

March 1997



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et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Seventh Session

Rome, 15-23 May 1997

ESTABLISHMENT OF, AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF, INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS OF THE COMMISSION

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Resources for Food and Agriculture.

ESTABLISHMENT OF, AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF, INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS OF THE COMMISSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Sixth Session in June 1995, the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources considered draft revised statutes for its Working Group, together with the comments of the Working Group itself. The Commission, noting that the proposed broadening of its scope and the possible nature of its Working Group were to be discussed by the FAO Conference in 1995, decided to postpone consideration of this matter until the present session. The current terms of reference and procedures are set out in Annex 1 and the new revised draft statutes discussed by the Sixth Session of the Commission, are given in Annex 2.
2. At its Twenty-eighth Session in October 1995, the FAO Conference agreed to broaden the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover all aspects of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture, and to change its name to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The implementation of the broadened mandate would be on a step-by step basis starting with animal genetic resources and should not interfere with the negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking as well as the preparations for the Fourth International Conference on Plant Genetic Resources (held in Leipzig, Germany in June 1996). The Conference further agreed that the broadened Commission should be assisted by geographically balanced sectoral groups of an intergovernmental technical nature. Pending the establishment of such working groups, the relevant technical committees of the Council and other relevant technical bodies should continue their work in specialized areas of biodiversity. The Conference requested the Director-General to establish an *ad hoc* working group of experts on animal genetic resources to prepare the future work of an intergovernmental technical working group on animal genetic resources and to report on progress to the Director-General who would bring its recommendations, as appropriate, to the attention of the Fourteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) (Rome, 7-11 April 1997) and to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, taking into consideration the progress in the revision of the Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources.
3. The Conference requested the Council at its Hundred and Tenth Session (November 1995) to adopt suitable statutes for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which it did on an interim basis, subject to review at future sessions as necessary.
4. Paragraph 3 of the Statutes of the Commission provide that:
 - “ (i) The Commission may establish intergovernmental technical sectoral working groups (“Sectoral Working Groups”), with appropriate geographical balance, to assist it in the areas of plant, animal, forestry and fisheries genetic resources.
 - (ii) The purposes of the Sectoral Working Groups shall be to review the situation and issues related to agrobiodiversity in the areas under their respective competences, to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters and to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission’s programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission.
 - (iii) The composition and terms of reference for each Sectoral Working Group shall be established by the Commission.”
5. Paragraph 6 of the Statutes requires that the establishment of any sectoral working group or other subsidiary body of the Commission should be subject to a determination by the Director-

General on the programme, administrative and financial implications, before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies.

6. The *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts on Animal Genetic Resources, which met in January 1997, recommended that the present session of the Commission establish an intergovernmental technical working group on animal genetic resources (ITWG-AnGR), and proposed draft statutes for such a group. The proposed statutes are set out in Annex III to this paper. The full report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts is available as document CGRFA-7/97/10.

7. The recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts were considered by COAG at its Fourteenth Session in April 1997; the comments of COAG are available to the Commission as document CGRFA-7/97/Inf. 2.

II. DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ESTABLISHING SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS

8. The *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts stressed the importance of the establishment of an intergovernmental mechanism, and strongly recommended to the Director-General that the Seventh Session of the Commission establish an ITWG-AnGR. Noting that the Third Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had decided to establish a work programme on agricultural biodiversity, the *Ad Hoc* Group believed that the expeditious establishment of the ITWG-AnGR would best serve effective collaboration of the organization and its Members, and intergovernmental activities in this field. The *Ad Hoc* Group considered the possible timing for the establishment of the ITWG-AnGR, and the consideration by the full Commission of AnGR matters. It recognized that, were the Seventh Session of the Commission to take the decision to establish the Working Group, and elect its Chairperson and Members, animal genetic resources would be brought to the attention of the Commission for the first time in 1999. Given the need for effective consideration of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Diversity by the Commission in 1999, the *Ad Hoc* Group recommended that the ITWG-AnGR meet twice before 1999, and that the first meeting should take place as soon as possible.

9. There are no financial or administrative implications consequent to re-establishing the existing Working Group of the Commission as an intergovernmental technical working group on plant genetic resources (ITWG-PGR).

10. For the proposed ITWG-AnGR, the following are the cost estimates for individual meetings of the Group:

Direct cost of meeting (interpretation, messengers)	\$US 30,000
Document preparation	\$US 45,000
Documentation (translation, distribution)	\$US 75,000
Total	\$US 150,000

11. The total cost could be reduced to around \$US 100,000, if a meeting of the Working Group is convened to immediately precede a session of the Commission.

12. If it is decided to convene the first session of the proposed ITWG-AnGR in 1997, the Director-General would need to call for extra-budgetary support, as no provision has been made in the 1996/97 PWB. Provision will need to be made to support subsequent sessions, either from the Regular Programme Budget or from extra-budgetary resources, or a combination of the two.

13. The Commission is invited to review the above and, in light of the COAG report and the Director-General's report on the programme, administrative and financial implications of such action, to decide:

- a) whether or not it wishes to establish sectoral working groups at this session, on plant genetic resources and/or animal genetic resources; and
- b) the terms of reference of any such sectoral working group, in light of the draft terms of reference set out in Annexes II and III.

14. In this connection, and if the Commission decides to re-establish the present Working Group of the Commission as an ITWG-PGR, the Commission's attention is drawn to the need to review the draft revised terms of reference as set out in the draft submitted to the Sixth Session of the Commission to bring it into line with the purposes established in paragraph 3 of Council Resolution 1/110.

ANNEX 1

CURRENT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCEDURES FOR THE WORKING GROUP EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT CPGR-6/95/3

Mandate

1. The Working Group was established by the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources at its first session as a subsidiary body of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources under paragraph 4 of the Statutes of the CPGR with the following terms of reference: *“to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission’s programme of work and any other matters referred to it by the Commission”*.¹
2. The Commission on Plant Genetic Resources agreed, at its fifth session, that the terms of reference of the Working Group *“should be broad, in order to permit sufficient flexibility for the Commission to assign specific tasks to the Working Group. It was suggested that the Working Group take an active role reviewing the preliminary agenda of the Commission”*.²

Composition

3. As regards the composition of the Working Group, the Commission decided at its first session that *“it should be made up of 23 Members of the Commission with the following regional distribution:*
 - 4 representatives from Asia*
 - 4 representatives from Latin America and the Caribbean*
 - 5 representatives from Africa*
 - 3 representatives from Near East*
 - 5 representatives from Europe*
 - 1 representative from Southwest Pacific*
 - 1 Representative from North America”*.³
 4. At its fifth session, the Commission *“reaffirmed the present composition of the Working Group, stressing the need to provide for the participation, upon invitation, in an observer capacity, of members of the Commission that are not members of the Working Group, and experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations”*.⁴
 5. The Commission further *“agreed that the members of the Working Group should be nominated by the Chairman of the Working Group, according to the regional distribution agreed by the Commission in 1985, on the advice of each regional group”*.⁵
 6. The procedure for electing Working Group members was discussed at some length during the ninth session of the Working Group. It was *“agreed that election should be at the discretion of the regional groups, as should the question of rotation and continuity”*.⁶
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ANNEX 2

PROPOSED STATUTES OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE

¹ CPGR/85/Rep, paragraph 78.

² CPGR/93/Rep, paragraph 85.

³ CPGR/85/REP, paragraph 79.

COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT CPGR-6/95/3

Article I
Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the Working Group shall be:

- a) to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work;
- b) to consider any other matters referred to it by the Commission; and
- c) to make suggestions for the Commission's consideration on the above.

Article II
Composition

The Working Group shall be composed of twenty-three Member Nations from the following regions:

- 5 from Africa
- 5 from Europe
- 4 from Asia
- 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean
- 3 from the Near East
- 1 from North America
- 1 from Southwest Pacific.

Article III
Officers

1. The Working Group shall have a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Working Group shall be elected by the Commission. They will remain in office until the next regular session of the Commission and shall be eligible for reappointment.
2. The election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall take place before the end of the second day of the Commission's session.
3. The Chairman, or in his absence the Vice-Chairman, shall preside over the meetings of the Working Group and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work. In the event that both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are not available to preside at a meeting, the Working Group shall appoint one of its Members to take the chair.

Article IV
Election and term of office of Members

1. The Members of the Working Group shall be nominated by the Chairman of the Working Group on the advice of the respective regional groups.
2. The Members of the Working Group shall be elected by the Commission during its regular sessions. They shall serve until Members of the Working Group are elected at the next

Article V
Sessions

Sessions of the Working Group shall be held at least once a year, and shall, in the year in which a session of the Commission is held, be held immediately prior to the session of the Commission.

Article VI
Observers

1. Members of the Commission which are not Members of the Working Group may participate, upon request,⁷ in the work of the Working Group in an observer capacity.
2. The Working Group may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations, to attend its meetings.

⁷

The Commission used the expression “upon invitation”. It was not specified whether the Director-General or the Commission or the Working Group would send the invitation. Besides, the identification of the countries to be invited as well as of the applicable criteria would present a major difficulty. It is therefore proposed to use the expression “upon request” following the Statement of Principles relating to the Granting of Observer Status to Nations. (Basic Texts, L, Appendix).

ANNEX 3

**PROPOSED STATUTES OF
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES
OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE *AD HOC* WORKING
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES
Rome, 7-9 January 1997**

**Article 1
Terms of Reference**

The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources (the Working Group) shall advise and assist the Commission in the performance of its mandate in the area of animal genetic resources and shall, in particular:

- (a) review the situation and issues related to animal genetic resources and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters, including proposals regarding the programme of work on animal genetic resources of the Commission, and in particular the further development of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources;
- (b) consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work on animal genetic resources and the Global Strategy;
- (c) prepare the agenda of meetings of the Commission from the point of view of animal genetic resources;
- (d) perform on behalf of the Commission such tasks of a technical nature as may be necessary in the area of animal genetic resources during the inter-sessional periods of the Commission and report thereon to the Commission at its next session;
- (e) consider and make recommendations on any other matters referred to it by the Commission.

**Article II
Composition**

The Working Group shall be composed of a Chairperson and twenty-three Member Nations from the following regions:

- 5 from Africa
- 5 from Europe
- 4 from Asia
- 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean
- 3 from the Near East
- 1 from North America
- 1 from Southwest Pacific.

Article III Officers

1. The Chairperson of the Working Group shall be elected by the Commission. The Chairperson will remain in office until the next regular session of the Commission and shall be eligible for re-appointment.
2. The election of the Chairperson shall take place before the end of the second day of the Commission's session.
3. The Working Group may elect one or more Vice-Chairpersons from among the representatives of Members of the Working Group. The Vice-Chairpersons shall remain in office until the first session of the Working Group following the next regular session of the Commission and shall be eligible for re-appointment.
4. The Chairperson, or in their absence a Vice-Chairperson, shall preside over the meetings of the Working Group and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work.

Article IV Election and term of office of Members

1. The Members of the Working Group shall be elected at the end of each regular session of the Commission and serve until the next regular session of the Commission. They will be eligible for re-election.
2. In appointing their representatives, the Members of the Working Group shall take into account the specific technical nature of the Working Group.

Article V Sessions

Sessions of the Working Group shall be held at least once a year, and shall, in the year in which a session of the Commission is held, be held prior to the session of the Commission.

Article VI Observers

1. Members of the Commission which are not Members of the Working Group may participate in the work of the Working Group in an observer capacity.
2. The Working Group may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations, to attend its meetings.