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A Summary of the Special Information Seminar on Climate Change and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: State of Knowledge, Risks and Opportunities
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CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: STATE OF KNOWLEDGE, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES: 16 JULY 2011

On Saturday, 16 July 2011, in the prelude to the thirteenth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), a special information seminar was held at the headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy, under the heading: "Climate Change and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: State of Knowledge, Risks and Opportunities."

In the morning, a panel discussion was held on the risks and opportunities of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) in the context of climate change, which included presentations on animal, plant, aquatic, forest, microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources.

The afternoon panel addressed challenges and responses in integrating GRFA concerns in climate change activities at different levels, and involved presentations on international, national and community level experiences.

OPENING SESSION

CGRFA Chair Javad Mozafari Hashjin (Iran) welcomed participants and highlighted that farmers, forest dependent communities and fishing communities, particularly in the developing world, are at the frontline of climate change impacts. He said GRFA are essential for enabling plants and animals to adapt to environmental stresses associated with climate change. He underscored that this should be brought to the attention of the international community to better address the challenges that climate change poses for agriculture and food security.

Ann Tutwiler, Deputy Director-General Knowledge of the FAO, said climate change presents severe and widespread threats to ensuring food security, which urgently needs to be addressed. Noting that agriculture is considered to be part of the climate change problem, she said agriculture should also be part of the solution, and added that adaptation in the agricultural sector is not an option but an imperative for human survival. She highlighted that many countries showed increasing interest in agricultural-related mitigation and adaptation projects at national level, including through related activities in their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Moderated by Toby Hodgkin, Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, the morning panel session focused on the state of knowledge regarding risks and opportunities for agricultural biodiversity in the context of climate change.

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES: Irene Hoffmann, FAO, presented on climate change and animal genetic resources (AnGR). She said livestock production is a major contributor to

global emissions of greenhouse gases. Among potential areas for adaptation, she highlighted: increasing heat tolerance and adaptive capacities of all livestock breeds; achieving greater efficiency in production; exploring co-benefits among species and ecosystem services including through, *inter alia*, better use of grasslands, conservation of wild biodiversity in protected areas and high nature value grass lands; and exploring tools such as payments for environmental services schemes. She also highlighted the key role of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources as a framework to address these challenges.

One participant suggested that drought should be considered the major cause for the loss of AnGR. Hoffmann replied that, based on a series of surveys, economic and market drivers have emerged as the main causes, cautioning that focusing on food security risks narrowing down the genetic diversity available to address future adaptation challenges.

PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES: Andrew Jarvis, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, presented on risks and opportunities for plant and crop genetic resources. Noting that climatic change will alter the geographic distribution of climate zones, he presented three categories of risks: novel climates arising from new combinations of climatic facts for which currently no adapted species exist; changes in averages and variability leading to more frequent occurrence of extreme events; and accelerating rates of change. He explained that the suitability for the use of crops will change, with the greatest changes expected in areas that are already poverty hotspots.

As main impacts on agricultural production, Jarvis outlined: increasing interdependence in the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), up to 30 percent of land subject to novel climates; and threats to wild species and crop relatives. In closing, he stressed that adaptation options depend on PGRFA as well as the geographic transfer of existing agricultural technologies and practices to adapt to changes in biotic suitability.

AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES: On aquatic genetic resources, Roger Pullin, FAO Consultant, emphasized that aquatic ecosystems management is key to global mitigation and adaptation strategies. On aquatic genetic resources risks, he stressed ocean acidification as the most worrying trend. On impacts, he noted that inland and coastal fisheries are more vulnerable than ocean and deep-water fisheries, while some aquaculture systems are less vulnerable than others. With regard to adaptation, he outlined opportunities in changing species composition, natural selection in species with high rates of fecundity, and the use of biotechnology applications and domestication of new species. He also recommended considering the inclusion of fish in wetland farming systems and the role of fisheries and aquaculture as a component of global carbon and nutrient cycles.

FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES: On forest genetic resources, Bruno Fady, French National Institute for Agricultural Research, explained that the main impacts of climate change will arise from the modification and change in location of suitable bioclimates. He outlined three adaptation

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strategies of trees: the ability of a phenotype to cope with a large range of climatic conditions (phenotypic plasticity); genetic adaptation; and migration. On genetic adaptation, he stressed knowledge gaps regarding: costs, limits and trade-offs; genomics of adaptation and reproduction; science-based collection management; and increasing the genetic basis of forest breeding programmes. On migration, he prioritized the study of fragmented landscape effects and impacts of long distance dispersal, and research on communities of tree species. Regarding priorities of climate change adaptation, Fady stressed valuation of conservation actions, research on assisted migration and gene flow, marginal populations, and improvements in germplasm conservation and characterization.

MICROORGANISM GENETIC RESOURCES: Fen Beed, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, presented on microorganism genetic resources. Despite their relevant role in ecosystem functions and services, he said microorganisms are largely ignored because of their rapid reproduction rates and modes and their restricted capacity to be cultured under laboratory conditions. Among key roles by microorganisms, he highlighted: formation and maintenance of soil structure; nutrient absorption, nitrogen fixation and tolerance resistance to diseases in plants; and as biological control agents. He said precise effects of climate change on microorganisms are difficult to predict owing to the lack of current knowledge.

Among opportunities to adapt to climate change, Beed underscored farming practices that increase biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, including crop rotation and green and organic manure fertilization. He called for the enhancement of: microorganism genetic resources management to buffer, adapt to and mitigate climate change; and mechanisms for their monitoring, research, characterization and conservation. Responding to a question concerning the use of chemical fertilizers, Beed reminded participants that chemical fertilizers imply greenhouse gas emissions and said a combination of natural and chemical fertilizers could be used depending on the biodiversity scenario and the available market conditions on a case-by-case basis.

INSECT GENETIC RESOURCES: Matthew Cock, Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International, presented on insect genetic resources and climate change, underscoring their key roles in agriculture, including that they: contribute to essential soil processes that maintain productivity; perform as pollinators and biological control agents; and are a source of food and products. He noted uncertainty about possible climate change impacts on invertebrates, but expected that the majority of invertebrate pollinators, pests and their natural enemies would move with their host plants as crop and forage distributions change. He anticipated an increasing demand for the movement of biological control agents to address new pest problems caused by climate change, but cautioned against movements of soil invertebrates between countries, noting that further implementation of relevant guidelines and policies is needed. He underscored knowledge gaps, including on invertebrate interactions with climate change-related factors, their genetic characterization, and the methods to facilitate invertebrate adaptation.

DISCUSSION: The discussion focused on knowledge gaps, the roles of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, and mitigation and adaptation. On knowledge gaps, Fady underscored gaps concerning undomesticated tree species, functional types, and inventories. Hoffmann highlighted that a distinction should be made on the different levels of knowledge gaps depending on the sector addressed. She underscored that in the case of the livestock sector few species are used but further knowledge on the impacts of climate change is still needed. A participant highlighted the need to further collect and compile traditional and local knowledge. Another participant said scientific assessments should contribute to implementation and be used

at the national level. Pullin highlighted the need to strengthen information systems for aquatic genetic resources. One participant highlighted knowledge gaps in the study of tropical vulnerabilities and adaptation. Beed supported considering an ecosystem approach and highlighted that centralized inventories and collections could contribute to identify knowledge gaps.

On conservation, several participants called for stronger focus on *in situ* conservation, with panelists noting that *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation are complementary strategies. Cock added that conservation must also ensure accessibility to realize appropriate deployment.

On mitigation and adaptation, one participant underscored the need for the international climate change debate to further focus on adaptation gaps, particularly those in developing countries. He also underscored the need to enhance cooperation between the national ministries of environment and agriculture within countries.

On measures to address vulnerability, Hoffmann highlighted the need for further understanding on the linkages between agriculture and food security. One participant called for more systematic evaluation of accessions of plant genetic resources currently stored in gene banks with regard to their potential use for adaptation.

Panelists also discussed risks associated to the deliberate movement of germplasm and the introduction of species into new environments for adaptation of food and agriculture to climate change, such as alien invasions. Cock called for careful decisions on introductions, which should be taken at the international level and consider the risks of alien invasions. Fady said both local adaptation and foreign introductions will be needed to cope with climate change, whereas Jarvis suggested that technologies and species, as well as traditional knowledge will be needed.

Echoing a suggestion by moderator Hodgkin, Pullin supported an inter-sectoral approach on adaptation. One participant called for conservation as a means to support adaptation in vulnerable regions. On risk quantification, Cock suggested improving data collection for risk modeling.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

The afternoon session focused on cross-sectoral activities and efforts to integrate GRFA in climate change activities at different levels. This session was also moderated by Toby Hodgkin.

GLOBAL ACTIVITIES: Peter Holmgren, FAO, presented on the international landscape for addressing climate change and food security, noting the need to consider impacts on human security. He said the long-term goals of achieving food security and avoiding dangerous climate change require sustainable increases in agricultural production, while also increasing greenhouse gas removals through agriculture. Holmgren then described the global policy landscape as a range of issue “mountains” addressed through isolated institutions that measure success in different currencies, while ignoring the interlinkages between issues. To address interlinkages, he called for multi-objective policies that use common measurements for success and avoid micromanagement through detailed agreements. As an example, he presented FAO’s programme on “climate smart agriculture.” He said that while food security is at the heart of the programme, it also addresses climate change in relation to its objectives. In response to questions, he clarified that FAO should not engage in action on human security, but be aware of the link between food security and human security, and that early action could foster political momentum, as well as fundraising opportunities.

Vincent Gitz, FAO, gave an overview of the work of the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). He depicted food security as situated “in the eye of the storm” of overlapping local, regional and international agendas, including climate change. After describing the HLPE’s assessment process, he outlined the elements of a proposed study on climate change and food security, which would: assess direct and indirect impacts of climate change on food security; identify particularly vulnerable regions and populations; address adaptation and mitigation options; and make recommendations in different policy fields, including options towards a more integrated response and institutional linkages. Gitz then described the institutional layout of FAO and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and suggested that food security be integrated into the work programmes of the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC, including those on loss and damage, the Nairobi Work Programme on Vulnerability and Adaptation, and a potential work programme on mitigation in agriculture. Responding to a comment on the lack of attention to livestock, Gitz confirmed that this issue would be taken up by the HLPE.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES: Hari Dahal Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Nepal, presented on the National Adaptation Program of Actions to climate change and agro-biodiversity Management in Nepal. He described the development of his country’s NAPA, which provides a strategic response to climate change challenges, including nine adaptation priorities. Among priorities he highlighted, *inter alia*: the need to establish a database system and communication network; *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation; enhancement of the legal framework; and capacity development, including among farmers and other local actors.

COMMUNITY LEVEL ACTIVITIES: Ximena Cadima, Foundation for the Promotion and Investigation of Andean Products, Bolivia, presented on the role of agro-biodiversity in coping with climate change and the experience of rural communities and indigenous peoples. Based on 200 case studies, she underscored that adaptation measures involve different activities at the ecosystem, agriculture and biodiversity levels and that local and indigenous communities tend to use both traditional crop varieties and new materials. She underscored that local communities need to, *inter alia*, rescue old and traditional crop varieties, and gather crop varieties from other communities that are more resistant to diseases, good for commercial production and adapt to difficult climatic conditions. Among other recommendations, she suggested the: enhancement of farmer and community access to gene banks; development of agreed procedures for seed multiplication and increased technical support to farmers on seed development; and use of the genetic resources.

On the suggestion of farmers’ direct access to gene banks, one participant noted that the gene banks were designed to avoid biodiversity erosion and have few samples of seeds while providing access to farmers for production requires larger quantities of seed. He suggested that intermediate institutions could create and provide these resources to farmers. Other participants recommended the creation of communal gene banks that would allow access to local communities. Many participants from developing countries underlined the need to enhance local and regional capacities for moving ahead on the characterization of genetic resources in the existing regional gene banks.

DISCUSSION: Referring to Holmgren’s image of the international policy landscape as isolated mountains, moderator Hodgkin invited participants to introduce their visions on how the international, national and local dimensions could be better connected to tackle climate-change related challenges. Dahal suggested strengthening capacities at the country level,

whereas another participant suggested addressing the response at the very top level to ensure a clear signal is provided. Others suggested that further coordination efforts should be made at the international level led by the FAO or the Commission.

One participant cautioned against simplistic solutions and said climate change requires urgent responses, questioning whether coordinating efforts would be possible in view of time constraints. Other participants called for more coordination at the national level, among ministries and agencies. Holmgren suggested tapping into existing institutions instead of new ones. Cadima highlighted that institutions, policies and politicians are far away from communities’ needs and suggested that focus be retained on making technology available to local communities. Gitz added that solutions can be found on the ground, while Dahal stressed the need to enable farmers to use their agricultural biodiversity through technology and resource transfer.

Hodgkin then invited panelists and participants to reflect on their experience in integrating agricultural biodiversity in NAPAs. Dahal reported the need for better coordination between the ministries of forestry and agriculture in Nepal to ensure that agrobiodiversity concerns are reflected. A participant from India suggested adopting regional approaches to plant genetic resource management to ensure accessibility between countries with similar conditions and shared gene pools, in particular for emergency situations.

Other participants stressed the need to build capacity and human resources for evaluation, characterization and breeding, as well as breeding stations to improve usability of plant genetic resources. Several supported the suggestion to establish seed banks and other mechanisms that provide farmers access to genetic resources that can be used in their fields, in particular for emergency situations. One participant proposed national integration points to ensure that NAPAs consider the linkages with agriculture.

CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING: In summarizing the day’s discussions, Hodgkin said the morning session had shown that there is increasing acceptance of the ecosystem approach and the concept of ecosystem services in addressing linkages with climate change. Other messages included the: importance of accessibility of genetic resources and availability of information, especially in developing countries; different roles of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation in addressing risks and enabling responses; need for an inter-sectoral approach to adaptation and mitigation; and recognition that climate change leads to the movement of agricultural biodiversity and creates a need for informed decisions of deliberate movements of germplasm.

The key messages from the afternoon session were: while climate change is being embedded in many agricultural strategies and plans, agriculture still needs to be embedded in climate change measures; there is a need for institutions and mechanisms to supply seeds to users; and there is a great need for capacity building activities for adaptation, such as evaluation and characterization.

Chair Mozafari added that participants had recognized the need: for the agriculture community to take action to ensure that GRFA are properly reflected in climate change efforts; to improve the knowledge base, in particular national knowledge on wild crop relatives and wild species; to reconcile efforts in all aspects of food security to ensure coherence; for global partnerships in research, evaluation and characterization; to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable; and for financial resources. He suggested that CGRFA 13 reflect on how to communicate these needs to the UNFCCC and other instruments to put GRFA on the global climate change agenda. He then thanked participants for their contribution and closed the meeting at 6pm.

CGRFA 13 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 18 JULY 2011

The thirteenth regular session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA 13) opened on Monday, 18 July 2011, at the headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy. Delegates considered items relating to the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW), namely the updated Global Plan of Action (GPA) for the conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), the role of biotechnologies for the conservation and utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA), and climate change and GRFA. A contact group on the GPA met in the evening and into the night.

OPENING SESSION

CGRFA 13 Chair Javad Mozafari Hashjin (Iran) welcomed delegates. FAO Deputy Director-General for Knowledge Ann Tutwiler commended the CGRFA's work, and the role of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR) in addressing climate change challenges, pests and diseases. She highlighted the importance of: access and benefit-sharing (ABS); the updated GPA on PGRFA; the State of the World reports on forest and aquatic genetic resources; and communication.

In a video message, Professor M.S. Swaminathan, Chair of the FAO High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, emphasized CGRFA 13's role in relation to the Millennium Development Goals, especially in reducing hunger and poverty by half by 2015. He also highlighted "the four C's" of conservation, cultivation, consumption and commercialization.

Valerie Normand, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), on behalf of CBD Executive Secretary, Ahmed Djoghlaif, described the CBD's cooperation with the FAO, especially the revised joint work programme with the CGRFA for 2011-2020, consistent with the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020. She stressed that the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization gives priority to specialized regimes that are consistent with the CBD and recognizes the importance of GRFA for food security, poverty alleviation and climate change.

ITPGR Secretary Shakeel Bhatti addressed areas of collaboration with the CGRFA, including ABS for PGRFA, and supporting components of the ITPGR. He reported that the fourth session of the ITPGR Governing Body had requested a

paper on the legal, administrative and financial implications of transferring activities from CGRFA to ITPGR for a functional division of tasks.

Linda Collette, CGRFA Secretary, highlighted challenges to be undertaken by CGRFA 13, including crosscutting issues such as ABS, biotechnology and climate change. She underscored the relevance of developing and reinforcing the Commission's links beyond the international agriculture arena. She welcomed Lao PDR as the 173rd member state to the Commission.

CGRFA Chair Mozafari said that genetic resources are key to addressing many of the world's problems, in particular climate change. Reporting on the special information seminar on climate change and GRFA, he called for, *inter alia*: enhancing conservation and knowledge of genetic resources; further integrating traditional knowledge; and communicating the relevance of GRFA for coping with climate change to the international community.

Delegates confirmed Solita Sicat (the Philippines) as new bureau member for Asia, with other bureau members carrying on from the previous session, and adopted the agenda and timetable (CGRFA-13/11/1 and 2), with two amendments: moving forward agenda item 3.1 on updating the GPA for PGRFA to Monday afternoon and, deferring agenda item 4 on Aquatic Genetic Resources to Wednesday, as requested by GRULAC.

OPENING STATEMENTS: All regions stressed the importance of adopting the GPA for PGRFA at this session. The Dominican Republic, for the LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), called for appropriate funding for GPA implementation and making the connection to adaptation to climate change. The Czech Republic, for the EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP, except the Russian Federation (ERG), welcomed discussions on aquatic genetic resources, the funding strategy and a roadmap for work on climate change. Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for cooperation between developing and developed countries to address climate change and the food crisis. Yemen, for the NEAR EAST, stressed the importance of a mechanism for GPA implementation, and called for a working group on aquatic genetic resources.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

PGRFA: Updated GPA for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA: The Secretariat introduced the relevant working document (CGRFA-13/11/6). CGRFA Secretary Collette urged the Commission to finalize it to enable the Council to approve it in November 2011.

Brad Fraleigh (Canada), Chair of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group (ITWG) on PGRFA, outlined the working group's recommendations (CGRFA-13/11/8), and

outstanding work. Delegates decided to establish a contact group comprising up to five speakers per region and co-chaired by Brad Fraleigh (Canada) and Embaye Kassahun (Ethiopia). After further discussion, delegates agreed that in the contact group, they would first make general comments on the draft GPA text, followed by negotiating text not yet addressed by the ITWG, after which the document could be revisited from the beginning.

CROSS-SECTORIAL MATTERS: Biotechnologies for GRFA Conservation and Utilization: The Secretariat presented relevant documentation (CGRFA-13/11/3 and Inf.8; and Background Study Paper No. 52). Cuba, for GRULAC, expressed concern about using the definition of biotechnology included in the scoping paper. Chair Mozafari noted the definition was taken from CBD Article 2 (Use of Terms). ECUADOR opposed reference to the “comparative advantages” of biotechnology over traditional technologies.

Lebanon, for the NEAR EAST, opposed by CANADA, suggested to consider biotechnology as a major component in the MYPOW; and proposed activities to be considered, including capacity building and conducting a comprehensive survey, particularly on molecular techniques. Tonga, for the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, highlighted the need to enhance capacities to evaluate germplasm at the molecular level.

ECUADOR, BRAZIL and ARGENTINA opposed developing a draft code of conduct on biotechnology. BRAZIL, ARGENTINA and the US preferred developing voluntary guidelines instead. The ERG agreed to defer drafting a code of conduct, considering that standards and protocols will be overrun by the rapid pace of scientific and technological development.

The ERG requested adding text regarding “harnessing and sharing benefits” of genetic resources, and to delete text on: sector-specific standards and technical protocols for molecular characterization; and sector-specific analyses of investments, returns and socio-ecological impacts of biotechnologies for GRFA conservation.

INDIA called for awareness raising on health and environmental risks of biotechnology products. CANADA supported a science-based regulatory system for assessment of biotechnology products for agriculture. ANGOLA stressed national capacity building for biotechnology use. The US and CANADA suggested that FAO focus on technical capacity building, rather than policy formulation on biotechnology use.

The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM) expressed concern regarding the emphasis on *ex situ* conservation and the focus on molecular biotechnology.

Climate Change and GRFA: The Secretariat introduced relevant documentation (CGRFA 13/11/4 and Inf.10 and Background Study Papers 53 to 57). Many parties highlighted the relevant role of GRFA in facing climate change impacts. The Cook Islands, for the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, highlighted the need for local solutions and capacity building to make adequate use of GRFA. THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO called for mechanisms that provide incentives to local people to conserve forests.

Cuba, for GRULAC, stressed the need to enhance GRFA’s role and visibility in the climate change process, while respecting the mandates of each process. ARGENTINA cautioned against duplication of work and, with CANADA, opposed text suggesting that commission members encourage national representatives to the UNFCCC to include agricultural considerations and the management of GRFA.

The ERG underscored the role of agroforestry systems and traditional knowledge in the context of adaptation strategies, and suggested: including reference to civil society and the private sector; strengthening existing partnerships and developing new

ones; and requesting the Secretariat to provide information on financial implications of a road map. CANADA preferred developing a work programme to a road map.

Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested further cooperation efforts with relevant institutions and the adoption of mechanisms to support the conservation of wild species by farmers. BRAZIL said that guidelines for the implementation of the ecosystem approach in agricultural systems should be adapted to countries’ circumstances. INDIA prioritized in-depth investigation of biodiversity hotspots in areas that are especially vulnerable to climate change, whereas IRAN prioritized capacity building in such areas.

PRACTICAL ACTION recommended that the Commission’s work be rooted in the views of small-scale food providers, and that it provide international leadership on GRFA and climate change. The PLATFORM FOR AGRO-BIODIVERSITY emphasized the importance of an ecosystem approach at farm, community and landscape scales, and community-led adaptation efforts.

The GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST reported on its work on adaptation, including screening collections for crops adapted to climate change. IFOAM stressed the importance of having many small and medium-sized breeders and implementation of the ecosystem approach through low-input high-output farming.

ITPGR Secretary Bhatti commented that the ITPGR’s Multilateral System for ABS creates a global system of the world’s most important food crops and that its Benefit-sharing Fund invests in high impact projects to ensure global crop diversity and on-farm adaptation to climate change. BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL reported on a CGIAR research programme on adaptation, stressing the importance of dryland agriculture and use of native species for rehabilitation of degraded land.

CONTACT GROUP ON THE GPA

Delegates first heard regional statements. GRULAC expressed concern that a number of the region’s priorities regarding the funding strategy have not been reflected in the text. The ERG called for reflection of provisions of the ITPGR and references to climate change and noted that implementation should be subject to financial resources, as appropriate. Delegates then considered the provisions of the draft updated GPA that had not been addressed by the ITWG, paragraph by paragraph, starting in the section on sustainable use. Negotiations continued into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

At the outset of CGRFA 13, it was clear that the finalization of the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for Plant Genetic Resources was the number one priority for all regions, but how to get there in the fastest and most efficient way possible proved to be a point of contention. In addition some delegates indicated that they see the issue as being closely linked to the necessary funding commitment for implementing the GPA. Some delegates bemoaned the fact that they will likely spend their evenings and nights in contact group sessions rather than enjoying the pleasures Rome has to offer in the summertime.

The hot temperatures in Rome served as the perfect backdrop for a first round of discussions on climate change, where some lamented the lack of consideration of mitigation measures in agriculture and their impacts, as adaptation remained the main focus. After the seminar on climate change and GRFA held on Saturday, many agreed on the need for the Commission to take the initiative and spread to other fora the message on the key role that genetic resources have to play in adapting to climate change impacts. However, many were also cautious when considering how to achieve this without interfering with the mandates of other international processes.

CGRFA 13 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 19 JULY 2011

CGRFA 13 delegates continued to consider items related to the Commission's Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW), namely policies and arrangements for access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA), and: cooperation with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR); progress in implementation of other CGRFA recommendations on PGRFA; and forest genetic resources. A contact group on the updated Global Plan of Action (GPA) on PGRFA met in the evening.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

CROSS-SECTORIAL MATTERS: Access and benefit-sharing: The Secretariat introduced the issue (CGRFA-13/11/5 and Background Study Paper No.59) underscoring the Nagoya Protocol provisions relevant to GRFA, including its recognition of the special character of GRFA and the ITPGR, as well as the ample scope to develop specialized international agreements.

Delegates discussed two options for action by the Commission: one requesting the Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, develop mechanisms for inclusion of GRFA policies on ABS and analyze the need for further instruments on ABS for GRFA; and a second option providing for the establishment of an open-ended *ad hoc* subsidiary body on ABS for GRFA, and its terms of reference.

GRULAC and AFRICA supported the second option. Poland, for the EU and its member states, and CANADA supported the first option, with the EU supporting one inter-sessional meeting of an ABS group of experts to study distinctive solutions for GRFA. CANADA called for further study before engaging in specific work on GRFA, and encouraged the Commission to focus on ABS for animal genetic resources. GRULAC suggested: including reference to harmony with the CBD and its relevant instruments; referring to "mechanisms" on ABS for GRFA, rather than "instruments"; and considering a financing mechanism for the proposed subsidiary body.

The NEAR EAST supported developing draft mechanisms for inclusion in ABS policies, as stated in both options, but opposed text referring to monitoring implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and considering the need for, and modalities of, instruments addressing ABS for GRFA. ERITREA requested developing distinctive solutions for GRFA along with a mechanism to ensure implementation of benefit-sharing.

YEMEN called for funding and technical support for national implementation of ABS and suggested the Commission focus on ABS for aquatic genetic resources. The EU called for distinctive solutions, agreeing to analyze the need for specialized international tools on GRFA.

CANADA proposed identification of approaches for differential treatment of GRFA but, supported by the US, preferred reference to "legislative, policy and administrative measures" rather than "legislative and regulatory requirements," to ensure consistency with the Protocol. BRAZIL said different opinions on procedure should not prevent action by the Commission. BHUTAN called for capacity building and guidance for ABS implementation in GRFA sectors.

BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL commended the CGRFA's technical expertise, noting that the CGIAR centers would continue to contribute expertise for ABS implementation. THE INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION called for stakeholder involvement in ABS implementation to enable sharing of experiences. An informal group met in the evening to consider revised text on actions to be taken by the Commission.

PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: Cooperation with the ITPGR: CGRFA Secretary Linda Colette introduced the document on policy coherence and complementarity of the work of the CGRFA and the Governing Body of the ITPGR (CGRFA-13/11/7) noting that it sets out key activities of both bodies and the current institutional framework. ITPGR Secretary Shakeel Bhatti reiterated that the Governing Body had reviewed a similar paper and had requested further information on the legal, administrative and financial implications of transfer of activities from the CGRFA to the ITPGR.

Delegates discussed three different options regarding whether or how PGRFA related activities should be transferred from the Commission to the ITPGR Governing Body. The EU, CANADA, ECUADOR, AUSTRALIA, KENYA and others called for further consideration of the legal, administrative and financial implications of the options presented. AUSTRALIA suggested the three options could be considered as short-, medium- and long-term objectives.

The first option to enhance the ongoing cooperation framework was supported by ARGENTINA, AFRICA, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, YEMEN, MEXICO, the US, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and BRAZIL, with many noting that the bodies have distinct roles and different membership. PRACTICAL ACTION called for the Commission to continue its leadership across all GRFA.

The option of a case-by-case gradual transfer of specific tasks and activities to the Governing Body was supported by the EU, AUSTRALIA, CUBA and MALAYSIA, with the EU noting that

some tasks can be transferred more easily than others. CUBA recalled that the scope of the ITPGR covers all PGRFA, noting that the transfer would occur in the medium to long-term and in a coordinated way. MALAYSIA suggested the ITPGR Governing Body is better placed to focus on certain specific issues.

The final option of transfer of all PGRFA activities from the Commission to the Governing Body was supported by CANADA, noting that the Commission should keep cross-sectorial matters such as ABS within its purview.

Progress in Implementation: Under this agenda item, delegates considered several issues arising from CGRFA 12 decisions. On the draft revised genebank standards for orthodox seeds (CGRFA-13/11/9), Canada, for the NORTH AMERICAN REGION, requested that the current draft be reviewed by the ITWG on PGRFA, along with further standards for non-orthodox seeds and germplasm, which he requested to be developed. The EU agreed with the latter, but urged adoption of the current draft genebank standards. YEMEN and IRAQ supported considering the standards at the next ITWG meeting. KENYA called for technical support for the implementation of international genebank standards.

Delegates also discussed follow-up activities to other CGRFA 12 recommendations (CGRFA-13/11/10), including: national information sharing mechanisms; strengthening plant breeding capacities (CGRFA-13/11/Inf.12); strengthening seed systems (CGRFA-13/11/Inf.13); and options to promote food security through on-farm management and *in situ* conservation of PGRFA (Background Study Paper No.51).

The EU noted that the nature of any information sharing mechanism depends on the future division of tasks between the Commission and the Treaty and, with CANADA, requested that the Commission continue collaborating with the Treaty Secretariat to avoid duplication. ECUADOR requested that funding for the information sharing mechanism be included in the FAO's regular programme, to avoid repeated requests for extra-budgetary funding. KENYA suggested strengthening synergies among existing information systems and networks at the regional level.

On strengthening plant breeding capacities and seed systems, the EU encouraged governments, NGOs and the seed sector to recognize the importance of long-term support and funding for plant breeding research. ANGOLA supported the use of locally adapted material. The SOUTHWEST PACIFIC highlighted the need for capacity building, support for regional networks and technical assistance at the local level. The NEAR EAST underscored the need to strengthen capacity and support for breeding activities and funding for GPA implementation in developing countries.

Regarding *in situ* and on-farm conservation, the EU requested the identification of indicators of diversity to establish and monitor changes in diversity at a national, regional and global level. ECUADOR prioritized on-farm conservation, and expressed reservations regarding the establishment of a global network due to lack of clarity on its sustainability and added value.

Delegates decided to postpone the nomination of regional representatives to the ITWG on PGRFA to Wednesday. The NEAR EAST requested to increase the number of their representatives from three to five due to lack of proportion in representation considering the number of countries compared to other regions. NORWAY, AUSTRALIA, SWITZERLAND, GERMANY and CUBA expressed concern about this proposal and preferred postponing consideration of the issue.

PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS OF THE MYPow:
Forest Genetic Resources: The Chair of the ITWG on Forest Genetic Resources, Tore Skroppa (Norway), reported on the ITWG's first meeting (CGRFA/13/11/12) which provided input on the format and timing of country reports to inform the

SoW Forest Genetic Resources Report, noting that once it was completed, a next step could be consideration of a GPA on forest genetic resources. The CGRFA Secretariat then presented the guidelines for preparation of country reports and workshops to build capacity of national focal points for report preparation (CGRFA/13/11/Inf.15).

CANADA declined to support an international conference to launch the SoW Forest Genetic Resources. CHILE, ECUADOR and INDIA requested that funds be made available to allow countries to complete high-quality reports as scheduled. IRAN and AFRICA lamented the rapid erosion of forest GR, and called for global attention and action on the issue.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO noted the need to: identify climate-resilient varieties that can also contribute to food security; stabilize the *in situ* conservation of known forest varieties; and maintain emphasis on capacity building and participatory and inclusive approaches. AFRICA called for: capacity building among farmers to conserve forest GR, increasing awareness for both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, and support for countries to produce their national reports on time. NORWAY called on countries to provide additional resources for country reports on forest GR.

JAPAN noted earlier agreement to use existing financial resources for this purpose. The ERG prioritized: country reports on forest GR by 1 January 2012; study of biotic and abiotic impacts of climate change; and close coordination of information systems.

CONTACT GROUP ON THE GPA

Delegates completed the first reading of the priority action areas related to sustainable use, namely: expanding characterization, evaluation and further development of specific collection subsets to facilitate use, supporting plant breeding, genetic enhancement and base-broadening efforts; promoting diversification of crop production and broadening crop diversity for sustainable agriculture; and promoting development and commercialization of plant varieties, farmer varieties and underutilized species. Following repeated debates about references to breeders, farmer breeders and farmers, delegates agreed to simply refer to breeders and farmers throughout the text; and in other provisions they agreed to refer to breeding programmes rather than breeders.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Discussions on ABS affirmed that the long-standing efforts to ensure adequate recognition of the special character of GRFA under the Nagoya Protocol have been successful. However, delegates diverged as to whether the Commission should take action now to occupy the field, or wait to see how the Nagoya Protocol plays out. Opinions diverged especially on whether an "intersessional body" should be established. Some warned against missing this "historic opportunity" to further define the global system on GRFA conservation, while others noted that the Nagoya Protocol will not enter into force for some time and the "window of opportunity" may stay open for a while.

Similarly, delegates could still not agree on whether and how responsibility for more PGRFA-related tasks should be transferred to the ITPGR Governing Body. One veteran negotiator warned against a reductionist approach to PGRFA: "I understand concerns on duplication but we cannot just push all PGRFA matters into the Treaty with its specific mandate and limited resources, taking them from the Commission with its broader mandate, different membership and separate funding." Echoing the CGRFA Chair, one insider explained the ITPGR is like a son to the Commission, such that disconnecting the two, "even if physically possible, would not be emotionally feasible." Others felt confident that the collaboration of both bodies is already highly efficient, and issues might work themselves out faster on the ground – so, *de facto* before *de jure*.

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.

CGRFA 13 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 21 JULY 2011

Delegates met in plenary in the morning to consider: cooperation with international instruments, conventions and organizations; status and profile of the Commission; election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs; and aquatic genetic resources.

The Contact Group on the Global Plan of Action (GPA) for PGRFA met in the afternoon and evening to finalize the GPA.

PLENARY

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS: Delegates considered CGRFA-13/11/22. ECUADOR, supported by the NEAR EAST, requested the Secretariat to ensure all relevant documents are translated into the UN languages, in particular the report from the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

The ERG, commended: the collaborative work with the ITPGR Governing Body and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); the work of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in the context of updating gene banks; and the role of the Global Crop Diversity Trust for germplasm collections. The GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST (the Trust) underscored collaborative work on GRFA undertaken for GPA implementation, including in developing *in situ* and *ex situ* collections. She said the updated GPA should be brought into prominence in the Commission and other relevant bodies, highlighting the GPA's role as a coherent framework of global priorities for GRFA management, including in the assessment of the commitments foreseen by the ITPGR and the GPA.

PRACTICAL ACTION called for enhancing interaction and participation of civil society in the Commission's work. The ETC GROUP suggested reviewing and enhancing the relationship between the Commission, the ITPGR, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and the Trust. On cooperation with UNFCCC and WIPO, she expressed concern over the "gene-giants" requesting recognition of intellectual property rights over "climate-ready crops," noting this could undermine food security and countries' sovereignty and infringe the ITPGR's provisions, calling for a legal assessment of these questions.

BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL highlighted the CGIAR research programme on climate change, agriculture and food security involving the CGIAR centers, as a source for the development of a road map for addressing climate change and GRFA under the Commission. The SOUTHWEST PACIFIC highlighted efforts to conserve gene bank collections in the region in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. IRAN expressed concern that the initial expectation that the Trust would be an integral part of the ITPGR was not fully met, and called for ensuring close collaboration between both entities.

STATUS AND PROFILE OF THE COMMISSION: The Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-13/11/23 outlining three options for raising the Commission's status: transform the Commission into an FAO Technical Committee reporting directly to the FAO Council and Conference; maintain its status and continue reporting directly to the FAO Council and Conference, as appropriate; or maintain its status and report to the FAO Council and Conference through the Technical Committees. He noted that transforming the Commission into a Technical Committee could be an arduous process and that the Commission currently has a *de facto* direct reporting line to the Council and the Conference based on an invitation by the Conference.

All speakers favored the second option, with several noting that the Commission's profile does not depend on its status, but the quality of its expertise. AUSTRALIA noted that transforming the Commission into a Technical Committee could reduce the Commission's independence. GRULAC suggested reforming the Commission's statutes to streamline decision-making.

AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES: Delegates considered revised text on aquatic genetic resources. GRULAC requested further time to review the text and discuss it with regional colleagues.

OTHER MATTERS: Date and venue of the CGRFA

14: The Secretariat announced that CGRFA 14 is tentatively scheduled for the last week of April 2013 in view of the need for the meeting documentation to be available for reporting to the FAO Conference later in the year.

Election of Chair and Vice-chairs: Delegates elected: Brad Fraleigh (Canada) as Chair of CGRFA 14 and, as Vice-chairs: Elzbieta Martyniuk (Poland) for the ERG; Modesto Fernández (Cuba) for GRULAC; Raj Patil (Australia) for the Southwest Pacific; Javad Mozafari Hashjin (Iran) for the Near East; and Tashi Yangzome Dorji (Bhutan) for Asia. AFRICA offered to submit their nomination on Friday. Delegates then nominated representatives to the ITWGs on PGRFA and animal and forest genetic resources, as well as the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on ABS.

The NEAR EAST requested increasing its representation to the Commission's Bureau and Working Groups from three to five, before making nominations. Chair Mozafari advised that, based on consultations with the Secretariat and its legal office, the two possible ways to recognize the Near East's request would be: the Commission to agree to the request at the meeting; or the Commission to suggest that further time be allocated for the Secretariat to study the issue with a view to reviewing it at CGRFA 14. He noted that the current quota of three representatives for the region is not proportionate to its number of members, and suggested to request increasing representation to four members, noting that an increase to five would call into question the level of representation from other regions.

SWITZERLAND emphasized that the issue has implications for other groups, and proposed this be considered at CGRFA 14. AFRICA requested clarification on the criteria for determining the number of representatives per region.

CONTACT GROUP

On Thursday afternoon, the GPA contact group discussed the role and importance of the Treaty's Benefit-sharing Fund to the GPA, debating whether or not the GPA should have a separate funding strategy. Noting that the Benefit-sharing Fund has received contributions of US\$10 million, some questioned the relevance of yet another funding strategy, while others asserted that the GPA needs its own dedicated funds. Some expressed confusion over whether or not the Benefit-sharing Fund could only support Annex 1 crops; it was later clarified that the Fund was for all crops, including under-utilized ones.

After going through the text that had not been addressed by the ITWG on PGRFA, delegates revisited outstanding text in the entire document. Delegates preferred referring to "stakeholders" instead of "rural people" or "farmer breeders." On a paragraph dealing with the establishment of information systems to identify and obtain appropriate germplasm for reintroduction, delegates addressed an outstanding proposal referring to the provision of arrangements for repatriation of PGRFA. Some regional groups supported reference to "repatriation," while another group suggested, and delegates eventually agreed, to refer to "reintroduction and restoration".

Delegates further agreed that the name for the priority area should be "sustainable use of PGRFA" instead of "sustainable use." Negotiations continued into the evening.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the final day of the CGRFA13 approached, the spirit of compromise penetrated the halls of FAO, with discussions converging towards agreement on the most relevant issues. Delegates started to get ready for the Friday's afternoon final Plenary and planned to make the most of their remaining time in wonderful Rome, except for those delegates struggling to address the more than 60 pages of text on the GPA update. What kept them locked up in the Red Room were all too familiar debates around funding. Confusion seemed to be another cause for delay, as some parties were unclear on whether those countries that are members of the Commission, but not parties to the Treaty, would have access to funding from the ITPGR Benefit-sharing Fund.

As many delegates noted, the spirit of compromise and conciliation also seemed to surround informal consultations at lunchtime on how to address biotechnology under the MYPOW. One delegate highlighted: "While some parties and the recommendations from the Commission's Technical Working Groups proposed addressing biotechnology under each sector-specific issue in the MYPOW, others preferred having a more strengthened component on biotechnology." One satisfied veteran negotiator added: "we finally got to a middle-ground solution and agreed to include biotechnology as a sectoral milestone that would foresee the review of the work of the Commission Working Groups on biotechnology for GRFA."

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of CGRFA 13 will be available on Monday, 25 July 2011 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/biodiv/cgrfa13/>

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