



COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

Fourth Session

Rome, 15-19 April 1991, Green Room

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen
2. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable for the Session
3. Reports on the last session of the FAO Council and on the sessions of the Working Group

The Chairman of the Working Group will present the reports of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Sessions of the Working Group. For the Sixth Session, only a verbal presentation will be given.

4. The Global System on Plant Genetic Resources: Implementation of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources

Following a short historical background, the document will present the philosophy behind, and the current structure of the Global System, that is being developed through the implementation of the International Undertaking. It will also identify those elements of the Global System that have already been established, and those still under development or discussion, and will seek the guidance of the Commission when appropriate. Special emphasis will be put on the current negotiations for the implementation of the Resolution regarding Farmers' Rights, and its relationship to an International Fund, the possible plan of action, and the establishment of an advisory committee for the Commission.

5. Mechanisms to facilitate the exchange of germplasm, information and technology

Facilitating exchange of germplasm: the network of "ex situ" base collections and the network of "in situ" conservation areas

In line with Article 7 of the International Undertaking, and with the recommendations of the Third Session of the Commission, the background paper to be prepared jointly by FAO and IBPGR will provide information on progress made in the development of the ex situ network of base collections under FAO auspices or jurisdiction, as well as in the efforts made to merge it and the

IBPGR register of base collections. It will also report on the state of development of technical standards for genebanks that agree to take part in this network. Finally, the paper will provide information, and seek the guidance of the Commission, on FAO Involvement in the Norwegian initiative for the establishment of an international seedbank in the permafrost conditions of Svalbard.

Following the recommendations of the Third Session of the Commission, the paper will include a study on the feasibility of, and possible strategies for the establishment of a network of in situ conservation areas.

Facilitating the exchange of information and technology: The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources (SW/PGR) and Global Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources (GIEWS/PGR)

In line with Article 7 of the International Undertaking, the Third Session of the CPGR requested FAO to assess periodically the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and to develop a GIEWS/PGR, so as to facilitate the exchange of information and technologies for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources. In view of the cooperation agreed on this subject between FAO and IBPGR, the background paper will be jointly prepared by these Organizations; It will report on the progress made in developing the Global Information System, and in preparing the publication, and will seek the guidance of the Commission where appropriate. The paper will also report on the development of questionnaires aimed to facilitate the preparation by Member Countries of the kind of reports on their national plant genetic resources that are requested by Article 11 of the International Undertaking, since these reports will be a major source of information for the GIEWS/PGR and the SW/PGR.

6. FAO Activities and Future Programmes on PGR

According to its terms of reference, the Commission will review FAO's policy, programme and activities on PGR. The background paper will be in two parts, covering crop and forest genetic resources.

7. Biodiversity and Plant Genetic Resources

At the request of the last session of the Commission, this paper will deal with policy issues related to biodiversity and plant genetic resources. It will discuss the relationship between biodiversity and PGR, and will present an overview of ongoing efforts and activities regarding biological diversity, within and outside FAO. The paper will discuss the role of FAO in this field and identify areas where cooperation with other organizations is needed. Following the request of the last session of the FAO Council, it will also discuss the role of the Commission and its scope, in order to ensure this cooperation in the different aspects of biological diversity.

8. International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer

The Third Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources considered that one of its important tasks was the development of international agreements for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources; in this respect, it recommended the preparation of a Code of Conduct "for international collectors of germplasm, to also cover the conservation and use of plant genetic resources". The document presents the Draft Code of Conduct prepared by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Working Group of the Commission; it requests comments, and the endorsement of the Commission.

9. Overall work programme of IBPGR and joint FAO/IBPGR activities

As recommended by the Third Session of the Commission, FAO and IBPGR have developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Programme Cooperation. In line with the recommendations of the Fourth Session of the Working Group, the first memorandum provides for IBPGR to report to the Commission on its overall programme. The background paper will have two parts, the first to be prepared by IBPGR, on its current and planned activities, the second, to be prepared jointly by FAO and IBPGR, on joint activities.

10. Biotechnology and Plant Genetic Resources

At the request of the last session of the Commission, this paper will deal with policy issues regarding biotechnology and PGR. The paper will include a technical progress report on the advance of new biotechnologies, and their possible impact on the conservation and utilization of PGR, with special emphasis on FAO's role and activities; the legal implications of these biotechnologies, with information on the ongoing discussions; activities regarding property rights and biosafety legislation in matters related to the conservation and use of PGR; and the follow up to the recommendation of the Third Session of CPGR to FAO to prepare a Code of Conduct for Biotechnology "as it affects conservation and use of plant genetic resources".

11. Agenda, time and place of the next meeting. Future of the Commission

12. Other Business

13. Adoption of the Report