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et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

Sixth Session

Rome, 19 - 30 June 1995

**EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF FAO TECHNICAL BODIES, AND
THE 108TH SESSION OF THE FAO COUNCIL: MATTERS REGARDING
THE COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**

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REPORT OF THE 21ST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (Rome, 10-13 March 1995)

ANY OTHER MATTERS

Broadening the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture

66. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/95/10 and sought the advice of the Committee as to whether the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources should be broadened to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture.

67. The Committee welcomed, in principle, the proposal to expand the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture, although some delegations felt that such expansion was still premature. It was noted and recommended that many issues surrounding the expansion of the Commission will be submitted to and discussed in greater detail by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). The Committee recognized that there are issues associated with the expansion that will be specific to fisheries and aquaculture that must be dealt with.

68. The Committee supported the creation of a working group or group of experts to advise COFI and FAO on how best to integrate fisheries and aquaculture into an expanded Commission. It was recommended that COFI be advised of any work done by FAO on fishery genetic resources. It was suggested that the practical and budgetary implications of the enlargement of the Commission's mandate be carefully assessed. The Committee further recommended a step by step approach to incorporating aquatic resources into the new Commission once it is established and when there is support for utilizing the mechanism of Technical Expert Working Groups (TEWG). However, the Committee noted that the TEWG should be operated in a clear and transparent manner and there should be representatives from developing and developed countries. FAO was acknowledged as an appropriate institution for the Secretariat of the expanded Commission.

REPORT OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

(Rome, 13-16 March 1995)

42. The Committee was informed of the proposal for the broadening of the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture. It stressed the importance of continuing the activities of the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, given the specificity of approaches and strategies in this field.

REPORT OF THE 13TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

(Rome, 27-31 March 1995)

BROADENING THE MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES (CPGR) TO INCLUDE OTHER CATEGORIES OF ORGANISMS USED FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE¹

38. The Committee noted that the Hundred-and-Seventh Session of the Council had discussed the possible broadening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, to cover also other categories of organisms of interest for food and agriculture. It recalled that, in that session, the Council had raised a number of questions, and had referred the matter to COAG, COFO and COFI, as well as to the Programme and Finance Committees, so that it might again be discussed at its Hundred-and-Eighth Session, on the basis of their comments. The Council could then make recommendations to the Conference, which was the body empowered to decide on the possible broadening of the mandate. The questions raised by the Council were addressed by the Secretariat in document COAG/95/5 Supp.1, which was discussed by the Committee.

39. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Hundred-and-Eighth Session of the Council that the Commission's mandate be broadened to include other categories of organisms of interest for food and agriculture, and to encourage the Council to recommend to the Conference that it do so at its Twenty-eighth Session later this year. However, it also recommended that the implementation of the broadened mandate take place through a step-by-step process, beginning with animal genetic resources. The broadened "Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture" would be able to provide guidance to FAO on agrobiodiversity and technical assistance to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as appropriate. The Committee also felt that, in order to maintain a clear focus in each sector, the broadened Commission should be assisted by sectoral working groups, with a geographic balance, on plants, animals, forestry and fishery genetic resources. There was no consensus as to whether the working groups should be composed of government representatives, or of technical experts serving in a personal capacity.

40. It was further agreed that the mode of broadening the Commission's scope should not adversely affect the important processes under way within the Commission for the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, and for the preparation of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, planned for June 1996. The Committee, therefore, suggested to the Council that the broadening of the Commission should commence in 1996 and that the practical modalities of implementing the broadened mandate could be considered at the earliest in early 1996 and at the latest during the Commission's seventh regular session, in April 1997. The financial implications should be further analysed and reflected in the 1996-97 Programme of Work and Budget.

41. It was suggested that, in the interim period, until the Commission was actually prepared to implement its broadened mandate and in the light of the Conference's decision as to the nature of the working groups and the timetable for the step-by-step process, FAO should undertake a number of detailed studies and analyses, beginning in 1996, to facilitate the implementation of the Conference decision. These tasks could be carried out by interim *ad hoc* technical groups to be established immediately following Conference decision for animals, and at a later stage for fishery genetic resources. The recommendations of these groups would be brought to the attention of COAG and COFI respectively. In the case of forestry, there was already a panel of experts whose views had been brought to the attention of COFO.

¹ COAG/95/5 Supp.1 and COAG/95/Inf.5.

REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (ROME, 27-31 MARCH 1995) - ITEM 6

15. The Council recommended that the Conference agree, at its Twenty-eighth Session, to broaden the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to that of a Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. It agreed that a broadened Commission should be assisted by sectoral working groups, with appropriate geographical balance, for plant, animal, forestry and fishery genetic resources, and advised that the whole process should be carried out through a step-by-step approach, beginning with animal genetic resources. Although there was support by many Members for intergovernmental instead of expert groups, to prepare the work for the broadened Commission, in the absence of a consensus on the nature and composition of the working groups and due to the budgetary implications associated thereto, the Council referred the matter to the Conference. In this context, the Council welcomed the offer to provide extra-budgetary support.

