



## CGRFA 14 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2013

Meeting throughout the day and into the night, plenary addressed aquatic genetic resources; issues related to the implementation of the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW), including human and financial resources and the strategic plan 2014-2021; and the Commission's mode of operation. Friends of the Chair groups on access and benefit-sharing (ABS), and aquatic genetic resources met throughout the day, and discussions continued in plenary into the night.

### AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES

**POLICY ANALYSIS:** The Secretariat introduced documents on gaps and opportunities on aquatic genetic resources (CGRFA-14/13/18 and Inf.24). Responding to a question by Ethiopia regarding focus on the genetic level, the Secretariat noted that while policy gaps remain at the species level, much more policy development is needed at the genetic level. ERITREA emphasized the need for capacity assessment and development, especially in Africa. Colombia for GRULAC called for further consultation with states in the preparation of the report on the State of the World's aquatic genetic resources, noting that the examples of policies and legislation should not address areas beyond national jurisdiction. The ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT highlighted the negative effect of ballast water on aquatic genetic resources.

A Friends of the Chair group was established to address issues related to the scope of the State of the World report. In the afternoon, POLAND reported on deliberations in the group, noting agreement reached on all issues addressed. She underlined that the scope of the State of the World report is farmed aquatic species and their wild relatives within national jurisdiction. She added that countries are invited to provide a list of nationally important aquatic genetic resources of capture fisheries within national jurisdiction; and suggested that the Secretariat adjust draft guidelines (CGRFA 14/13/Inf.25) and thematic studies (CGRFA 14/13/16) to reflect the scope of the report. She noted that certain elements related to scientific and technical aspects are already included in the draft guidelines, and suggested that the Secretariat revise the proposed structure of the report (CGRFA 14/13/16, Appendix 2). She further noted that the CGIAR Centres and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community are invited as relevant stakeholders to participate in the process of preparing the State of the World report.

Delegates discussed the establishment of an ITWG on aquatic genetic resources. They debated GRULAC's request to limit its terms of reference to areas within national jurisdiction; and potential overlap or complementarity between the proposed ITWG and the advisory working group on genetic resources and technologies, in the process of being established by COFI. AUSTRALIA reiterated concerns over duplication, and proposed to refrain from establishing the ITWG while requesting COFI for additional information. Noting broad support, SRI LANKA urged establishment of the ITWG. The SOUTHWEST PACIFIC noted that the narrow scope of the State of the World report did not warrant establishing an ITWG. The ERG proposed to invite input from the advisory group in the State of the World report. Delegates eventually agreed not to establish the ITWG and to instead invite COFI, in case they set up the advisory group, to contribute to the preparation of the State of the World report.

### MYPOW IMPLEMENTATION

**HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CGRFA-14/13/24).

GRULAC stressed the need for "predictable" financial resources. The ERG said the budget should be kept stable and requested that financial and human resources be accounted for separately. AFRICA called for adequate financial resources to attend CGRFA activities. CANADA favored a zero net increase. The Secretariat pointed to efficiency savings and explained that the CGRFA has a stable budget of \$2.5 million for the biennium. AUSTRALIA urged the CGRFA to articulate its role in the restructured FAO to get adequate resources.

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2021:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CGRFA-14/13/25).

**Ten-Year Cycle for State of the World Reports:** Several delegations favored the proposed ten-year cycle for the launch of the State of the World reports, foreseeing the launch of one report per CGRFA session. GRULAC, AFRICA, the US and CANADA preferred postponing the launch of the report on biodiversity for food and agriculture to CGRFA 17, so that it can benefit from the earlier finalization of all sectorial reports. The NEAR EAST and ASIA favored launching the report on biodiversity at CGRFA 16, with the NEAR EAST noting that its preparations appear more advanced than those for the report on aquatic genetic resources. The ERG suggested launching both reports at CGRFA 16 as an exception, to contribute to the UN Decade on Biodiversity and the work of IPBES.



Chair Fraleigh noted agreement on launching the report on aquatic genetic resources at CGRFA 16, and called for informal consultations on the launch of the report on biodiversity. In the evening, the NETHERLANDS reported that all regions expressed readiness to launch the report on biodiversity at CGRFA 16, together with the report on aquatic genetic resources.

**Strategic Plan:** CANADA called for maintaining Annex 1 of the Strategic Plan 2010-2017 on processes needed to achieve MYPOW outputs and milestones and organizations with which to cooperate, noting it provides valuable guidance. The ERG suggested that CGRFA 17 review the cycle of reports focusing on lessons learnt; and, opposed by the US, proposed inviting IPBES to use the Strategic Plan. The US called for reference to “access” alongside “sharing of benefits” in the strategic goals and objectives. Upon a question by the US, the Secretariat noted that stakeholder involvement will be covered from extra-budgetary funds. Chair Fraleigh noted that the Commission approves the strategic plan as amended during discussions.

#### **COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

The Secretariat introduced relevant documents (CGRFA-14/13/26 and Inf.21, 22 and 26).

BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL presented the report of the CGIAR Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGRFA-14/13/Inf.22) describing joint work with the CGRFA, especially in the field of micro-organisms. The GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST introduced its report (CGRFA-14/13/Inf.21), highlighting its new headquarters in Bonn, Germany, and the number of accessions to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) called for access to a maximum amount of genetic resources as key to plant breeding. PRACTICAL ACTION advised on its work focusing on agricultural biodiversity for food sovereignty, and called for greater community involvement in CGRFA activities. Many delegates welcomed cooperation of different organizations with the Commission, and highlighted the need for ongoing support from the Global Crop Diversity Trust. AFRICA urged ongoing capacity building through international organizations. NORWAY welcomed cooperation with the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, noting it stores duplicates of about 40% of world’s accessions, and calling on countries to use it for safe *ex situ* conservation.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

FAO Assistant Director-General for Forestry Eduardo Rojas-Briales reported on UN participation at the EXPO 2015 in Milan, Italy, with the theme “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life,” drawing attention to thematic clusters focusing on food and biodiversity, and opportunities for country participation.

#### **CGRFA MODE OF OPERATION**

**STATUS AND OPERATIONS:** The Secretariat introduced the document (CGRFA-14/13/27). CANADA, the ERG, GRULAC, AFRICA, the US and SRI LANKA supported retaining the current status of the Commission as a body established under Article VI.1 of the FAO Constitution, as well as the proposed amendments to the rules of procedure aiming at improving efficiency. The ERG urged use of all communication means, including seminars, to raise the Commission’s

profile. Chair Fraleigh clarified that the status of observers is under review in FAO and the Secretariat will report on new developments.

**ITWG COMPOSITION:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document (CGRFA-14/13/28). CANADA, opposed by the G-77/CHINA, proposed to decrease by one the number of representatives for each region in each ITWG. The NEAR EAST requested an additional representative for his region in all ITWGs. ASIA requested to increase his regional representation by one in the ITWG on PGRFA. The ERG and the US supported the ITWGs’ current composition. ERITREA proposed the elaboration of criteria to address regional representativeness in the ITWGs at future meetings.

#### **ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING**

In the evening, following a report on Friends of the Chair group deliberations, delegates agreed on requesting, *inter alia*: all ITWGs to explore ABS issues for their respective sub-sectors; each region to appoint up to two representatives to form a team of technical and legal experts on ABS to help prepare intersessionally the ITWG meetings and participate in portions of these meetings dedicated to ABS to help inform and shape the ITWG discussions and outputs; and the ITWGs to produce draft elements to facilitate domestic implementation of ABS for different sub-sectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture as a voluntary tool, taking into account relevant international instruments on ABS. NAMIBIA requested to clarify in the meeting report that the outcome of this process will not amount to a new “international instrument” as referred to in the Nagoya Protocol.

Delegates then discussed language proposed by Namibia on a study of the links between intellectual property and management of genetic resources for food and agriculture, indigenous and local communities and farmers, on the basis of CBD Decision X/34 (agricultural biodiversity). Following a lengthy discussion, delegates decided against including such language in the report.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

With the closing of CGRFA 14 fast approaching, plenary wrapped up a number of administrative and financial matters. Emerging from a lengthy afternoon discussion on the composition of technical working groups, one participant still hoping to catch a glimpse of Rome in the daylight sighed, “There must be a way to do this in a more efficient manner.” Meanwhile, Friends of the Chair groups attempted to resolve outstanding items regarding future work on ABS and on the State of the World’s aquatic genetic resources. Other delegates commented on the week’s “enlightening” side-events exploring instruments with significant implications for the Commission’s future work – the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Late into the night, a Friends of the Chair group was formed to “cope with” outstanding climate change issues.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of CGRFA 14 will be available on Monday, 22 April 2013 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cgrfa14/>