

CGRFA 13 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2011

CGRFA 13 delegates heard a report on progress in the contact group on the GPA for PGRFA in the morning, and addressed animal genetic resources. In the afternoon, delegates discussed: access and benefit-sharing (ABS); biodiversity of micro-organisms and invertebrates for food and agriculture; targets and indicators; aquatic genetic resources; human and financial resources for MYPOW implementation; and MYPOW review. The contact group on the updated GPA for PGRFA met during the afternoon and in the evening.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

UPDATED GPA FOR PGRFA: Contact Group Co-Chair Brad Fraleigh (Canada) reported that following general comments, the contact group had agreed on most outstanding issues with regard to several priority areas, with a few issues remaining in brackets, but noted that the current pace of discussions would not allow completing the GPA on time. After some discussion, delegates decided to reconvene the Contact Group in parallel with plenary.

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES: François Pythoud (Switzerland), Chair of the ITWG on animal GR, presented the report of the ITWG's sixth session (CGRFA-13/11/14) and Irene Hoffman, FAO, reported on progress in implementing the GPA for animal GR (CGRFA-13/11/15).

GRULAC, supported by the NORTH AMERICAN REGION, opposed the terminology of "native" and "non-native" breeds in the ITWG report, preferring definitions adopted at the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources (Interlaken, 2007), namely "local," "regional transboundary," and "international transboundary" breeds. BRAZIL noted that no agreement had been reached on references to native and non-native breeds in the ITWG, but expressed readiness to continue the discussion there.

AFRICA and ASIA called for the re-establishment of regional focal points. The ERG called on all members to initiate national strategies, action plans and relevant projects, suggesting that the Commission reiterate its request to members for national progress reports. CANADA supported work on indicators and resources for the four GPA priority areas and increasing compatibility between the FAO and regional databases. NIGERIA requested special attention to small-scale livestock keepers and nomads in the implementation of the GPA.

The LEAGUE FOR PASTORAL PEOPLES stressed the need for community-based conservation and implementation of livestock keepers' rights, which could be facilitated through

biocultural community protocols. He pointed to the importance of highly-adapted livestock breeds, including camels, to address challenges of climate change and poverty reduction and requested that CGRFA prioritize projects by small-scale livestock keepers.

Many delegates supported a set of draft technical guidelines for GPA implementation (CGRFA-13/11/16), with YEMEN requesting reference to implementation of the GPA at national and regional levels, and MAURITANIA calling for greater focus on capacity building, and for greater attention to camel genetic resources. CANADA asked to delete the term "full use," noting that countries can decide how to use the guidelines. The US asked to advance discussion of the guidelines in the ITWG and called for the initiation of dialogue on exchange of animal GR across international borders.

Regarding funding, ITWG Chair Pythoud noted that implementation activities on animal GR can begin as soon as funds in the FAO Trust Account reach a threshold of USD 500,000. Hoffmann reported that contributions from Switzerland and Norway total USD 450,000. GERMANY announced additional funding of around USD 700,000 to the Trust Account. The ERG proposed increasing the maximum allocation for project proposals from USD 50,000 to USD 100,000 for multilateral projects to encourage international collaboration. The US preferred maintaining the USD 50,000 limit for proposals to the trust fund. ITWG Chair Pythoud suggested, and delegates agreed, that the Secretariat prepare a paper considering the amount of maximum USD 50,000 for one-country projects and USD 100,000 for bilateral, regional and multilateral projects.

MAURITANIA asked how funding for implementation can be mobilised. AFRICA called for increased support for GPA implementation. GRULAC called for a solid funding strategy.

ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING: The Chair of the ABS informal group, Grethe Evjen (Norway), reported on the meeting held on Tuesday evening, noting agreement to establish an *ad hoc* technical working group on ABS for GRFA, its scope and composition. The US suggested that the text should "note" rather than "welcome" the Nagoya Protocol. AFRICA, GRULAC and the EU initially opposed, but eventually delegates agreed to the text as amended.

MICRO-ORGANISMS AND INVERTEBRATES: The Secretariat introduced the issue (CGRFA-13/11/17), describing the review process for key issues at CGRFA 14. The ERG, recommended, *inter alia*: the development of comprehensive information material; and strengthening linkages with existing initiatives.

INDONESIA suggested that the use of indigenous micro-organisms as bio-fertilizers in wetland agriculture, such as rice production, could be an adaptation response to climate change. She supported the preparation of a SoW report on micro-organisms. IRAQ, supported by BRAZIL, proposed an ITWG on micro-organisms, and called for a work programme and financial and technical support to improve national capacities.

TARGETS AND INDICATORS: The CGRFA Secretariat briefed delegates on targets and indicators for biodiversity for food and agriculture (CGRFA-13/11/18), highlighting potential contributions to the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. CANADA, supported by the EU, requested development of policy-relevant, higher-order indicators that are sensitive to change.

The EU also called for: further work on food diversity, including nutrition indicators; and strengthening cooperation on GRFA indicators with the OECD and the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. ARGENTINA expressed concern about the general application of indicators to all countries, given their differing circumstances.

AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES: The Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-13/11/11, noting that the SoW report, initially scheduled for release at CGRFA 14, may be delayed to CGRFA 15, and that extra-budgetary resources are required. The ERG requested that: the SoW report enable stronger policy and planning, including a code of conduct for responsible fisheries; contain a scoping study to identify management gaps in aquatic GR and fewer thematic studies; and focus on food security. He requested that further information regarding cost estimates and timelines be prepared for the CGRFA 14.

Argentina, for the G-77/CHINA, asked to delete text suggesting coverage of aquatic GR in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, including consideration of "international, regional and sub-regional" aspects, emphasizing the "primary competence" of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in this area. He noted that the UNGA would eventually address the issues as a package, including benefit-sharing, under a separate process. He further insisted that the inputs for the SoW report be provided by states only, and not by international organizations, NGOs and "others."

The NEAR EAST suggested establishing an *ad hoc* technical working group to work on the SoW report. The US recommended that the SoW report: include cultured aquatic species and their wild relatives that have significant importance for trade and food security; limit thematic studies; exclude algae and micro-organisms; and provide recommendations on how countries can "capture and preserve" aquatic GR. He proposed the SoW report be finalised before a code of conduct on responsible fisheries is developed.

CHINA called for strengthening efforts to prepare the SoW report on aquatic GR. RUSSIA supported providing guidelines on the preparation of country reports, and providing standards for the analysis required. AUSTRALIA suggested focusing on priority areas that relate to food security. A revised text will be prepared for further consideration.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR MYPOW IMPLEMENTATION: Delegates considered CGRFA-13/11/19. The ERG requested the Secretariat to incorporate in the future further detailed information on resources, and highlighted that the Commission's activities should be funded by the FAO core budget.

MYPOW REVIEW: The Secretariat explained that since 2007 all milestones and outputs have been achieved and that most future milestones are achievable. She presented a consolidated version of the MYPOW based on discussions held in the current session (CGRFA-13/11/20 Appendix 2 Rev.1).

The US recognized that shortage of resources would affect the preparation of the SoW reports on PGRFA and aquatic GR and supported, *inter alia*, inclusion of a milestone on the consideration of needs and modalities on ABS with regard to GRFA. The EU suggested: including a new milestone on the review of the implementation of the updated GPA on PGRFA; postponing the SoW report on aquatic GR; including a study and policy analysis on gaps and opportunities for aquatic GR-related issues; and further work on micro-organisms. On biotechnologies for GRFA conservation and sustainable use, IRAN suggested further elaboration, while QATAR and AUSTRALIA requested more time to consider the issue. Delegates agreed to convene an informal group to consider whether and how to integrate biotechnology in the MYPOW.

PRACTICAL ACTION called for inclusion of the views of small-scale food producers in the preparation of the SoW on biodiversity for food and agriculture.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS: The Secretariat introduced the issue (CGRFA-13/11/21). The EU supported the Commission to: concentrate on ongoing collaborative initiatives rather than new ones; continue providing capacity building in updating and revising National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; and further coordinate with the CBD Secretariat to ensure relevant decisions can be reflected in and aligned with the MYPOW.

CONTACT GROUP

Delegates agreed to refer only to: "support for diversification programmes," and not to "non-trade-distorting incentives"; as well as to "underutilized seeds" and not to "neglected seeds." Delegates debated references to formal and farmers' seed systems, and to regulated and unregulated systems. Others proposed to refer to "formal" and "informal" systems. Delegates eventually agreed to refer to "different" seed systems. Rather than making specific mention of "farmer produced and/or saved seeds," delegates agreed to mention "all seeds" and specifically refer to seed conservation. Delegates also agreed to delete references to intellectual property rights, but to refer to plant breeders' rights and farmers' rights as per ITPGR Article 9.

Delegates considered the outstanding priority areas paragraph by paragraph throughout the evening and into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates slaving away, right across from Circus Maximus, were initially frustrated with the slow progress in the Contact Group on the updated Global Plan of Action on PGRFA, but, as one delegate noted, "Rome was not built in a day either." Nonetheless, the contact group continued to advance and even resolve some of the more contentious issues regarding PGRFA.

Meanwhile discussions on access and benefit-sharing for GRFA picked up speed, with agreement emerging on establishment of an *ad hoc* technical working group to consider the need for, and modalities of, ABS arrangements for GRFA. The possibility of including experts and representatives of specialized agencies in that group led some to reckon that this group will allow the Commission to take the reins on the development of specialized ABS regimes for GRFA.

Similarly, delegates had hoped that the Commission would initiate the preparation of a comprehensive report on aquatic genetic resources. These hopes were left unrealized, though, as a majority of members requested to exclude marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction from the report's scope. As one delegate quipped, it no longer merits the title "State of the World" report.