



CGRFA-10 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2004

Delegates to the tenth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-10) discussed the future work of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITWG-PGR), and issues related to animal genetic resources (AnGR) including: the Global Strategy; the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on AnGR (ITWG-AnGR); and the first report on the State of the World's AnGR. A dialogue session with the civil society was held in the afternoon. Carlos Mezzadra (Argentina), Djemali M' Naouer (Tunisia) and M.A. Kamali (Iran) were nominated as Vice-Chairs.

PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

FUTURE WORK OF THE ITWG-PGR: Chair Eng-Siang Lim (Malaysia) outlined possible areas for future work of the ITWG-PGR, including: coordinating the division of work between the CGRFA and the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR); establishing a new work programme for the CGRFA with regard to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), in light of the ITPGR entry into force; addressing patenting issues; providing policy guidance regarding transgenic materials in *ex situ* collections; and reviewing progress of implementation of the Global System.

The Netherlands, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States (EU), prioritized activities supporting ITPGR implementation, and reiterated its proposal to transform the ITWG-PGR into a technical subsidiary body for the Governing Body of the ITPGR. ANGOLA, the US and CANADA said that questions relating to the ITPGR should be dealt with during the Interim Committee's meeting, and the ITWG-PGR's ongoing work should continue. URUGUAY called for seed-related activities, to improve national production and marketing systems, and MALAYSIA prioritized plant breeding activities to strengthen developing countries' agricultural sectors. AUSTRALIA noted the CGRFA should also facilitate the Treaty implementation. An informal group was established to discuss the issue.

Regions nominated the following new members of the ITWG-PGR: India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Malaysia (Asia); Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Spain (Europe); Zimbabwe, Algeria, Cameroon, Guinea and Uganda (Africa); and Canada and the US (North America). Nominations from the Near East, Southwest Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) are pending.

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

GLOBAL STRATEGY: The Secretariat introduced the Overview of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm AnGR (CGRFA-10/04/7), underlining the need for extra-budgetary financial resources, particularly for capacity building and further development of information systems, in addition to resources needed for completion of the first report on the State of the World's AnGR.

The EU suggested strengthening regional processes and national focal points, and encouraged stakeholder involvement, particularly for completion of the State of the World report. He noted that information systems should be more country-driven, taking into account developing countries' needs. He suggested further development of indicators and capacity-building activities, along with feasibility studies on gene banks. He said that priority setting on limited resources is more feasible than obtaining extra-budgetary funding. The US expressed support for FAO work on information systems, assistance to breeding programmes, monitoring systems, and gene bank development.

NIGERIA supported establishing regional focal points and required FAO guidance in this regard. He highlighted the need for *in situ* conservation systems for AnGR, while TURKEY underlined *ex situ* conservation. Mali, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, MALAYSIA, POLAND and TOGO asserted the need to strengthen national focal points, with the AFRICAN GROUP stressing implementation of national priorities. MALAYSIA called for developing further the Global Strategy and for addressing funding availability. IRAN asked for a suitable mechanism to synchronize animal and plant genetic resource conservation with water and soil protection and range management. Tunisia, on the behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by many developing countries, called for FAO funding to strengthen field conservation projects. SOUTH AFRICA stressed country-based planning and implementation strategies and BANGLADESH the need for differentiated conservation strategies for low and high input breeds. GEORGIA presented activities in the South-Caucasian region, including the establishment of a center for the conservation and future use of AnGR.

ETHIOPIA underscored the need to sustain the momentum achieved through stakeholder participation in the country reports, and, with KENYA and NIGERIA, called for initiating negotiations on a treaty on AnGR. The INTERMEDIARY TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP (ITDG) and the ACTION GROUP ON EROSION, TECHNOLOGY AND CONCENTRATION (ETC GROUP) emphasized the importance of a legally binding global recognition of the contributions and rights of livestock keepers. The EU underlined that the State



of the World report is a precondition for negotiating a legal instrument on AnGR.

The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), on behalf of the CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (CGIAR), outlined its collaborative initiatives on capacity building for AnGR, including a biotechnology center of excellence for Central and East Africa.

REPORT OF THE ITWG-ANGR: Carlos Mezzadra (Argentina), Chair of the ITWG-AnGR, presented the group's recommendations (CGRFA/10/04/8), including: a revised schedule and process for preparing the first State of the World report; a follow-up mechanism; strengthening national and regional focal points; a study on developments in biotechnology; a proposal for country-based monitoring; and examination of the feasibility of AnGR gene banks. The EU requested that the study on developments in biotechnology be considered during the discussion on the draft code of conduct on biotechnology.

STATE OF THE WORLD REPORT: The Secretariat introduced the documents on the preparation of the first State of the World report on AnGR (CGRFA-10/04/9 and Add.1-3), requiring guidance on, *inter alia*: holding regional consultations in 2005 to identify strategic priorities for action; rescheduling the completion of the report to 2006; holding an international technical conference on AnGR in 2007; configuring the follow-up mechanism; and addressing the need for extra-budgetary resources for all of the above.

Many supported holding regional consultations and endorsed organizing a technical conference in 2007. The US supported completion of the report by 2006 and suggested using regular FAO programme funds. The LEAGUE OF PASTORAL PEOPLE highlighted the important contribution of indigenous livestock keepers to AnGR conservation. The EU suggested that the FAO develop an operational plan for identifying gaps and needs for report preparation.

On the follow-up mechanism, Venezuela, on behalf of GRULAC, supported its establishment and called for the necessary financial resources. Tunisia, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, underlined the need to better define the mechanism to reflect its project implementation component rather than merely resource mobilization. The US proposed focusing on field-level action and locating the mechanism within the global focal point, and TURKEY called for promoting stakeholder awareness for its implementation. MALAYSIA urged establishing regional focal points. The AFRICAN GROUP and CHILE stressed the Secretariat's role in the process, with the AFRICAN GROUP underlining the need to consolidate regional representation. SRI LANKA and IRAN suggested collecting information from national research reports for knowledge sharing.

The UK, supported by GUINEA and UGANDA, highlighted experiences in fundraising for regional focal points, recommending, *inter alia*, that the FAO provide limited funding for the secretariat's setup and that countries set a budget ceiling and target number of contributing countries.

On the report for strategic priorities for action (CGRFA-10/04/Inf. 9), POLAND and MALAYSIA endorsed the recommendations, with POLAND stressing monitoring and emergency response mechanisms. NORWAY suggested prioritizing individual recording programmes over molecular characterization techniques.

FUTURE WORK OF THE ITWG-ANGR: Chair Lim identified as priority tasks the review of the draft State of the World report and of the report on strategic priorities for action, including the preparation of the international technical conference. He also underscored the evaluation of the follow-up mechanism and the progress review of the Global Strategy. Delegates approved the proposal without discussion.

Regions nominated the following new members of the ITWG-AnGR: Bangladesh, China, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (Asia); Denmark, France, Germany, Slovenia and Turkey (Europe); Botswana, Tunisia, Cameroon, Ghana and Ethiopia (Africa); Egypt, Iran and Jordan (Near East); and Canada and the US (North America). Nominations from the Southwest Pacific and GRULAC are pending.

DIALOGUE WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY

Opening the dialogue, the ETC GROUP illustrated areas of concern for civil society, including: involvement in livestock and biotechnology issues, particularly relating to genetic use restriction technologies; genetic contamination of *ex situ* collections, including the proposing of guidelines by the CGIAR rather than their development at the international level; and producers' rights to cover livestock, fishery and forestry sectors.

The LEAGUE OF PASTORAL PEOPLE, supported by NIGERIA, underscored that recognition of legally binding rights for livestock keepers would provide an opportunity to market local breeds and germplasm. He stressed the importance of indigenous knowledge in maintaining local breeds and understanding the interaction between plants and animals. TOGO asserted that responsibility for the protection of livestock keepers' rights falls on States. CAMEROON said that their nomadic nature implies individual rather than state control over livestock raising activities. The ITDG emphasized the multiple roles of civil society in animal resource conservation and stressed that a treaty on AnGR would facilitate *in situ* conservation of livestock breeds, keeping in view the lifestyle of pastoralist communities.

TUNISIA said that national participatory processes should lead to the full involvement of civil society organizations, and called upon their participation in the Global Strategy on AnGR. A representative of the CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS PARA EL CAMBIO EN EL CAMPO MEXICANO reported on the genetic contamination of traditional maize varieties in Mexico, calling for precautionary measures, including a moratorium on the cultivation of transgenic crops and a transgenic food import ban.

Stressing the lack of information on genetically modified seeds, the KENYA SMALL SCALE FARMERS FORUM noted these seeds are expensive and affect farmers' livelihoods adversely. The ETC GROUP suggested: creating a farmers' rights panel, with farmers' representatives, to report to CGRFA meetings; working on basic producers' rights; further addressing IPR issues; and considering a code of conduct on new technologies. The ITDG urged the CGRFA to address a broadly defined agenda on agricultural and food policy, including the role of new technologies, and called for government engagement in a public debate on sustainable and diverse food systems.

IN THE CORRIDORS

CGRFA-10 continued its fast stride through the animal genetic resources agenda. Several participants expressed satisfaction with the broad support for an international technical conference on animal genetic resources and regional initiatives on strategic priorities. When discussion came down to funding, delegates did their best to avoid the all-too-usual pleas for extra-budgetary resources, and the EU's fundraising model for regional focal points received much applause in this regard. On the other hand, the unsuccessful European initiative to transform the ITWG-PGR into a technical subsidiary body of the International Treaty led one delegate to say that this was, at best, premature.

On the unusual occasion of an in-session civil society dialogue, some NGO representatives, though appreciative of the opportunity to extensively address the Commission, noted the lack of meaningful interaction with delegates, with one even regretting the absence of potentially productive disagreements. This might be accounted, according to one participant, to the wide and diffused array of suggested areas for action and the lack of prioritization among them.