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REPORT OF THE SECOND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE FAO COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 22-27 APRIL 1996

The Second Extraordinary Session of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-EX2) was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 22-27 April 1996. During the week-long meeting, delegates worked their way through all agenda items in spite of a staggeringly slow start, persistent procedural problems and a near-paralysis in plenary over forests, funding and follow-up. Nonetheless, delegates addressed several issues in preparation for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources to be held in Leipzig, Germany, from 17-23 June 1996. These include: the first comprehensive state-of-the-world report on plant genetic resources, which will be forwarded to the Conference; and a heavily bracketed Global Plan of Action, which will be further consolidated by a two-day working group meeting held immediately prior to the Leipzig Conference. The draft text of the Leipzig Declaration, which is expected to be one of the Conference's key outputs, remains subject to substantial negotiation. Delegates also agreed to hold the Commission's next extraordinary session on the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources in early December 1996, immediately preceded by a meeting of the working group that will prepare a simplified text to serve as a basis for the Commission's negotiations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COMMISSION

While plant genetic resources (PGR) have been sought after, collected, used and improved for centuries, it has only been since the 1930s that concern has been voiced over the need for conservation. Concerted international efforts to promote conservation, exchange and utilization are somewhat more recent.

In response to growing alarm over the rapid loss of agricultural plant species, in 1974 the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) established the International Board for Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR). As an independent Board

with its secretariat supplied by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), IBPGR's mission was to coordinate an international plant genetic resources programme, including collecting missions and the construction and expansion of genebanks at national, regional and international levels.

Although much was accomplished during the 1970s, gaps persisted in practical conservation work and linkages with utilization efforts, as well as in institutional relations and policy matters. Due in large part to the urgency of the work during this period, no systematic attempt was made at the intergovernmental level to develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan to conserve and sustainably utilize PGR.

The FAO established an intergovernmental Commission on Plant Genetic Resources in 1983, and adopted a non-binding International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources (IU), which is now being revised in light of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. In 1995 the Commission was renamed the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), a body

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which currently comprised of the 143 member States of the FAO.) The Commission and the International Undertaking constitute the main institutional components of the Global System for the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which also includes other international instruments and technical mechanisms being developed by the FAO.

A series of international technical conferences and meetings on PGR have been convened by the FAO, in cooperation with other organizations, in order to facilitate technical discussions among scientists and to create awareness about PGR issues among policy-makers at the national and international levels. The first significant meeting was held in 1961 and focused on plant exploration and introduction. The 1967 Conference formulated a number of important resolutions subsequently adopted by the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment. The most recent international technical conference, which took place in 1981, catalyzed the development of the FAO Global System.

By the early 1990s, it was becoming evident that another international conference was needed to assess progress, identify problems and opportunities, and give direction to future activities in the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). At its fourth session in 1991, the Commission proposed the convening of an international technical conference on plant genetic resources. The FAO established a multi-donor trust-fund project to coordinate the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference on PGR to be held in Leipzig, Germany, from 17-23 June 1996.

The importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture was formally recognized in Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, which includes programmes of action on the "conservation and sustainable utilization of PGRFA." At the international level, Agenda 21 proposes actions to: strengthen the FAO Global System; prepare periodic state of the world reports on PGRFA and a rolling global cooperative plan of action on PGRFA; and promote the International Technical Conference on PGRFA, which would consider both the report and the plan of action.

In April 1993, the fifth session of the Commission noted that the Conference process would "transform the relevant parts of the UNCED process (including Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)) into a costed Global Plan of Action based on the first FAO Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources." The Commission also noted that the process would "make the Global System fully operational."

At its most recent regular session, held in June 1995, the Commission concentrated on two issues in particular: negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking (the focus of the first extraordinary session of the Commission in November 1994 and a third to be held in the fall of 1996) and preparations for the Leipzig Conference (the focus of a second extraordinary session of the Commission in April 1996).

REPORT OF CGRFA-EX2

The Second Extraordinary Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-EX2) was opened by FAO Deputy-Director, Mr. H. Hjort on 22 April 1996. In his opening statement, Hjort noted the expanded scope of the Commission to include domesticated animals and marine and aquatic resources. Dr. Zehni, the Director of Plant Production and Protection, emphasized that the country-driven preparatory process for Leipzig has helped raise awareness among policy-makers of the importance of plant genetic resources. The results of this process

include the drafts of two major elements of the FAO Global System: the first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action. He suggested that the Commission focus on two essential tasks: recommendations to the Leipzig Conference on its scope, purpose and expected results; and advancing consensus on the final documents.

At its sixth session in June 1995, the Commission elected Mr. José Bolívar (Spain) as Chair of the Commission until its next regular session. Mr. Moorosi Raditapole (Lesotho) and Ms. Kristiane Herrmann (Australia) were elected as first and second Vice-Chairs, respectively, and Mr. Fernando José Marroni de Abreu (Brazil) was elected Rapporteur.

Delegates then adopted the provisional agenda and timetable (document CGRFA-EX2/96/1), which contains the following items: preparation for the Fourth International Technical Conference (item 2), including the First Report on the State of the World's PGR (item 2.1), the Global Plan of Action on PGR (item 2.2), the draft provisional agenda of the Fourth Conference (item 2.3) and other matters related to its organization (item 2.4); and preparation for further negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking on PGR (item 3).

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON PGR

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA: Delegates agreed that the Leipzig Conference agenda would include, among other items: a progress report on the revision of the International Undertaking; a presentation of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources; adoption of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) and recommendations for its implementation; review of possibilities for the implementation and financing of the GPA; and adoption of the Leipzig Declaration. As a basis for discussion on this item, delegates referred to the draft provisional agenda adopted by the Commission at its sixth session and contained in document CGRFA-EX2/96/5. The Commission emphasized that the draft should be "finalized at the [current session], and that the Fourth International Technical Conference itself would determine the definitive version of the agenda."

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: As the host country of the Conference, Germany outlined its preparations, most notably the recent opening of the ultra-modern Leipzig Fair Ground, which encloses the conference centre and exhibition hall. He urged member governments to confirm attendance and expressed hope that the a spirit of cooperation and compromise would make Leipzig a resounding success.

The second Vice-Chair, Ms. Kristiane Herrmann (Australia), reported on the conclusions of an informal contact group (comprised of the regional representatives) on organizational matters. The FAO Director-General will open the Conference and the German Minister for Agriculture will provide the welcoming address. Germany indicated that its Deputy Minister for Agriculture is prepared to chair the meeting, if elected by the Conference. The size and representation of the Bureau will be determined based on consultations with FAO regional representatives in Rome. Regarding organization of work, the contact group agreed that in addition to meetings of the plenary, working groups with a clear mandate to settle issues will be established as needed. However, no more than two parallel sessions may be held in order to facilitate the participation of smaller delegations. Although no high-level segment will be held, it is expected that some high-level representatives will be present to deliver opening statements.

The FAO Director-General has agreed to present a special medal to honor distinguished work in the field of PGR. However, criteria and a selection process have yet to be established. The US, SWEDEN and INDIA proposed honoring eminent scientists who did pioneering work on PGR. COLOMBIA and MEXICO suggested special recognition of local and indigenous communities as an act of justice. ETHIOPIA proposed raising consciousness of different groups' contributions by creating additional categories, including art and literature.

Delegates also discussed presentation of the report adopted at Leipzig to other relevant bodies. The FAO Director-General has indicated his wishes that the report constitute a major input into the World Food Summit to be held in November 1996.

SWEDEN expressed dismay at the absence of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, especially in light of the substantive theme of this year's meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP): terrestrial ecosystems. To this end, SWEDEN, later supported by BRAZIL, MALAYSIA and the EU, urged both the Executive Secretary of the CBD as well as the Executive Director of its interim financial mechanism, the Global Environmental Facility, to personally attend the Leipzig Conference. AUSTRALIA recalled that CBD COP-2 formally endorsed the International Technical Conference and its preparatory process, and welcomed the presentation of the COP-2 President in Leipzig.

THE FIRST REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PGR

As a basis for discussion on this agenda item, delegates referred to document CGRFA-EX2/96/2 on the first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources. In introducing the document, Dr. Cary Fowler, the Project Manager of the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference, noted that the Report was based on an outline approved by the sixth session of the Commission. He explained that the Report represents a synthesis of over 5000 pages of information gathered through the country-driven preparatory process, which included 150 Country Reports and the results of 11 regional and subregional meetings. Additional information had been provided through the FAO World Information and Early Warning System, international institutes, NGOs and the private sector. The Report should be considered in conjunction with the more detailed information provided in the complementary background documents.

Although MOROCCO proposed a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the Report, most delegates limited their plenary interventions to general concerns. SENEGAL objected to the Report's use of the term "marginal areas", arguing that an area is marginal only if all of its crops are marginal. CANADA detailed its concerns, including use of the terms "formal" and "informal", on-farm management, implications that a legal instrument is required, and benefit-sharing in accordance with the CBD.

INDIA and MALAYSIA expressed concern that the Vavilovian Centres of Origin were not addressed. ITALY, on behalf of the EU, emphasized information gaps in national and regional reporting and noted that the open process employed in preparing the Report might serve as a foundation for a future monitoring system on the world's PGR. MALAYSIA noted that the Report should highlight strengths and weaknesses within the present system and form the basis for strategies under the GPA. He noted the Report's inadequate treatment of farmers' rights and legislative measures regarding access and benefit sharing. INDONESIA called for stronger treatment of national legislation and policy. FRANCE

called for a more strategic approach, one which would address priority areas to justify the GPA. ECUADOR recommended that the Report include a review of native PGR as an integral part of traditional agricultural systems. KENYA emphasized the importance of subregional meetings. IRAN emphasized the transfer of technologies for the conservation of medicinal and ornamental plants.

In addition to the Report's content, delegates also discussed its status. The US noted that the Commission meeting should not be an endorsement of the Report. MEXICO, on the basis of informal consultations with Latin American and Caribbean countries, stated that the Report should be used a framework for discussion and should not be imbued with the same status as a document negotiated by governments. As such, the GPA should be emphasized and the Report simply noted in Leipzig. BRAZIL, while commending the "bottom up" process and integrated cooperation between countries and institutions that led to this first comprehensive report, stated that it should serve as an informative background paper. COLOMBIA noted that the document provided a good preliminary overview of the state of PGR, but should remain a reference document, especially since it may not coincide with political views.

SWEDEN noted that it was up to the Secretariat to determine what to include in its own documents, such as the Report. Nonetheless, he noted that the continuing process of updating and refining the Report should include countries and that the Leipzig Conference can provide guidance on future work of the FAO — with greater emphasis on sustainable agriculture and a move away from the "squirrel approach" of collecting everything in gene banks. He noted his preference for a full presentation rather an executive summary of the Report in Leipzig.

Upon the request of MEXICO and SWEDEN, the Secretariat's legal counsel provided the following advice: an information-based document may be adopted even if it is to be subject to periodic revisions; "taking note" of a document falls short of accepting it — a statement of fact might be "welcomed" or "accepted" as a basis for future discussion or action.

CANADA and PAKISTAN recalled that the original mandate of this extraordinary session (as agreed at the Commission's sixth session) entrusted the Commission — not the Secretariat — with finalizing the Report for Leipzig. Despite these last views, a consensus emerged regarding the Report's status as a background information document that would be periodically updated and revised. In line with the status of the Report and the related decision to limit its consideration, delegates decided not to formally endorse the Report but to submit written comments and corrections to the Secretariat, which would serve as a basis for a revised text to be forwarded to Leipzig. These decisions were reflected in items 6 and 8 of the provisional agenda for Leipzig. Delegates agreed to focus their attention on the Declaration and the GPA.

In its report, the Commission adopted a section on this item (as orally amended by Canada, Colombia and Germany), which includes the following points. The Commission recognizes the Report, which represents the first world-wide assessment of the state of PGR conservation and utilization, as a useful basis for the GPA and as a comprehensive source of information, which should be periodically updated, made widely available and analyzed in further depth in order to facilitate the monitoring role of the Commission. Also, the Commission agreed that although it would not formally endorse the Report, the Secretariat should forward a revised text to Leipzig on the basis of comments and corrections submitted by governments.

THE DRAFT GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION ON PGR

As a basis for discussion, delegates referred to the draft Global Plan of Action (document CGRFA-EX2/96/3), which is based on the revised structure endorsed by the sixth session of the Commission (Appendix F of the report of the sixth session, CGRFA-6/95/REP). Since plenary deliberations on the GPA proceeded slowly, the Chair established a parallel open-ended drafting group to consider written submissions and oral comments put forward during plenary. Under the chairmanship of the Rapporteur, Mr. F.J. Marroni de Abreu (Brazil), the drafting group met nine times between Wednesday afternoon and Saturday afternoon and completed only a partial reading due to the complexity of and controversy over many of the issues involved. As a result, the drafting group was unable to submit successive sections to the plenary for a second reading, as originally planned, and the heavily bracketed text will be a matter for further negotiation in Leipzig, where a working group will meet for two days before the Conference to consolidate the current text.

The plenary's discussion of the GPA focused on the document's substance and structure as well as procedure for its review. COLOMBIA reported on the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) regional meeting in Bogota, which was attended by 25 countries, and highlighted the major components of the Bogota Declaration, including: the sovereignty of States' over their genetic resources; integration of political, institutional, scientific and organizational matters; dependence of the global economy on shared genetic resources; application of legal measures to systems of access and farmers' rights; harmonization of existing legal instruments, including intellectual property rights; and access to financial resources. She requested that the Bogota Declaration be part of the GPA.

MADAGASCAR noted that the financial estimates in the GPA were rather low. INDONESIA hoped that recommendations from subregional meetings be included as an appendix to the report.

The NETHERLANDS stated that the GPA was more an inventory rather than a plan of action. The EC noted its difficulty in studying the GPA without an understanding of the status of PGR; suggested that the scope of the GPA should include forest genetic resources; indicated that the International Undertaking should be in harmony with other agreements, notably the CBD; and noted that implementation of the GPA without a special fund would be problematic. MALAYSIA, later supported by KENYA, underscored the GPA's lack of balance because it did not adequately discuss benefit sharing.

CANADA, later supported by NORWAY, the US, JAPAN and AUSTRALIA, underscored that the GPA represents only one part of the FAO Global System. He further noted that the issue of on-farm management is not well-documented. VENEZUELA indicated that training costs had been underestimated. MEXICO, later supported by ETHIOPIA, noted the GPA's cursory consideration of farmers' rights and centers of origin, and insufficient reference to access to training and financing.

An NGO, the Rural Advancement Fund International (RAFI), felt that the GPA did not recognize genetic erosion as linked to current systems of agriculture. CHINA underscored the importance of institutional capacity-building. AUSTRALIA, supported by SWEDEN and ARGENTINA, called for harmonization of the GPA with the CBD. BRAZIL stated that the GPA should not serve as an instrument for gaining concessions under the International Undertaking. The US, supported by MALAYSIA and SWEDEN, stated that the primary goal is to maintain PGR for world food security. The US underscored the great importance it placed on

unrestricted access to PGR, and stated that the concept of farmers' rights should not include intellectual property rights or human rights law.

MADAGASCAR called for a timetable for implementation. MALAYSIA stated that farmers' rights should move from concept to reality. SWEDEN noted that although the GPA was technically sound, it lacked crispness and indicated that the GPA should provide guidance on funding to the COP of the CBD. INDIA was concerned that Vavilovian Centres of Origin were not considered in the GPA. KENYA stated that patents must be shared between countries. INDONESIA called for greater emphasis on public awareness.

After delegates expressed their general comments on the content of the GPA, the plenary then embarked on a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the document.

INTRODUCTION: Numerous changes to the first paragraph were proposed by many countries as the original text gave a rather wordy overview to the context of the report. Three versions still remain. As a result of BRAZIL's proposal in the Drafting Group (DG) to withdraw all references to agroforestry and forestry, these terms remain in brackets while later references to forests have been deleted altogether. (See the discussion on forest genetic resources on page 6.)

The Rationale for the Global Plan of Action Specifically for Food and Agriculture: In plenary the US called for recognition of the importance of world food security and CANADA requested that a later section of the GPA, relating to international cooperation and equitable benefit-sharing, be inserted in the Introduction. In the DG, BRAZIL emphasized the need to combat poverty rather than improve production.

The Aims and Strategies for the Global Plan of Action: In the Drafting Group, the US, supported by BRAZIL, requested the removal of the reference to the International Undertaking. CANADA requested that the GPA should aim to assist countries in identifying priorities for action, but this suggestion was not supported by the US. BRAZIL preferred that all aims be included in brackets. In a reference to the need for the GPA to promote the development of institutions, the US indicated they did not want to support the development of such institutions. ETHIOPIA, supported by BRAZIL, stated that development of institutions is exactly what is required.

Structure and Organization of the Global Plan of Action: This section of the GPA provides explanatory remarks on subsequent sections. In the part referring to Research and Technology, BRAZIL sought language to include the concept of technology development and transfer, but the US did not support this.

IN SITU CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT: Surveying and Inventorying Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: In the Drafting Group, the EU, the US and CANADA would not support language proposed by TANZANIA to "sustain" *in situ* resources. ETHIOPIA supported TANZANIA's position and called for financial and technical support to survey and inventory *in situ* PGR. This text is now in brackets.

Supporting On-Farm Management and Improvement of Plant Genetic Resources: In plenary, INDIA explained that on-farm conservation was not necessarily *in situ* conservation, since crops were not necessarily grown in the same field, and called for the GPA to pay more attention to *ex situ* conservation. NORWAY and COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, stated that the GPA should give more attention to *in situ* conservation. In support of this latter position, ETHIOPIA said that genetic erosion

occurred in gene banks and hence more effort should be placed on *in situ* conservation. A representative of NGOs from Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua and Brazil stated that twice as much money was spent on *ex situ* conservation as *in situ* conservation, and that gene banks were no more important than indigenous agriculture. FRANCE conceded that some developed countries needed *in situ* programmes.

AUSTRALIA said that the GPA's reference to pricing policy in support of farm management might create a trade distortion. Later, in the Drafting Group, MALAYSIA stated that a pricing policy for on-farm conservation was an insurance policy to help *in situ* conservation rather than a trade distortion.

CANADA proposed text to the effect that farmers' choice to grow new varieties of food plants, also known as cultivars, may lead to genetic erosion. BRAZIL suggested text to refer to farmers being driven by market forces to grow new cultivars. The US did not support either proposal and suggested instead that improved productivity would reduce pressure on fragile ecosystems.

At BRAZIL's request, reference to forests in the long-term objectives and elsewhere in the text was removed. The US wanted reference to farmers' rights to be qualified by "the concept of" so as not to prejudge other international negotiations. This proposal was supported by BRAZIL but not by ETHIOPIA. Specific reference to the role of International Agricultural Research Centres was removed at request of CANADA. ETHIOPIA, supported by MALAYSIA, wanted all text referring to the release of "unfinished varieties" to be deleted since it was not consistent with the CBD. AUSTRALIA supported INDIA's proposal to remove particular reference to the role of CGIAR centers in identifying agricultural plant species (landraces) for multiplication. ETHIOPIA commented in plenary that they wanted the rights of the knowledge of farmers to be protected as a caveat to promoting research into their knowledge. Later, in the Drafting Group, the US, supported by BRAZIL, suggested that rights of farmers' knowledge be couched in terms of being consistent with national legislation.

In plenary, MALAYSIA expressed concern that the encouragement of on-farm research in the GPA was not consistent with the CBD since it did not recognize the need for access on mutually agreed terms.

Assisting Farmers in Disaster Situations to Restore

Agricultural Systems: The US wanted specific reference to the role of NGOs in disaster relief situations. BRAZIL questioned this. ETHIOPIA was concerned about reference to "private" organizations that play a major role in genetic erosion and proposed language on "national cooperation" consistent with the CBD. The GPA's proposal to establish a multilateral fund for the multiplication of seeds in response to emergencies was supported by AUSTRALIA and BRAZIL, but not by JAPAN, the EU or SWITZERLAND. The US, supported by CANADA but not by ETHIOPIA, suggested less definitive language, and added that the FAO should not be the coordinating body for disaster situations.

Promoting *In Situ* Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives and

Wild Plants for Food and Agriculture: In the Drafting Group, BRAZIL, supported by AUSTRALIA, suggested that the title of this section be changed from "Wild Plants for Food and Agriculture" to "Wild Plants for Food Production", hence removing further reference to forests and trees. CANADA and the US successfully argued that reference to "livelihood" security be replaced with "world food security" — again to remove any implication of conserving plant species not directly related to food. BRAZIL propose that reference to indigenous peoples be omitted since this issue was being addressed within the UN Commission on

Human Rights and was beyond the competence of the body. Later, in the Drafting Group, BRAZIL suggested that all references to the role of tribal and indigenous peoples' in managing resources in protected areas be deleted. CANADA disagreed. AUSTRALIA suggested that if language referring to indigenous peoples was to be removed, reference to the role of women should be kept. During plenary, the Legal Counsel for FAO suggested that the term "indigenous peoples" in the GPA be replaced by "local and indigenous communities" so as to be consistent with Article 8(j) of the CBD.

In the continued deliberations of the Drafting Group, AUSTRALIA proposed text relating to off-reserve management of PGR, but the US and BRAZIL thought the content of the proposal was too broad. FRANCE agreed with the importance of off-reserve management. Crisper wording was found.

The US, the EU and CANADA each submitted text that removed the suggestion that governments should catalogue private collections of PGR so as to coordinate with *in situ* programmes. TURKEY submitted text suggesting that *in situ* conservation programmes should be linked with habitat protection, pollution prevention and land-use programmes. This proposal was rejected by the Drafting Group, primarily due to objections by CANADA. TURKEY suggested additional activities for *in situ* conservation, such as promoting under-utilized crops, planned and targeted collections, and promoting public awareness. This was accepted by the Drafting Group since it was consistent with the chapters of the GPA.

EX SITU CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT:

Securing Existing *Ex situ* Collections: CANADA proposed reference to "securing" collections in the title of this section of the GPA be replaced by "sustaining". In Plenary, ANGOLA stated that countries urgently needed to carry out collecting missions to strengthen national *ex situ* collections. In the Drafting Group, the US did not support this proposal, stating that there was excess storage capacity in existing collections. ETHIOPIA disagreed. COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, suggested removal of text referring to excessive *ex situ* conservation costs, especially for non-unique species. This was accepted by the Drafting Group.

ANGOLA sought additional text to recognize the fact that countries lacking sufficient *ex situ* capacity are those with the most urgent food security problems. In considering the long-term objectives of this part of the GPA, which refers to "sustaining" *ex situ* collections, COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, submitted text calling for the need to strengthen cooperation among national programmes and international institutions. In the Drafting Group, the US did not support this text. During plenary, KENYA called for the rehabilitation of existing *ex situ* collections. ECUADOR, on behalf of GRULAC and supported by TANZANIA and ANGOLA, expressed grave concern that the intermediate objectives of this section of the GPA placed too much emphasis on FAO programmes and not enough on national efforts. The AFRICAN GROUP submitted text to the Drafting Group to recognize the sovereign rights of the countries of origin as a prerequisite to the ongoing transfer of genetic material as advocated in the GPA. The need to respect national sovereignty was reiterated later in the plenary by SYRIA. The US did not support this in the Drafting Group and, supported by AUSTRALIA, modified the direct reference to obligations under the CBD in relation to access procedures. Later in the plenary, CANADA also requested that a direct reference to the CBD be removed. MALAYSIA, in response to CANADA's comment, suggested that collections should be made in accordance with national law.

The next section of the GPA referred to cooperation between the FAO, member countries and relevant institutions. It appeared to be aimed at setting the context for future negotiations on the International Undertaking. CANADA picked up this nuance and submitted text to have direct reference to the International Undertaking be included in the GPA. This position was supported by ETHIOPIA, but not by BRAZIL or AUSTRALIA. ETHIOPIA, on behalf of the African Group, again sought text referring to “countries of origin” rather than “source country” so as to be consistent with the CBD. This position was not supported by BRAZIL, the EU or the US. BRAZIL suggested that the term “source country” may also refer to a country holding material in a gene bank. The US supported BRAZIL by giving the example that some material has been recombined with other material so that the seed stock may now come from a number of countries. In plenary, RAFI suggested that this section of the GPA placed too much emphasis on the development of large gene banks in developed countries. In reference to a call for training support in the GPA, both CANADA and the US proposed language to remove the imperative of implied financial support. ETHIOPIA did not support this weaker language.

The following paragraph of the GPA called for sustainable funding for FAO networks. In the Drafting Group this concept was supported by FRANCE, ETHIOPIA and BRAZIL, but not by the EU or the US.

COSTING OF THE GPA: Venezuela, on behalf of the G-77, noted that the costing of the GPA was not clear enough to serve as a basis for serious work and proposed that the Secretariat should try to produce a more precise estimate for Leipzig. The US underscored its support for this idea in its opening statement, but expressed doubt as to the Secretariat’s ability to accomplish this additional task in time for Leipzig. AUSTRALIA underscored the anomaly of trying to make progress on costing a GPA without making progress on the GPA itself. The EU noted that the GPA did not contain any operational elements and proposed going directly to the sources of expenditure by asking international institutions in the field of PGR to confirm the cost of their activities. The Secretariat stated that although it welcomed any proposals on methodology for arriving at more precise and helpful documents, it noted that it had only received 34 responses to its survey of member countries on current expenditures. Other limiting factors, such as translation and distribution, might extend an already time-consuming process.

The Drafting Group at this stage ran out of time to discuss further aspects of the GPA raised by countries during plenary sessions. Issues discussed at plenary that extended beyond this section of the GPA mainly focused on technology transfer. COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, and supported by IRAN, stated that all countries need access to technologies to carry out their activities. In addition to the numerous outstanding issues that emerged from deliberations, the following sections of the GPA still need to be addressed in full: Utilization of PGR; Institutions and Capacity-Building; Costing of the GPA; and Major Elements and Recommendations.

FORESTS, FUNDING AND FOLLOW-UP

At the beginning of the Thursday afternoon session in plenary, VENEZUELA made a statement on behalf of the G-77 that set the tone and agenda for most of the remaining plenary sessions. The G-77 requested that all references to forests and forest genetic resources be removed from the GPA for the following reasons. First, there was no mandate to include forests: at its last session, the

Commission had not agreed to include forests in the GPA due to the issue’s highly contentious nature. Furthermore, Agenda 21 does not refer to forests in relation to PGR. Second, the Commission should not prejudice the outcomes of two critical processes already underway: the UN Commission on Sustainable Development’s Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), which focuses on forests, and negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking, which does not include forests. The G-77 further stated that the Commission must demonstrate political will in relation to the GPA. To this end, the G-77 proposed creating a contact group to start immediate negotiations on the cost dimensions of the GPA (including identifying sources of funding) to reconsider the structure of the GPA (including identifying priority areas of implementation). Delegates first deliberated the statement pertaining to forests.

FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES: BRAZIL argued that the Secretariat had exceeded its mandate by including forests in the GPA despite lack of resolution on this matter at the last session of the Commission. He emphasized that major economic interests should not overshadow the FAO’s guiding principles of hunger relief and food security. GERMANY, BOLIVIA and FRANCE noted that many countries had prepared their national reports according to specific FAO guidelines (derived from the first extraordinary session of this Commission), which did include forest resources.

In response to Germany’s request for legal counsel on the scope of the FAO mandate, the FAO Legal Counsel noted that the FAO mandate on food and agriculture includes forests and fisheries, but that the factual nature of his statement should in no way determine the answer. Thus, the Commission’s previous deliberations regarding the inclusion of forest genetic resources in PGRFA had been inconclusive and, in the absence of any definitive view, the question remains open for resolution by the Commission. From a strictly legal point of view, the FAO Legal Counsel later concluded, the Secretariat had no mandate to include forests in the GPA. ARGENTINA, CHINA, BRAZIL and FRANCE requested a written legal opinion on a number of matters — including the competence of the Commission and the mandate of the Secretariat to include forests in the GPA — for consideration by capitals prior to the Leipzig Conference.

MALAYSIA, supported by INDONESIA, argued that the introduction of the “new” dimension of forests into PGRFA would require postponing the Leipzig Conference and renegotiating the entire GPA pending the results of the IPF. INDIA questioned the wisdom of introducing forests, an issue never before negotiated in any of the Commission’s six sessions.

COLOMBIA, noting that developing countries are fully convinced of the importance of forest resources in agriculture, emphasized that their exclusion from the subject matter was simply a practical interim measure to facilitate agreement at the Leipzig Conference. The inclusion of forests into the GPA would introduce new complexities into the already difficult negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking whose scope remains difficult to define. CUBA and CAMEROON associated themselves with the G-77 position and implored delegates not to get bogged down on an issue that could not be resolved at this stage.

CHINA noted that despite its opinion that forests is an important part of PGRFA, it would accept the G-77 position. He noted that the political and legal linkages surrounding food and forests were more complex than the scientific ones. As a compromise, he proposed leaving the matter for Leipzig until which time the Commission could adhere to the wording approved by the last FAO

Conference: “biological resources”. TURKEY noted that most plant species are associated with forest vegetation and, as such, forest genetic resources should be retained in the text.

The EU noted that the G-77 statement corresponded exactly to the GRULAC position. He recalled the EU position, shared by many countries outside the EU, which supported the inclusion of forests as a key part of PGR. He noted that this is a legal matter in which the EU did not want to enter and proposed that the matter remain open for Leipzig until which time forest genetic resources could be considered without special emphasis. FRANCE underscored the importance of creating linkages with the IPF and proposed retaining all PGRs of forest origin in the GPA — if only in brackets — for resolution in Leipzig. FINLAND stated that it would be very short-sighted to exclude forests from the GPA, especially in light of the uncertain timeline of the IPF. Although countries have sovereignty over their forest genetic resources, they may require support and funds for the maintenance of native forests.

Following presentation of these positions in plenary, the Chair proposed a recess for informal consultations. Upon return to plenary, the EU reiterated the importance of forest genetic resources, but in order to facilitate constructive progress on the GPA, the EU announced its reluctant agreement to remove all specific references to them — on the condition that the Commission return to this issue as a matter of priority after the Leipzig Conference. In response to ARGENTINA’s question regarding whether conclusion of the IPF would constitute an appropriate time to resume consideration of the matter, the EU responded, “in principle yes”, but noted the difficulty in forecasting the work of the IPF. In thanking the EU for its positive response, COLOMBIA requested that delegates consider the G-77’s call for “political support” in the same spirit.

FUNDING AND FOLLOW-UP: In response to the G-77 proposal to create a contact group to address financing and follow-up of the GPA, the US underscored the decision of the sixth session of the Commission to define commitments for the implementation of the GPA at its next regular session and called on the G-77 to abide by this decision in the same spirit of cooperation previously demonstrated by the EU. He further explained that discussion of financing and implementation would be dependent on concrete proposals for action. This position was shared by CANADA, NORWAY, the EU, AUSTRALIA, the NETHERLANDS, SWITZERLAND, POLAND, AUSTRIA, FRANCE and the UK.

NORWAY, underscoring its status as one of the few countries that is well above the 0.7% of GNP for ODA mark, indicated its general willingness to discuss any aspect of funding, including new funding. However, such a discussion needed to be justified on the basis of clear needs and priorities and might be better placed at a higher level meeting. AUSTRALIA emphasized that no decisions on financial or institutional arrangements should be made outside the International Undertaking process, since its revision will have an impact on the implementation of the GPA.

FRANCE expressed its strong political will towards making a binding commitment to funding the GPA. However, in support of the NETHERLANDS’ comment that the draft GPA was still a working framework, indicated its inability to assign funds to unidentified projects and priorities. The UK, later supported by TURKEY, urged delegates to return to consideration of the GPA as the only way of giving practical effect to the Commission’s deliberations.

VENEZUELA, on behalf of the G-77, revised its earlier proposal for a contact group and called for clear proof of political will. COLOMBIA noted that a responsible GPA must contain financial arrangements and without a show of commitment to this effect, the meeting cannot move forward. BRAZIL stated that it would be diversional to study the GPA without a “politically safe” statement from donor countries. MALAYSIA noted that without a budget, the draft GPA was merely a technical plan rather than a global one, and proposed that it be adopted in Leipzig as a technical document in the way that an auditor qualifies an annual report.

Noting the impasse on this issue, the Chair adjourned plenary on Thursday evening and suspended Friday morning’s plenary to allow for informal consultations among delegations. Heads of regional groups were requested to keep the Bureau informed of deliberations and on this basis, a Chair’s text was presented to the Friday afternoon plenary as follows: “We recognize the need for financial resources in order to implement the GPA and we commit ourselves to discuss this matter during the Leipzig Conference.”

The US noted that the text closely approximated an acceptable position and proposed replacing “matter” with “process.” Linked with this, the US proposed amendments to the draft provisional agenda for Leipzig, so as to read “Adoption of the Report and the GPA” (deleting “and recommendations for its implementation and financing” in item 8) and “Review of possibilities for the implementation and financing of the GPA” (deleting brackets around item 9). Should the term “process” not prove acceptable, then the term “matter” would be conditioned by item 9.

PAKISTAN argued that replacing “matter” with “process” represented an unwanted change of concepts rather than a mere clarification, noting that his delegation did not wish to discuss a process that may not address the matter: financial resources. ETHIOPIA proposed that “process” could be introduced as a separate agenda item while “matter” could be defined in a footnote.

VENEZUELA stated that although the Chair’s text did not satisfy the aspirations of the G-77, it was prepared to accept the text provided it was not amended — to reopen debate on this issue would mean reopening all the other G-77 points. VENEZUELA did however accept the US proposal regarding agenda item 9 as “logical”. MEXICO, ETHIOPIA, IRAN, PAKISTAN, COSTA RICA and CHINA also voiced their support for the G-77 position.

While CANADA and AUSTRALIA concurred with the US proposal in its entirety, the EU supported only the proposed amendments to the agenda. The impasse was broken when CANADA drew applause for its concession to accept the Chair’s text without amendments with the term “matter” conditioned by item 9, as originally proposed by the US. VENEZUELA proposed to drop the term “financing” from item 8 because it was now dealt with in item 9. Just when the issue appeared to be resolved, FRANCE proposed additional wording that would place the financing of the GPA within the context of the entire FAO Global System. Rather than reopening debate on an issue on which consensus had been difficult to achieve, the Chair requested that FRANCE withdraw its proposal and recommended that the Global System be addressed under another item on the Leipzig agenda. FRANCE, AUSTRALIA and NORWAY went on record in the final report of the Commission as having requested that an explicit link be made between the GPA and the Global System, including the International Undertaking.

FORMAL STATEMENTS: Following closure of the GPA funding debate on Friday, VENEZUELA issued a formal statement in which the G-77: expressed deep regret that their proposals for the examination of financial matters were not accepted by the

developed countries; recalled that the GPA should be complementary and consistent with the provisions of the CBD, in particular Article 20 regarding financial mechanisms; and considered that the negotiations of the financial mechanisms for the full implementation of the GPA should not prejudice the negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking.

The following day, CANADA made a formal statement in plenary on behalf of AUSTRALIA, the CZECH REPUBLIC, the EC and its member States, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, POLAND, SLOVAKIA, SWITZERLAND, TURKEY and the US in which these countries: recognize the importance of establishing a sound process for considering the financial implications of the GPA but do not consider that all relevant information is yet available for an in-depth discussion on implementation; propose that a process for discussing the implementation and financing of the GPA — according to the arrangements agreed at the sixth session of the Commission — be agreed to at Leipzig; and state that the International Undertaking and the GPA are interlinked as part of the FAO Global System underpinning world food security and that their financing should be discussed accordingly.

Both statements were included in the body of the final report.

LEIPZIG DECLARATION

Plenary began formal consideration of the draft Leipzig Declaration on Wednesday evening. The Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-EX2/96/4, which contains a preliminary draft of a “declaration that might be adopted during the Fourth International Technical Conference (the ‘Leipzig Declaration’), either as part of the Global Plan of Action or separately”, prepared by the sixth session of the Commission for further negotiation at its second extraordinary session. The Secretariat noted that the text had been slightly amended in order to reflect the preparatory process that took place largely after the adoption of the report of the sixth session of the Commission (as contained in Appendix G of document CGRFA-6/95/REP). However, the bracketed text that emerged from the Commission’s sixth session remained for consideration at this session.

Following completion of the single plenary session devoted to the draft Declaration, the AFRICAN GROUP, GRULAC and the EU each tabled their own written versions of the Leipzig Declaration. These regional drafts were consolidated into a new draft Declaration that was heavily debated in plenary and will serve as the basis for further negotiation in Leipzig. The EU text represented a substantial rewrite of the whole declaration.

In plenary, countries made initial comments and then worked through the Leipzig Declaration (LD) paragraph-by-paragraph. A large amount of the LD remains in brackets since there was no time to consolidate the various comments and statements presented by delegations and regional groups.

In opening the general discussion, COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, said that the LD needed to support the strengthening of institutional capacities in developing countries and to fit within the context of the CBD and Agenda 21. The EU called for a delay in discussions until the GPA had been resolved, stating that this was a Leipzig Declaration and not a Rome Declaration.

The introductory paragraph committed countries to the conservation and sustainable development of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use. COLOMBIA, on behalf of GRULAC, and supported by the AFRICAN GROUP, asked for text to refer to the need for benefit-sharing arising from knowledge, innovations and practices. CANADA did not support this text. The

EU, supported by the NETHERLANDS, FINLAND, SENEGAL and CONGO wanted a reference to forests in the LD. BRAZIL, supported by MALAYSIA, MEXICO, ARGENTINA, INDONESIA, INDIA and URUGUAY, on behalf of GRULAC, opposed any reference to forests. The US, supported by JAPAN, requested a reference to food security in defining PGRFA. The US also wanted brackets around the reference to the CBD since some countries were not signatories to this convention. FRANCE suggested that reference to the CBD was needed somewhere in the Declaration.

The second paragraph referred to the sovereign rights of countries over their biological resources. This text created difficulties for some countries. The UK was concerned that the text was paraphrasing the CBD and this was dangerous. The EU recommended deletion of the entire text. ETHIOPIA, supported by SYRIA and MALAYSIA, wanted the text to remain. The AFRICAN GROUP, in their written proposal, wanted specific recognition on the need for “agricultural” development. GRULAC presented text stating the need for all countries to have PGR if they are to meet changes in the environment, including climate change.

The third paragraph referred to the importance of PGR for world food security. GERMANY said the text did not refer to growing human populations and the need for more efficiency. The EU provided more detailed comments based on its written text and referred to the need for countries to diversify agricultural production. This new text, with minor modifications from the US, was supported by INDONESIA. GRULAC preferred the original text.

The fourth paragraph acknowledged the role of farmers, women, indigenous populations, breeders and scientists in conserving PGR. The US, supported by the UK and YEMEN, wanted reference to women deleted. The NETHERLANDS, VENEZUELA and COSTA RICA wanted reference to women retained. Some countries had difficulties with the terminology referring to indigenous populations. INDIA preferred the term “indigenous peoples”. The corresponding EU text (paragraph 3) noted the speedy loss of diversity in fields and forests and in gene banks.

The fifth paragraph referred to the concern that many gene banks cannot maintain international standards. COLOMBIA, supported by BRAZIL, called for the removal of text referring to forests. This was opposed by NORWAY, FINLAND, CONGO and INDIA.

The sixth paragraph acknowledged the weaknesses in national and international capacity to assess PGRFA. INDIA asked that a particular reference to developing countries to be removed.

The seventh paragraph acknowledged the need to access and share PGRFA. COLOMBIA wanted reference to access to technology and the need to guarantee intellectual property rights. The US wanted direct reference to world food security.

The eighth paragraph acknowledges the importance of the need to secure *ex situ* and *in situ* PGR. The AFRICAN GROUP wanted a change from the reference to “securing” PGR to “sustaining” PGR. GRULAC presented substantial alterations to the text. They sought specific reference to recognizing the need of indigenous and local communities and recognizing the need for preferential access for developing countries to appropriate technology.

The ninth paragraph notes the need to integrate the best traditional knowledge and modern technologies. SYRIA asked for a reference to researchers in national and international programmes. GRULAC’s written submission deleted this paragraph.

The tenth paragraph was a pledge for common action. GRULAC called for a commitment based on the CBD, Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration.

The eleventh paragraph is a vow to implement the Global Plan of Action. GRULAC revised this text to call for the mobilization of new and additional financial resources. The corresponding EU text (paragraph 4) stated the importance of long-term national commitments to integrated national plans and a commitment to the priorities yet to be determined in the Global Plan of Action. The EU also made specific reference to the International Undertaking, suggesting that it will include a multilateral framework on access and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

The twelfth paragraph is a commitment to the Declaration and a further commitment to the GPA. GRULAC deleted this text in its document.

The large amount of brackets still remaining in the LD indicate that there is a long way to go before some of the key issues are resolved. The text, including three versions of the last three paragraphs, was sent onto Leipzig for further negotiation.

THE INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING ON PGR

The Commission considered the process for the further negotiation of the revision of the International Undertaking. Discussions were based on document CGRFA-EX2/96/6, which provides information on developments since the Commission's last session, where it was agreed that the current session should "review any recent developments relating to the harmonization of the International Undertaking with the Convention on Biological Diversity" in preparation for substantive negotiations to be held at the third extraordinary session.

Plenary discussion on this item focused on matters of procedure rather than substance. In particular, delegates deliberated the timing of the third extraordinary session of the Commission, especially as it relates to the third meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD; the timing, cost and mandate of a Working Group meeting to prepare a simplified draft negotiating text; and the status of observers in such a Working Group.

The Commission ultimately agreed that the third extraordinary session will be held in early December 1996 in order to further negotiations on the revision of the International Undertaking. Due to the substantial savings in holding meetings back-to-back, immediately prior to this meeting, the Commission's working group will convene with a twofold task: commenting on the structure of the Third Negotiating Draft, and preparing a simplified draft text concentrating on the three main issues of scope, access and equitable sharing of benefits. In addressing policy matters, this draft text will also draw on further proposals made by governments at the Leipzig Conference and technical information in agreements from the Conference. Members of the Commission who are not members of the working group will attend as fully participating observers.

Reflecting concerns raised by numerous delegations during the course of plenary debate, the report stresses that any simplified text resulting from the deliberations of the working group should in no way be a substitute for the proposals already contained in the Third Negotiating Draft. It will be for the Commission itself to evaluate the usefulness of any such text as a potential focus for future negotiations. Reflecting concerns raised by LESOTHO, the report further notes that every effort would be made to facilitate financially the participation of developing countries.

CLOSING PLENARY

Delegates met well into Saturday night due to drafting and translation delays. The Commission agreed on several matters related to preparations for Leipzig, including a provisional agenda and organization of work. They also agreed to forward the first ever comprehensive Report on the State of the World's PGR. The report adopted by the Commission contained important gaps since the documents that were to be the main output of the session remained unresolved. Nonetheless, delegates agreed to a process for their resolution. Most notably, delegates endorsed Italy's proposal that the working group meet immediately prior to the Leipzig Conference in order to further consolidate the GPA. The Commission adjourned its meeting at 2:00 am Sunday morning.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

The Commission's session reflected the painstaking negotiation process through which governments begin to take ownership of the documents prepared by the FAO secretariat. Many delegations expressed their frustration about the staggeringly slow progress and persistent procedural problems that characterized the meeting. This frustration clearly manifested itself in the final plenary when a number of African countries expressed their reluctance to postpone the next extraordinary session until December 1996. Both public interest and private sector NGOs were united in their concern about the substantive stand-off and called for the meeting to move forward. Nevertheless, the slow progress reflects the complex and controversial nature of the issues involved.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CBD AND THE GPA:

Several delegations suggested that the turgid nature of the meeting related to the fact that some governments and institutions have yet to come to grips with what the Convention on Biological Diversity has set in place: a new regime for addressing *in situ* and *ex situ* plant genetic resources. Similarly, some delegates privately commented that they felt the FAO was itself grappling with the implications of the CBD. The linkage between the FAO and the CBD Secretariat appears to be problematic. Several delegations noted the conspicuous absence of the CBD Secretariat and urged its Executive Secretary to personally attend the Leipzig Conference. However, too much can be read into this lack of representation, as it may simply relate to the fact that the CBD Secretariat is currently without staff. Some delegations commented that the US's regular call for the removal of any direct reference to the CBD in the text of the GPA may well reflect a concern that such reference might compromise US ratification of the CBD. A number of delegations were frustrated by this reluctance to link the GPA to the principles of the CBD, in particular its provisions regarding equitable benefit-sharing and technology transfer. G-77 members were frustrated in their attempts to introduce CBD language into the Drafting Group's text. The timing of the next session to run after the next CBD Conference of the Parties effectively places the ball in the CBD's court to come up with some meaningful results on issues that overlap with the GPA and the International Undertaking.

INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING: Clearly the revision of the International Undertaking will be a significant issue for COP consideration. However, whether progress will be made on the IU remains to be seen. The Drafting Group's protracted, word-by-word negotiation of the Global Plan of Action may serve as a good indicator of forthcoming negotiations for the revision of the IU. Some countries signaled their lack of faith in negotiating a revised IU. Some OECD (and some G-77) countries clearly did not want reference to the IU within the text of the GPA — fully cognizant

of the fact that the IU will be the principle instrument for approving new and additional funds to support the GPA. Without a financial commitment stemming from the IU, the GPA is likely to be treated as a set of broad recommendations without any commitment to their implementation. The G-77 clearly wanted an assurance that the principles enshrined in the CBD relating to sovereign rights over genetic resources and access arrangements under mutually agreed terms will be reflected in the IU. The EU statement suggested these principles have not been set in concrete. Old CBD negotiation battles are likely to resurface if common language is not found soon.

Of course, the International Undertaking raises several critical issues that need to be resolved. In addition to financial commitments, some delegations pointed to the perplexing problem of determining which legal regime should apply to *ex situ* collections gathered before the CBD's entry into force. Several countries suggested that the concept of Vavilovian Centres of Origin should be revisited and used as a means of identifying the country of origin in order to facilitate access and benefit-sharing arrangements. Meshing the concept of farmers' rights with Articles 8(j) and 10(c) of the CBD, which relate to recognizing the rights of local and indigenous communities, subject to national legislation, is another challenge. Many delegations expressed their dismay that the issue of farmers' rights was not adequately addressed and are looking towards Leipzig for the issue to be resurrected.

EX SITU PROGRAMMES: In discussions over the GPA, many G-77 countries expressed concern that the FAO had over-emphasized the CGIAR networks rather than supporting national *ex situ* programmes. Many countries see a clear necessity to maintain their own national gene banks for their own food security, particularly as more commercial food crop varieties are controlled under intellectual property regimes. Because the development of national *ex situ* programmes would create new and additional financial burdens on the global donor community, sourcing new money is a pivotal issue. As GPA deliberations progressed, language suggesting or implying the need for new financial resources inevitably wound up in brackets. Anything that implied a financial commitment was asked to be withdrawn by the donor countries. It remains to be seen whether Germany will be able to garner commitments for new financial resources from donor countries as a means of securing success in Leipzig.

The meeting also heard a variety of opinions as to whether *ex situ* collections were more important than *in situ* conservation measures. The debate did not follow the usually North-South divide. Developing countries, which are centers of origin of food plant species, were, of course, strong advocates of *in situ* measures, although many also recognized the need to establish complementary *ex situ* collections. A number of NGOs weighed into this debate in support for *in situ* on-farm conservation based on traditional practices. NGOs also expressed their concern that the FAO and governments were locked into the mind set of bigger is better, rather than supporting local communities.

FORESTS: The strong position taken by the G-77 in insisting upon the removal of all references to forests and forest genetic resources in the GPA represents an interesting development. In earlier sessions, some G-77 countries, notably from Africa, supported the inclusion of forest genetic resources in the GPA, citing the importance of some tree species as sources of food. GRULAC's proposal to refer forest genetic resources to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests may be problematic, as the terms of reference for the IPF do not specifically allow an entree into this issue-area. As a way forward, several delegations noted that the next COP of the CBD may need to establish a process for

discussion on forests and forest genetic resources — perhaps in line with Sweden's previously expressed interest in a CBD working group on forests.

LOOKING AHEAD TO LEIPZIG: The issues surrounding world food security are infinitely complex and profoundly important. Given the short timeframe between this meeting and the Leipzig Conference, sorting through the morass of unresolved issues will be the real challenge. The strong political statements put forth by the G-77 and a number of OECD countries will set the stage for Leipzig. It remains to be seen whether the Conference will mark a rapprochement or entrenchment of positions.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON PGR: This meeting will take place in Leipzig, Germany, from 17-23 June 1996. The meeting will be preceded by a two-day meeting of the Working Group of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to make further progress on the draft Global Plan of Action.

EXPERT MEETING ON INTRODUCTION OF ALIEN SPECIES: This meeting, which is sponsored by Norway in cooperation with UNESCO and IUCN, will be held in Trondheim, Norway, from 1-5 July 1996.

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON BIOSAFETY: The first meeting of the working group on biosafety, which was established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, will meet in Aarhus, Denmark, from 22-26 July 1996.

CBD SBSTTA-2: The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity will meet at the headquarters of the Secretariat in Montreal, Canada, from 2-6 September 1996. The substantive theme will be "Terrestrial Ecosystems."

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS: The third meeting of UN Commission on Sustainable Development's IPF is scheduled for 9-20 September in Geneva, Switzerland.

IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS: The Congress will be held in Montreal, Canada, from 13-23 October 1996. The theme will be "Caring for the Earth".

CBD COP-3: The third meeting of the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 4-15 November 1996, with a Ministerial Segment from 13-14 November 1996.

FAO WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: A World Food Summit on the theme "Renewing Global Commitment to Fight Hunger" will be held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 13-17 November 1996.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES: The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will meet for its Third Extraordinary Session, from 9-12 December 1996, to further negotiations on the revision of the International Undertaking in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The session will be preceded by a two-day meeting of the working group.

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: This meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 1997 at FAO Headquarters in Rome.