

SUMMARY OF THE TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: 19-23 OCTOBER 2009

The twelfth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-12) opened on Monday, 19 October 2009, at the headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in Rome, Italy. It was attended by over 200 participants, representing 107 countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and international agricultural research centers.

CGRFA-12 considered agenda items relating to the ongoing programmes of the Commission with regard to the multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), including access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for GRFA, plant genetic resources (PGR), animal genetic resources (AnGR), forest genetic resources (FGR), biodiversity of micro-organisms and invertebrates for food and agriculture, further preparation for future sessions, and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2010-2017 for the implementation of the MYPOW. Delegates also discussed cooperation with other international instruments and organizations, and the Commission's mode of operation.

The meeting resulted in the adoption of its report, which incorporated a number of outcomes, including agreement on the major outputs and milestones of the Strategic Plan. Delegates also: adopted new rules of procedure for the CGRFA; adopted the Strategic Plan; elected members of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups (ITWGs) on Plant, Animal and Forest Genetic Resources; adopted a resolution on policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA; agreed to the funding strategy for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for AnGR; approved the outline of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources; and agreed to create an ITWG on Forest Genetic Resources.

CGRFA-12 was preceded by a special information seminar on "Policies and Arrangements for ABS for GRFA," which convened on 17 October 2009, also at FAO headquarters. This event focused on the status and challenges of ABS for GRFA, with presentations on the: status of the negotiations on the

international regime on ABS; food security and ABS; recent developments in intellectual property law and policy; and the impact of climate change on GRFA. There was also discussion on the use and exchange of GRFA, which includes the domains of plant, animal, forest and microbial genetic resources and biological control agents. For more details about this seminar, see <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cgrfa12/html/yimbvol168num1e.html>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CGRFA

The FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources was established in 1983. Renamed the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 1995, it currently comprises 170 countries and the European Community. The Commission's main objectives are to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.

The Commission develops and monitors the Global System on Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm AnGR. It also facilitates cooperation between the FAO and other relevant bodies on GRFA policy

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issues, including the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Its regular sessions are held every two years and extraordinary sessions are convened when necessary. In 1997, the Commission established two subsidiary bodies, the ITWG on PGR for Food and Agriculture (ITWG-PGR) and the ITWG on AnGR (ITWG-AnGR), to deal with specific issues in these areas.

PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES: The development of the Global System on Plant Genetic Resources began in 1983. The Global System contains two key elements: the Report on the State of the World's PGRFA and the Global Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable utilization of PGRFA. The first Report on the State of the World's PGRFA was presented at the fourth International Technical Conference held in Leipzig, Germany, in 1996. The Global Plan of Action, adopted through the Leipzig Declaration, comprises a set of activities covering capacity building and *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of PGRFA. The Global System also includes: the non-binding International Undertaking on PGRFA (IU); the International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer; gene bank standards and guidelines; the draft code of conduct on biotechnology; crop and thematic networks; the international network of *ex situ* collections; and the World Information and Early Warning System.

ITPGR: The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR) entered into force on 29 June 2004. With 120 parties to date, the ITPGR is a legally binding instrument that targets the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and equitable benefit-sharing for sustainable agriculture and food security. The ITPGR establishes a Multilateral System (MLS) of ABS, which facilitates access to a specified list of PGRFA, balanced by benefit-sharing in the areas of information exchange, technology transfer, capacity building and commercial development. The list of crops contained in Annex I defines the scope of the MLS, and includes 35 crop genera and 29 forage species.

The Treaty negotiations were based on the revision of the non-binding IU. The IU was originally founded on the principle that PGRFA should be "preserved ... and freely available for use" under the principle of "common heritage of mankind." This principle was subsequently subjected to "the sovereignty of States over their plant genetic resources," according to FAO Resolution 3/91. In April 1993, the CGRFA decided that the IU should be revised to be in harmony with the CBD. Negotiations spanned more than seven years. The last remaining issues were resolved at the 121st FAO Council meeting and at an Open-ended Working Group held under its auspices, in Rome in October-November 2001. On 3 November 2001, the 31st FAO Conference adopted the ITPGR. After its adoption, an Interim Committee was convened to address a range of outstanding procedural and financial matters that were essential to the proper functioning of the Treaty's Governing Body and the ITPGR itself.

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES: Initiated in 1993, the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm AnGR provides a technical and operational framework for assisting countries. It comprises: an intergovernmental mechanism for policy development; a country-based global infrastructure to help states plan and implement national strategies; a technical support programme aimed at the country level; and a reporting and evaluation system to guide the Strategy's implementation and facilitate collaboration. A communication and information tool, called the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System, assists in the Strategy's implementation.

CGRFA-9: The ninth session of the CGRFA, held in Rome, Italy, in October 2002, addressed issues related to animal and plant genetic resources, including development of the first report on the *State of the World's AnGR*, and implementation and monitoring of the GPA on PGRFA. Delegates also revised the interim Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) between the international agricultural research centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the FAO, and considered the status of the draft code of conduct on biotechnology.

CGRFA-10: At its tenth session, in Rome in November 2004, the Commission agreed to hold an international technical conference on AnGR in 2007 to mark the completion of the first report on the *State of the World's AnGR*. Regarding its future work, the Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a MYPOW for submission to CGRFA-11, with a view to implementing the Commission's full mandate in the medium and long term, which would include: a study on the status and needs of forestry, fishery and microbial genetic resources; biodiversity for food and agriculture; the agro-ecosystem approach to genetic resource conservation; and cross-sectoral matters.

CGRFA-11: At its eleventh session, in Rome in June 2007, the Commission agreed on most of the major outputs and milestones of a MYPOW for the Commission, which spans its next five regular sessions. Delegates also agreed to forward to the International Technical Conference on AnGR, a draft Interlaken Declaration on AnGR and the elements of a Global Plan of Action for AnGR, incorporating Strategic Priorities for Action.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE ON ANGR: The first International Technical Conference on AnGR took place from 3-7 September 2007, in Interlaken, Switzerland. The meeting was divided in three parts: a forum on the scientific aspects of AnGR; a presentation of the *State of the World's AnGR*; and negotiations on and adoption of the Global Plan of Action for AnGR and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources.

CGRFA-12 REPORT

The twelfth regular session of the CGRFA opened on Monday, 19 October, at FAO headquarters in Rome. Welcoming participants to CGRFA-12, FAO Assistant Director-General Alexander Müller highlighted the meeting's special information

seminar on policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA held on Saturday, 17 October, as a step forward on this difficult issue and discussed the Commission's work in relation to the FAO, other UN organizations and member countries. He then identified topics to be tackled throughout the week, including consideration of the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for AnGR.

CGRFA-11 Chair Bert Visser (the Netherlands) reported on the Bureau's activities at its two intersessional meetings, including the review and consolidation of the draft rules of procedure, provided an overview of the seminar on ABS, noting consensus on the role of genetic diversity conservation for ensuring food security, and described CGRFA-12's agenda.

After a brief discussion on the proposed draft rules of procedure, delegates elected CGRFA-12's Bureau (CGRFA-12/09/2.1). Upon a proposal by Yemen, for the Near East region, Javad Mozafari Hashjin (Iran) was elected as CGRFA-12 Chair. Regional groups nominated and the Commission elected the following Vice-Chairs: Modesto Fernández Diaz-Silveira (Cuba); Grethe Evjen (Norway); Joel Rudinas (Philippines); Brad Fraleigh (Canada); Travis Power (Australia); and Cheikh Alassane Fall (Senegal). Jens Weibull (Sweden) was elected rapporteur.

Newly-elected Chair Mozafari thanked the outgoing Bureau for its excellent work, highlighted the CGRFA's ability to deliver on FAO's responsibilities to address agricultural problems through a new integrated approach, and opened the floor for comments. The Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) proposed discussing the draft rules of procedure and the status of the Commission (CGRFA-12/09/21) on Tuesday instead of Thursday. Canada supported advancing discussion on the rules of procedure, but not on the status of the Commission. The European Regional Group (ERG) proposed discussing budgetary issues arising from the FAO reform process under the draft Strategic Plan (CGRFA-12/09/4). The agenda and timetable (CGRFA-12/09/2.2) was adopted with the proposed changes.

Delegates convened in morning and evening plenary sessions throughout the week. In light of the heavy agenda and some controversy over policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA, evening sessions convened throughout the week. The closing plenary was held on Friday evening, at which time delegates adopted the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL). This summary report is organized according to the discussions and outcomes on each agenda item.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING FOR GRFA:

Delegates discussed policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA from Monday through Thursday.

On Monday, the Secretariat introduced the documents on the consideration of policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA and the status of negotiations of the international regime on ABS (international regime) (CGRFA-12/09/3.1, 3.2 Rev.1, and chapter VI.1 of CGRFA-12/09/4), as well as studies on food security, ABS, and GRFA in various sectors (background study papers

42-49). The US noted that the Commission should take into account the unique role of GRFA in a manner complementary with the CBD's work on genetic resources. Brazil, supported by Kenya and Ethiopia, emphasized that discussions under the Commission should not prejudge substantive outcomes under the CBD. Venezuela, for GRULAC, emphasized opportunities for the CGRFA to provide technical support, while Canada underscored assistance in developing model clauses on genetic resources in support of an international regime. Africa supported the Commission providing expertise on GRFA to the ABS process, and suggested intersessional work on the issue. Sweden, for the EU, supported providing inputs to the international regime negotiations and assisting in its implementation. Other countries noted that the ITPGR could serve as an example of how to develop other ABS systems under the CBD. Shakeel Bhatti, ITPGR Secretary, called for collaboration between the Treaty's Governing Body (GB) and the Commission so that issues related to ABS for PGRFA may be dealt with in a harmonious manner.

Consideration of Policies and Arrangements for ABS for GRFA: On Tuesday and Wednesday nights in plenary and Thursday in informal consultations, delegates negotiated text on policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA (CGRFA-12/09/3.1/DRAFT GUIDANCE/1). They discussed, *inter alia*: to what body and in what form this document should be transmitted; and inviting the "Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP) and the CBD *Ad hoc* Open-ended Working Group on ABS (ABS-WG)" to consider the specific nature of agricultural biodiversity. Canada noted that interdependence between countries on GRFA should be highlighted in the text and proposed that the background studies on ABS prepared for this meeting should be transmitted to the ABS-WG. While Switzerland, the EU and others proposed deleting a paragraph on willingness to cooperate with the CBD and its ABS-WG, Canada objected and stressed that it is important to indicate that the Commission can interact with the CBD in different ways. Delegates agreed to reflect some of the deleted provisions in the meeting's report. On Thursday evening, delegates adopted a resolution on policies and arrangements for ABS for GRFA.

Future work: On Monday, delegates explored how to undertake future work on ABS (CGRFA-12/09/4): within the bounds of the mandates of the ITWGs on PGRFA (ITWG-PGR) and AnGR (ITWG-AnGR); and in terms of two periods, one leading up to 2010 when the international regime is supposed to be adopted, and one after its adoption.

Final Outcome: On Friday, delegates discussed and adopted, with minor changes submitted by the ERG, Canada and Brazil, the section of the report on ABS for GRFA (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL). In the report, the Commission:

- took note of the background study papers commissioned by the Secretariat on, *inter alia*, the use and exchange of GRFA and requested that they be transmitted to the ABS-WG;

- stressed the essential role of GRFA for food security and requested the Secretariat to report on the results of the negotiations of the international regime at the next session of the Commission;
- adopted Resolution 1/2009 on Policies and Arrangements for ABS for GRFA (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/item 3.1); and
- expressed the need for intersessional work and encouraged, *inter alia*: members of the Commission to work closely with the negotiators of the international regime in their respective countries; and the involvement of the ITWGs in intersessional work mindful of the need to avoid duplication of the work of the ABS-WG.

In Resolution 1/2009, the Commission, *inter alia*:

- reiterated the need for FAO and the Commission, in close collaboration with the GB, to contribute within their mandate to further work on ABS within the auspices of the CBD;
- expressed its willingness to cooperate with the CBD and the ABS-WG; and
- invited the COP of the CBD and the ABS-WG to take into account the special nature of agricultural biodiversity.

PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND

AGRICULTURE: The State of The World's Plant Genetic

Resources for Food and Agriculture: On Tuesday, delegates addressed the agenda item on PGRFA. Delegates heard from Modibo Tiémoko Traoré, FAO Assistant Director-General, on the importance of protecting and diversifying PGRFA, and all GRFA. Elcio Guimarães, FAO, introduced the documents on the preparation of the draft Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA (SOW-2) (CGRFA-12/09/5) and the draft report (CGRFA-12/09/Inf.7 Rev.1).

Following the presentation, Africa, GRULAC, Asia, the Southwest Pacific and others thanked report contributors for their excellent work and endorsed the SOW-2, with Canada and the ERG endorsing the report pending minor amendments. The ERG also asked the FAO to prepare a non-technical synthesis report distilling key messages for policy-makers. Africa asked for support for developing countries to prepare country reports, with GRULAC adding a request for support for country report dissemination and Yemen for support to establish National Information Sharing Mechanisms on PGRFA. Cuba noted that proportionally fewer member countries contributed to the second report than the first. Norway described the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Practical Action emphasized that the report needed to be stronger in its coverage of the state of the world's small-scale farmers.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission, *inter alia*:

- endorsed the SOW-2 as the authoritative assessment of the PGRFA sector, with the Secretariat to finalize the report based on submissions from its members;
- invited governments and donors to make available the financial resources necessary to translate the SOW-2 and requested FAO to print and widely distribute it;
- requested FAO to prepare a "synthetic account" of the SOW-

2, containing main findings, conclusions and identified gaps and needs for policy makers;

- called upon governments and donors to make available financial resources for the publication and dissemination of country and regional reports in developing countries; and
- urged governments and donors to make available resources to enable countries that did not prepare country reports to undertake the necessary assessments.

Progress since CGRFA-11, including the Report of the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources: Vice-Chair Brad Fraleigh (Canada) introduced the report of the fourth session of the ITWG on PGR (ITWG-PG4) and the document detailing follow-up to recommendations on PGRFA (CGRFA-12/09/7 and 6).

In the ensuing discussions, the ERG stated that there is a need to collect more information on whether to update the Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collection and Transfer. Brazil, supported by Kenya and the US, noted that current gene bank standards need updating. GRULAC highlighted that there should be complementarity between the Facilitating Mechanism for the GPA and the ITPGR's Funding Strategy. Canada said that the Commission should request the ITPGR to take responsibility for the implementation of both the GPA and the Facilitating Mechanism, and proposed the transfer of several activities directed towards PGRFA from the CGRFA to the ITPGR. Ecuador said that it is premature to discuss further tasks for the ITPGR when it has not yet been recognized as a universal instrument. The Southwest Pacific noted that small island states need more technical assistance on GRFA issues. The CGIAR highlighted that the CGRFA should contribute to the development of a world programme on agriculture in cooperation with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Commission also elected members to the ITWG-PGR (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/items 4-6 Rev.1).

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission, *inter alia*:

- endorsed the ITWG-PG4 report;
- agreed that the further operation of the Facilitating Mechanism should be undertaken in synergy with activities undertaken to implement the ITPGR;
- agreed that extra-budgetary resources are needed to establish and strengthen National Information Sharing Mechanisms;
- requested the CGRFA Secretary to collaborate with the ITPGR Secretary to develop a vision paper to take stock of existing information systems and outline a process for development of the global information system;
- agreed on the need for revising the Genebank Standards, and requested FAO, in cooperation with the ITPGR Secretary, the CGIAR and others, to undertake this review for consideration by the ITWG-PGR at its next session;
- requested FAO to continue its work to strengthen seed systems at the national, regional and global levels, and to continue to report on activities and programmes on plant breeding and seeds systems;

- urged greater attention be given to crops essential for food security, including underutilized crops, and requested FAO to prepare an option paper addressing issues of on-farm management of PGRFA and *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild plants for foods; and
- requested the ITWG-PGR to meet prior to CGRFA-13 to, *inter alia*, review the updated GPA and initiate consideration of indicators, consider draft Genebank Standards, and review the vision paper on policy coherence and complementarity of the CGRFA and ITPGR work.

Future Work, Including Policies and Arrangements for Enhancing Utilization of PGRFA, and on Underutilized Crops and Wild Relatives: The Secretariat introduced the document on updating the GPA for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of PGRFA (CGRFA-12/09/8).

GRULAC, with Brazil, supported updating the plan, yet requested the Commission to monitor utilization of financial resources. The ERG, with Argentina and Canada, supported considering the GPA at CGRFA-13, not at a possible fifth International Technical Conference on PGR. Yemen, with Africa, said that more financial assistance should be provided to countries so that the GPA can be finalized and implemented. The US supported the update of the GPA based on the SOW-2 and the participation of the ITPGR Secretariat in this work. Canada emphasized the importance of the GPA as a supporting component of the ITPGR, in particular in relation to the Treaty's Funding Strategy.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission, *inter alia*:

- agreed to update the GPA and consider it at CGRFA-13;
- requested FAO to prepare the updated GPA based primarily on the SOW-2, in particular, on identified gaps and needs;
- requested the Secretary to coordinate with the ITPGR Secretary in the updating process, to ensure that specific issues of relevance to the ITPGR are taken into account;
- requested the Secretaries to organize a joint meeting of the CGRFA and ITPGR Bureaus to review a first draft of the GPA, and requested the ITWG-PGR to review the draft at its fifth session; and
- invited governments and international organizations to make available the necessary financial resources for updating the GPA.

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: Follow-up to the Interlaken Conference:

On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced documents on, *inter alia*: the follow-up to the Interlaken Conference (CGRFA-12/09/9) and the report of the fifth session of the ITWG-AnGR (CGRFA-12/09/10). François Pythoud (Switzerland), Vice-Chair of the fifth session of the ITWG-AnGR, held from 28-30 January 2009 in Rome, Italy, presented the report of the meeting on behalf of Chair Vanida Khumnirdpetch (Thailand) (CGRFA-12/09/10).

The ERG proposed that the CGRFA urge implementation of the GPA for AnGR at the national level through appropriate measures, including national strategies and action plans. The

ERG, with Asia, acknowledged the important contributions of small-scale livestock keepers and of sustainable management and use of AnGR by breeders and breeder associations, as well as in large-scale production systems. The Republic of Korea called for more work on breed identification and embryonic transfer methods for *ex situ* conservation. Togo, for Africa, commended the CGRFA for the adoption of the Interlaken Declaration. She also expressed appreciation for FAO's technical advice for the conservation of AnGR in Africa. GRULAC said establishment of early warning and response systems should be in line with existing initiatives and require technical support. The US cautioned that the issue of early-warning systems and response should not be decided upon until the working group further studies it. Papua New Guinea emphasized the need for region-focused early warning systems.

On the report from the ITWG-AnGR, the ERG supported the recommendations put forward. Iran noted the need for continued support and mechanisms to provide updated information on AnGR. Chile noted the CGRFA guidelines' role in assisting the country to complete its national plan. CGIAR stressed the need for valuation methods for AnGR and decision-support tools for management and breeding programmes. The Commission elected the members of the ITWG-AnGR (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/items 4-6 Rev.1).

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- endorsed the report of the fifth session of the ITWG-AnGR;
- agreed to the timetable for assessing progress in the implementation of the GPA-AnGR;
- requested FAO to make status and trends reports on AnGR available to the Commission at each of its regular sessions;
- requested the ITWG-AnGR to explore early warning and response systems for AnGR;
- endorsed the guidelines for *Preparation of national strategies and action plans for AnGR* and *Breeding strategies for sustainable management of AnGR*;
- acknowledged the important contribution of small-scale livestock keepers, particularly those in developing countries, as custodians of much of the world's AnGR, and called for their full and effective participation in the implementation of the GPA; and
- requested the ITWG-AnGR to meet prior to its next regular session to review progress made and actions taken to implement the GPA.

Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the GPA for AnGR: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the GPA for AnGR (CGRFA-12/09/11) highlighting the: country focus; call for greater cooperation; and project- and voluntary-based nature of the mechanism. GRULAC, with Brazil and Mexico, noted that the Funding Strategy should boost the international component of cooperation. The ERG, with the US, opposed setting targets under the Funding Strategy. Canada, concerned with the overall administration of the Funding Strategy, inquired whether there

will be an oversight body. The US emphasized that the Funding Strategy is a separate element to advance AnGR conservation and should not detract resources from ongoing activities and also proposed deletion of “species and breed relevance” as a selection criteria (Section C III para. 10). The Secretariat clarified that donors can continue to use other mechanisms to support activities of the GPA without using trust funds. The League for Pastoral People suggested including eradication of alien species as a priority for the use of resources under the Funding Strategy.

On Wednesday, Chair Mozafari introduced the revised text on the draft Funding Strategy. On the aims of the Funding Strategy, Brazil, Argentina and Cuba preferred to retain the qualifier “timely” on support to be provided to developing countries. The ERG agreed once it was specified that support would complement developing countries’ “own” efforts. On resources relevant to the Funding Strategy, GRULAC, with Argentina, emphasized international cooperation while the ERG suggested that national governments first consider national capacities and resources. Delegates agreed to retain both references, but placed text on international resources first. On priority setting, Brazil agreed to retain new text on support for indigenous and local livestock systems, on the condition that it exactly reflects the language used in the GPA. Delegates also agreed to retain “species and breed relevance” as selection criteria for project funding. Following opposition from Brazil, Ecuador, Iran, the Gambia, Africa and Asia to an ERG proposal to delete text on information and reporting on resources not under the FAO Trust Account, the ERG agreed to retain the text as a separate annex.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- adopted the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the GPA for AnGR, as contained in Appendix/item 5;
- requested FAO to implement the GPA as part of a consolidated programme that addresses all GRFA; and
- requested FAO to report on the administrative arrangements for the FAO Trust Account.

FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES: On Wednesday, the Secretariat presented the document on the preparation of the first report on the *State of the World’s FGR* (SOW-FGR) (CGRFA-12/09/12), and explained that the fifteenth session of the FAO Panel of Experts on FGR (CGRFA-12/09/Inf.13), which took place from 9-11 December 2008, in Rome, Italy, had laid the foundation for preparation. The Secretariat noted that FGR represent a new sector for the Commission. He explained that the draft SOW-FGR will be presented at CGRFA-14, and then presented the document on the establishment of an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on FGR (ITWG-FGR) (CGRFA-12/09/14 Rev.1).

On preparation of the SOW-FGR, the ERG, US, Africa, GRULAC, Asia, Australia, Norway, Canada and others welcomed the decision to prepare the report and the country reports and thematic studies that would feed into it, and the proposed timetable. GRULAC suggested that specific references to biotechnology not be included in the SOW-FGR. Brazil and

Argentina emphasized the importance of cooperation with the CBD and the UN Forum on Forests. Kyrgyzstan stressed the importance of cooperation with the CBD and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and said technical assistance should be provided to national focal points for the preparation of country reports. GRULAC, Kenya and Canada discussed whether there should be a reference to FGR for food and agriculture. Senegal highlighted the importance of drafting quality country reports and establishing databases on FGR. The CGIAR highlighted its work on agroforestry and looked forward to continued cooperation with FAO. The ERG emphasized that work done at the EU-level on FGR needs to be taken into account.

On the establishment of an ITWG-FGR, the ERG said FAO should assess its necessity. GRULAC noted that if there is money for the Panel of Experts, the creation of the ITWG should not present budgetary implications as these resources can be made available. The US noted that the Commission has no competence to abolish the Panel of Experts. GRULAC, opposed by the ERG, stressed the need to define the scope of the work of the ITWG by referring to FGRFA rather than FGR.

In the afternoon, delegates reported back on informal consultations. They agreed to establish the ITWG-FGR and adopted its statutes (CGRFA-12/09/14 Rev.1 and Annex 1). The US, supported by GRULAC and Australia, recommended that the FAO consider a review of the Panel of Experts in light of the ITWG’s establishment. Throughout the day, regions elected their representatives to the ITWG-FGR (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix 4-6).

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- requested FAO to prepare the SOW-FGR for consideration at its fourteenth regular session;
- endorsed the outline of the SOW-FGR’s chapters contained in document CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/item. 6.1;
- requested relevant international and regional organizations to participate in the preparatory process of the report;
- called for assistance and capacity building in developing countries for preparation of country reports;
- agreed to establish an ITWG-FGR, and agreed on its statutes; and
- recommended the FAO Director-General consider, in cooperation with the Forestry Department and the Committee on Forestry, a review of the role of the Panel of Experts.

BIODIVERSITY OF MICRO-ORGANISMS AND INVERTEBRATES FOR FOOD AND

AGRICULTURE: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced the scoping studies on micro-organisms and invertebrates relevant to food and agriculture (CGRFA-12/09/15.1 and 15.2, and Inf.17 and 18). Countries expressed support for: the scoping study on micro-organisms; strengthening technical support to developing countries; and informing the CBD of the Commission’s ongoing work in this area. The ERG, however, noted that the cost implications must be agreed upon first.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission, *inter alia*:

- recognized the fundamental role of micro-organisms and invertebrates for food and agriculture in achieving food security;
- requested FAO, with others, to prepare assessments on status and trends in the conservation and use of soil micro-organisms, biological control agents and plant pathogens for consideration at CGRFA-14; and
- requested the Secretariat to prepare further analysis and studies on status and trends for ruminant digestion, agro-industrial processes, and food processing.

FURTHER PREPARATION FOR FUTURE SESSIONS:

Aquatic Genetic Resources: On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced the follow-up to recommendations regarding aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture (AGR) (CGRFA-12/09/16), highlighting, *inter alia*, the development of technical guidelines for the conservation and sustainable use of AGR and the preparation of the report on the *State of the World's AGR*.

Africa, Asia, Brazil and others welcomed the “guidance sought,” as contained in the document. The ERG emphasized the need to agree on the cost implications of the guidance before committing to it. The US underscored the importance of harmonizing the work of the Commission with other bodies. Brazil and Argentina underscored the need to avoid overlap between the work of the Committee on Fisheries and that of the UN General Assembly on marine genetic resources. Iran stressed the need for transboundary cooperation on AGR. Practical Action called for the involvement of small-scale fisher organizations in the preparation of the SOW-AGR, while the Philippines, for the Network of Aquaculture Centers for Asia Pacific, highlighted its willingness to cooperate.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- agreed that at its thirteenth regular session, it will review the information base for AGR and key issues for the SOW-AGR;
- recognized the UN General Assembly’s role in addressing issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction; and
- noted the importance of studies on biological control for invasive aquatic species.

Application and Integration of Biotechnologies in the

Conservation and Utilization of GRFA: On Wednesday, the Secretariat presented on the FAO’s policy and technical assistance on biotechnology for food and agriculture (CGRFA-12/09/17), highlighting, *inter alia*, the preparation of a scoping paper on biotechnologies applied to the conservation and utilization of GRFA.

Africa, Sri Lanka, Ecuador and others supported the guidance on the Commission’s future work on biotechnology. Countries agreed on the preparation of a scoping paper describing the range of available biotechnologies for food and agriculture, to be examined by the ITWGs on PGR and AnGR. Ecuador stressed that his country is free of transgenic crops in accordance with

its new Constitution. The ERG said that they have implemented a comprehensive legal framework on genetically modified organisms, which takes into account environmental risks and the freedom of choice of farmers and consumers.

The ERG, supported by Canada, also proposed postponing to the next session of the Commission the identification of the areas in which FAO should support the Commission’s work on biotechnology. Egypt hoped there would be support for the participation of developing countries’ representatives at the FAO Conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries (ABDC-10) to be held in Mexico in March 2010. Brazil supported the FAO definition of biotechnology, which is broader than “genetic modification.” Practical Action stated that investing in the ABDC-10 conference was “a waste of scarce resources” and argued that it would have been better to invest in a follow-up to the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, co-sponsored by FAO, and that prioritizes agro-ecological approaches.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- requested FAO to prepare a scoping paper describing the range of biotechnologies being applied to the conservation and utilization of GRFA; and
- welcomed the convening of the International Technical Conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries in March 2010 and urged FAO to support developing country participation.

ADOPTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2017

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MYPOW: On Thursday morning, the Secretariat introduced the document on the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2010-2017 for the implementation of the MYPOW (CGRFA-12/09/4).

Following the presentation, Africa, GRULAC, Asia, Australia and others welcomed the Strategic Plan, with the ERG and Canada supporting its adoption. Following a GRULAC proposal on the mission statement, delegates agreed to language stating that the Commission strives to halt the loss of GRFA by promoting “their conservation, sustainable use, including exchange, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.” On strategic goals and objectives, Canada suggested deleting the specification “plant and animal” relating to the implementation of GPAs. Yemen and Australia seconded the EU proposal to discuss GRFA as a whole and not just animal and plant genetic resources. Africa, supported by the Southwest Pacific, called on the Commission to make sure that developing countries are able to prepare status reports on GRFA.

FAO presented on FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget, and the manner in which FAO is proposing to contribute to the MYPOW and Strategic Plan. The ERG, with Ecuador and Canada, asked the Secretariat to prepare for this session a detailed draft budget for the implementation of the MYPOW. The ERG, with Ecuador, expressed concern about the high dependence on extra-budgetary resources.

The Secretariat emphasized that the cross-sectoral nature of work on GRFA makes it very difficult to identify which FAO entity is contributing human and financial resources to which implementation activity. Ecuador and Canada noted that the Commission urgently needs a Secretary.

On Thursday afternoon and evening, delegates reviewed and agreed to the Strategic Plan's indicative timetables and processes for achieving the MYPOW's major outputs and milestones, with amendments. Discussions touched on, *inter alia*: for FGR, the need to reflect the establishment of the ITWG-FGR; for micro-organisms and invertebrates, deletion of the consideration of establishment of an *ad hoc* advisory group or another body; on biotechnologies, the need for cooperation with national research organizations; and agreement to consider climate change as a cross-sectoral matter by CGRFA-13.

Final Outcome: In the final report (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL) the Commission, *inter alia*:

- adopted the Strategic Plan 2010-2017 for implementation of the MYPOW (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/Item 9), and agreed to review it at CGRFA-13 and CGRFA-15;
- requested FAO to continue to establish cooperative arrangements with relevant international organizations to support implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- recommended that FAO explore the establishment of a trust fund to further enable participation of delegates from developing countries in CGRFA sessions;
- agreed to add to the MYPOW an additional milestone, requesting FAO to prepare a scoping study on climate change and GRFA for consideration at CGRFA-13;
- requested the Secretariat to present a report on financial and human resources to support implementation of the MYPOW at each session of the Commission; and
- requested that recommendations of the Commission be brought to the attention of the governing bodies of FAO.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: On Thursday, the Secretariat presented: the draft joint statement for cooperation between the Governing Body (GB) of the ITPGR and the CGRFA; a document on cooperation with the ITPGR, the Global Crop Diversity Trust (GCDT) and the CGIAR; and submissions from international organizations (CGRFA-12/09/18, 19, Inf.6 and Inf.6 Add.1). ITPGR Secretary Shakeel Bhatti reported on outcomes from the third session of the GB of relevance to cooperation with the Commission, as set out in Resolution 7/2009.

In the ensuing discussion, all regions and others recommended adoption of the joint statement. Africa, with the ERG, welcomed FAO Resolution 7/2009. Canada, with Brazil and Switzerland, proposed accepting the invitations for cooperation extended in the resolution, including cooperation related to FAO Reform.

On cooperation with the ITPGR, GCDT and CGIAR, Australia supported the document's recommendations. Africa welcomed preparation by the CGRFA and ITPGR Secretariats of a vision paper, and the ERG suggested that it be ready in time for CGRFA-13, and that it also address the GPA, information systems and technical tools. Canada said that eventually all sectoral matters on PGRFA should primarily be addressed by the ITPGR, with the CGRFA addressing cross-sectoral matters.

Canada, with Kenya, emphasized that the GCDT and the CGIAR are major players in the agricultural sector. Brazil expressed hope that the new governance process underway in the CGIAR will strengthen genetic resources conservation and promote crop diversity. The GCDT highlighted the important role of the Trust in the ITPGR's Funding Strategy, and welcomed collaboration with the CGRFA.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- adopted the Joint Statement of Intent for Cooperation between the GB of the ITPGR and the CGRFA and requested that its decision be made available to the fourth session of the GB (GB-4);
- took note of FAO Resolution 7/2009 and accepted the GB's invitation to include in future revisions of the SOW-PGR and the GPA information and issues of relevance to the ITPGR, commence revision of Genebank Standards, collaborate with the GB so that issues related to ABS for PGRFA may be dealt with in an integrated and harmonious manner, and coordinate to ensure that adequate attention is given to genetic resources in the context of the FAO Reform;
- requested the CGRFA and ITPGR Bureaus to coordinate their agendas for, *inter alia*, review of the draft GPA;
- requested the Secretariats to jointly develop a vision paper with the aim of facilitating policy coherence and complementarity of their work, for consideration by CGRFA-13 and GB-4; and
- requested the Secretariat to explore options to consolidate long-term cooperation between FAO and its Commission and the CGIAR Centers: and requested the CGIAR Centers to report on their work relevant to implementation of the MYPOW at CGRFA-13.

COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced documents on cooperation with the CBD and the Joint Work Plan (CGRFA-12/09/20 and Inf. 8), noting that: the aim of the Plan is to enhance synergies between the two Secretariats; it covers the time period until 2011; and provides the basis for further cooperation. Brazil, Africa, the ERG, and others welcomed the preparation of the Plan and proposed to take note of it, but considered its adoption premature at this session given the late arrival of the document. Africa, supported by the ERG, the Philippines and others, agreed with the five areas of interest for collaboration between the Secretariats and the identification of further areas, including ABS. Practical Action asked the

Secretariat to facilitate the inclusion of civil society organizations in activities leading up to the report on the *SOW on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- supported further collaboration between the CBD and the FAO and its Commission; and
- requested the Secretary to explore with the CBD Executive Secretary, the possibility of holding a joint meeting of the Bureau of the Commission and the Bureau of the CBD-COP to discuss future cooperation.

THE COMMISSION'S MODE OF OPERATION

DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE: On Monday, the Secretariat introduced new draft rules of procedure (CGRFA-12/09/21). Many delegates welcomed the draft rules, with some stressing that the CGRFA does not have the power to change its own mandate. Qatar suggested making a recommendation to FAO to revise the mandate accordingly. Delegates then moved to adopt the draft rules of procedure, under which the term of each new Bureau of the Commission begins immediately upon close of the regular session. On Friday, countries agreed that the current Bureau should be re-elected as the Bureau of CGRFA-13, with Belgium stressing that this was an exceptional case. The Commission elected Brad Fraleigh (Canada) as the rapporteur for CGRFA-13.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission adopted the rules of procedure (CGRFA-12/09/Appendix/item 12), taking note of the request by the Russian Federation and the Near East that CGRFA-13 consider increasing the number of representatives from their respective regions in the ITWGs. The new "Rules of Procedure" state, *inter alia*, that the terms of office of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs shall commence with immediate effect upon closure of the session at which they are elected.

THE STATUS OF THE COMMISSION: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-12/09/22, which considers options and implications for changing the status of the Commission and explained that raising the Commission's status would require an amendment to FAO's Constitution and to the general rules of the organization. He also noted concerns that such a change could re-open the issue of implementing the FAO's Immediate Plan of Action. Delegates discussed how the change would affect the work of the Commission.

Final Outcome: In the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL), the Commission:

- considered the *Status of the Commission* and stressed the importance of its role within FAO; and
- emphasized the need for raising its profile and requested its Secretary to prepare an analysis of potential constraints of the Commission's current status.

OTHER MATTERS

DATE AND PLACE OF THE COMMISSION'S

THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION: The Commission addressed the agenda item "other matters" on Friday evening. Chair Mozafari explained that the Commission's regular session usually takes place in Rome in November, but as of the next biennium, the FAO Conference will be in June and so the timing of CGRFA-13 needs to be discussed. The Secretariat added that if the Commission intends to adopt recommendations, such as a change in status of the Commission, these recommendations would have to be submitted at least 120 days before the FAO Conference in 2011.

Yemen requested that CGRFA-13 take place in Rome. Canada noted that any of these decisions on dates and timing, before being forwarded to the Conference, must first go through the various governing bodies of the Commission. Jordan said that holding CGRFA-13 in June is too close in time to the ITPGR meeting. Delegates agreed that the Commission would convene its thirteenth regular session in Rome at a suitable date to be discussed in the Bureau of the Commission.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary convened at 5:00 pm on Friday in order for the Secretariat to have time to print and translate the meeting's report. Chair Mozafari drew attention to the report of the meeting (CGRFA-12/09/DR-FINAL). Delegates adopted the text paragraph by paragraph, making minor amendments. Regional groups made closing statements, expressing their appreciation to the Chair and the Secretariat. Chair Mozafari thanked the Secretariat for organizing the session and for working "day and night" to accomplish the tasks assigned to it; highlighted the importance of genetic resources for their central role in achieving food security, combating hunger, developing the agricultural sector, improving livelihoods and promoting human health; and wished all delegates safe travels home. The meeting was gavelled to a close at 9:21 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CGRFA-12

Although the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) does not receive the same amount of attention as other UN commissions or treaties, it sits at the nexus of some of the most important issues on the international agenda today – biodiversity loss, access and benefit sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture, and adaptation to climate change – that will have far-reaching implications for food security and policy. CGRFA-12, in particular, came at an auspicious time, just two weeks before the start of the next Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meeting on negotiating an international regime on access and benefit-sharing, scheduled to be adopted in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

Given the many uncertainties remaining on the CBD negotiations' final outcome, not least its implications for GRFA, the twelfth regular session of the Commission was dominated

by discussions on policies and arrangements for ABS. In addition, CGRFA-12 adopted an ambitious Strategic Plan for implementation of its multi-year programme of work (MYPOW), and made important progress on sectoral matters, including agreeing to expand the Commission's work to new genetic resource sectors beyond the plant and animal kingdoms, with forests, aquatic resources, micro-organisms and invertebrates considered for the first time.

This analysis examines the twelfth regular session in the context of the ongoing international ABS regime negotiations, with a focus on the potential contribution of the Commission and its MYPOW to further work on ABS for adequate treatment of GRFA in any forthcoming CBD international regime.

ABS POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR CGRFA

Delegates to CGRFA-12, drawn primarily from agriculture ministries, engaged in protracted discussions in order to shape a clear message for delivery to their environment colleagues involved in the CBD ABS negotiations. The final text reflects the CGRFA's potential contribution to realizing the benefit-sharing objective of the CBD, while promoting implementation of ABS policies and arrangements that take into account the special nature of agricultural biodiversity. The special seminar on ABS for GRFA held just before the meeting was widely praised for helping to clarify the distinctive features of GRFA, and pulling out the key aspects of existing and future ABS policies of relevance to food security. The crux of the matter is that all countries depend on GRFA originating elsewhere, so that any agreed international ABS regime affecting GRFA exchange and use will have important implications for world food security and needs to reflect countries' interdependence. Lessons learned from the seminar, and which informed the meeting's discussions, included the recognition that the different sectors of GRFA – plant, animal, aquatic, etc. – may require tailored access and benefit sharing approaches, and that these might need to be distinct from the bilateral contractual approach envisaged under the CBD.

Discussions on ABS issues are never easy, given the technical and legal complexities involved, but the Commission had also to deal with the challenge of addressing the overlapping competencies and mandates of the multiple bodies and institutions involved in ABS for GRFA. While the CBD covers all genetic resources and all forms of biodiversity, including agricultural biodiversity, the CGRFA has a specific mandate to address GRFA. Moreover, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR) encompasses all PGRFA, while its Multilateral System on ABS covers, under Annex I, a subset of important food crop and forage species. Given the many intersections involved, identifying and enhancing synergies among relevant institutions and activities becomes difficult and necessarily touches upon sensitive political issues. In drafting a resolution on ABS for GRFA, the Commission therefore undertook an exercise akin to crossing a minefield, and came through remarkably unscathed.

The way the Commission managed to navigate the minefield was by underscoring the need for knowledge-based decision making – in particular, GRFA-related knowledge that it is well-placed to provide. The delegates' concern appeared to be that the forthcoming ABS regulations for GRFA in the CBD international regime needs to be framed taking into account its potential impacts on the development, improvement and diffusion of resources and technologies that are necessary for countries to meet their food needs. The CGRFA, with its technical expertise and practical experience in supporting national-level activities, is offering to help assess these potential impacts and ensure the adequate treatment of GRFA. Accordingly, the resolution sends a message of collaboration rather than competition to the CBD, because only through such cooperation, including with the ITPGR, can the real needs of countries be reflected in the international ABS regime.

Delegates' achievement in condensing a seven-page working document into a concise resolution is a clear indication of the support that the agricultural community extends to the CBD on its ABS work. Countries held differing views on how to implement the benefit-sharing objective of the CBD, with most delegates to the Commission also involved in the international ABS regime negotiations, so the very fact that the meeting reached agreement on the key parameters for dealing with GRFA in the international regime should not be taken for granted. It will be interesting to see whether the same spirit of compromise will prevail at the upcoming ABS meeting in November.

It is unfortunate that no representative of the CBD was present at the meeting to witness and reinforce this goodwill. Indeed, it appears that much more effort is needed to bring the CGRFA and CBD closer together. A Joint Work Plan between the CGRFA and CBD Secretariats aiming to do exactly that failed to be adopted at this meeting. Not only did the document arrive too late for consideration, but no statement from the CBD was heard from the floor. Delegates, however, did not perceive the CBD's absence as a dismissal of the Commission's work, but rather as the result of an internal administrative problem.

Whereas it took delegates the entire week to shape the content of the Commission's message, deciding on form was relatively straightforward. To flag its importance, delegates adopted the message as a resolution, rather than simply as part of the meeting report as some delegations had initially proposed. Given the need for a rapid delivery – the next meeting of the CBD's *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group on ABS begins on 9 November, just two weeks after CGRFA-12 – delegates further agreed to request the FAO Director-General to bring the resolution directly to the attention of the CBD Executive Secretary.

MILESTONES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE WORK UNDER THE MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

This meeting also achieved key milestones relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA. On PGRFA, most delegates agreed that the adoption of the *Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA* represents an important step forward, since it was considered to provide technical information

of high enough quality to facilitate the development of policies and the implementation of national strategies on PGR. It also serves as the basis for updating the Global Plan of Action (GPA) on PGRFA, which will be discussed at CGRFA-13. However, since many developing countries had not completed country reports, identifying lack of resources as the reason, a few delegates still questioned whether the Report was providing a strong enough foundation to update the GPA.

Other critical milestones were the adoption of the Funding Strategy for the GPA for Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources, with the consequent call to review the role of the FAO Panel of Experts on FGR. In the area of livestock keepers' rights, the Commission sent a positive signal by encouraging the full and effective participation of small-scale livestock keepers and pastoralists in the implementation of the GPA for AnGR.

Many delegates also hailed the adoption of the Strategic Plan for implementation of the MYPOW, since it organizes the Commission's work over the next eight years. Most notably, they agreed to go forward on the remarkable expansion of the work of the Commission into forest, aquatic, micro-organism and invertebrate sectors, begun at CGRFA-11. The Commission's mandate is to tackle all matters that relate to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources related to food and agriculture. As these domains were discussed, delegates realized they were treading in unknown territory, especially since much of the research on these new domains is in its nascent stage. To better understand these issue clusters, the Commission created intergovernmental technical working groups. Yet, under the Commission's rules of procedure, it can only develop working groups relating to plant, animal and fisheries, leaving the domains of aquatic genetic resources and micro-organisms and invertebrates in a legal vacuum. There's an additional question of stepping on the toes of other instruments, reflected by the discussions on aquatic genetic resources and their possible overlap with the work of the UN General Assembly on marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Other important results following discussion of the Strategic Plan included agreeing to consider climate change as a cross-sectoral matter at CGRFA-13, and requesting the Secretariats of the Commission and the Treaty to jointly develop a vision paper with the aim of facilitating policy coherence and complementarity of the work of the two bodies. The current food crisis and the impacts of climate change have made countries' interdependence on genetic resources greater and essential for survival, helping delegates recognize the value of access to resilient crops. On coordination between the CGRFA and ITPGR, the development of a vision paper would mean that they would finally have to sit down at the same table and define their roles and their respective financial responsibilities to prevent gaps or overlap of work, especially relating to PGR.

BUT WHO WILL PAY FOR IT?

Given the significant expansion projected for the work of the Commission, many delegates wondered who will foot the bill, with several countries and regional groups expressing concern about the high dependence on extra-budgetary resources. The problem is that only a portion of the Commission's funding comes from FAO's core designated budget. Other funds come from earmarked voluntary contributions and go to activities, countries or regions identified by the donors. Un-earmarked voluntary contributions are available for the Funding Strategy, and so the Funding Strategy for AnGR will only be successful if it can generate un-earmarked voluntary contributions. At this time of financial crisis, delegates insisted on preparation of a detailed draft budget for the implementation of the MYPOW, indicating the source of financing for each activity. Such a document, it was argued, is essential for priority-setting and for implementation of the MYPOW.

FROM ROME TO NAGOYA

This CGRFA meeting was destined to wrestle with ABS issues, not only because of its timing in relation to upcoming international ABS regime negotiations but also mounting environmental stressors to ecosystems. ABS for many has become a way to operationalize the interdependence between countries and equip them with a "lifejacket" in the waves of the global food crisis and climate change. It also serves as an adaptation tool. The Commission responded to the challenge, notably in the adoption of a focused resolution on its potential contribution to realizing the benefit-sharing objective of the CBD.

Integral to the message, and to the spirit of the meeting overall, was the emphasis on collaboration among "the triangle" of the CGRFA, ITPGR and CBD. The projected expansion of the Commission's work into new sectors was also presented in a collaborative light, with the Commission seemingly expecting to deploy its technical expertise and knowledge in support of existing and future GRFA activities. However, the careful negotiations and compromises on display at this meeting will likely be ever more necessary as the Commission takes on inherently complex issues such as aquatic genetic resources and micro-organisms for food and agriculture. While it may not be easy to tackle new emerging issues, based on past evidence, the Commission can succeed again.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) INCLUDING ARTICLE 8(j) AND ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING (ABS): This workshop will be held from 29-31 October, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=ABS8JCBW-LACILC-01>

SIXTH MEETING OF THE CBD WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(j) AND RELATED PROVISIONS: This meeting will be held from 2-6 November 2009, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WG8J-06>

ABS-WG 8: The eighth meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing will be held from 9-15 November 2009, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/wgabs8/>

POLICY SEMINAR ON THE ITPGR: GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTION: A seminar that will assess the role of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR) in addressing the global challenges of agro-biodiversity, food security and climate change will be held from 15-18 December 2009, in Valenzano (Bari), Italy. For more information, contact: ITPGR Secretariat; tel: +39-6-570-53441; fax: +39-6-570-56347; e-mail: pgrfa-treaty@fao.org; internet: <http://www.planttreaty.org>

ABDC-10: A major international technical conference on “Agricultural biotechnologies in developing countries: Options and opportunities in crops, forestry, livestock, fisheries and agro-industry to face the challenges of food insecurity and climate change” (ABDC-10) will be convened by FAO and the Government of Mexico from 1-4 March 2010, in Guadalajara, Mexico. For more information, contact: FAO Secretariat; e-mail: ABDC@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc>.

ABS-WG 9: The ninth meeting of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing is scheduled to be held from 18-24 March 2010, in Colombia, at a venue to be determined. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

CBD SBSTTA 14: The fourteenth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will be held from 10-21 May 2010, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SBSTTA-14>

HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON THE ITPGR: A high-level roundtable on the ITPGR is expected to be organized by the Italian government in 2010, in Rome, Italy. For more information, contact: ITPGR Secretariat; tel: +39-6-570-53441; fax: +39-6-570-56347; e-mail: pgrfa-treaty@fao.org; internet: <http://www.planttreaty.org>

FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY: The meeting will convene from 11-15 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. The meeting is expected to adopt rules and procedures on liability and redress in the context of Article 27 of the Biosafety Protocol.

For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MOP-05>

CBD COP 10: The tenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD will be held from 18-29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. COP 10 is expected to: assess achievement of the 2010 target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss; adopt an international ABS regime; and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=COP-10>

ITPGR GB 4: The fourth session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is expected to be held in the second or third quarter of 2011, in Indonesia. For more information, contact: ITPGR Secretariat; tel: +39-6-570-53441; fax: +39-6-570-56347; e-mail: pgrfa-treaty@fao.org; internet: <http://www.planttreaty.org>

CGRFA-13: The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will convene its thirteenth regular session in Rome in 2011 (exact dates to be confirmed). For more information, contact CGRFA Secretariat, tel +39-6-570-55480; fax: +39-6-570-53057; e-mail: cgrfa@fao.org; internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/>

GLOSSARY

ABS	Access and Benefit-Sharing
ABS-WG	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's <i>Ad Hoc</i> Open-Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing
AGR	Aquatic Genetic Resources
AnGR	Animal Genetic Resources
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CGRFA	Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
COP	Conference of the Parties
ERG	European Regional Group
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FGR	Forest Genetic Resources
GB	ITPGR Governing Body
GPA	Global Plan of Action
GRFA	Genetic resources for food and agriculture
GRULAC	Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries
ITPGR	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
ITWG	Intergovernmental Technical Working Group
MTA	Material Transfer Agreement
MYPOW	Multi-year programme of work
PGRFA	Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture
SOW	State of the World's Genetic Resources