



Invitation to the
International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing
for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Rome, Italy, 10 – 12 January 2018

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to extend an invitation to attend the International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 10 to 12 January 2018.

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its last session, *“requested the Secretariat to continue working on access and benefit-sharing [ABS] for genetic resources for food and agriculture [GRFA], with the aim of raising the awareness of Members, their diverse authorities involved in ABS and other stakeholders, to assist Members in reflecting in their ABS measures the importance of GRFA, their special role for food security and the distinctive features of the different subsectors, with a view to contributing to the achievement of SDG Targets 2.5 and 15.6, and to enable the subsectors to engage in a meaningful way and promote communication in relevant processes at local, national, regional and international levels.”* The Commission requested the Secretariat to convene, as soon as practicable and in collaboration with the Secretariats of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an international workshop to assist countries to raise awareness of distinctive features and specific practices of subsectors of GRFA in the context of the *Elements to facilitate domestic implementation of access and benefit-sharing for different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture (ABS Elements)*.

The Commission also agreed to produce non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA, to complement the ABS Elements.

The FAO Conference, at its 40th Session, welcomed the International Workshop to be convened by the Commission Secretariat in collaboration with the CBD and Treaty Secretariats, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, and encouraged donors to provide the necessary funds.

In line with the Commission's request, the International Workshop will:

- consider the inputs received from Members, observers and other stakeholders for the explanatory notes, including on their practical experiences in implementing national ABS measures related to GRFA and the distinctive features and the specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA;
- provide a forum for participants to exchange information, experiences and views; and
- provide outputs for subsequent elaboration into non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA.

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This invitation is sent to addressees of all FAO Members as prescribed in the official channels of communication of FAO, as follows:

For ACTION/INFORMATION, as appropriate:

- Main Addressees (Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or other addressees selected by the Government);
- Permanent Representatives to FAO/Embassies.

This invitation is also being sent to heads of selected international organizations.

The workshop will be open to all Members of the Commission, observers and relevant stakeholders. Expenses incurred in connection with attendance at the Workshop and travel of representatives and observers shall be borne by the Governments or organizations concerned.

The International Workshop will be conducted in English only.

The provisional agenda, as well as further meeting documents, may be downloaded, as they become available, from the following website: <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-meetings/abs/en/>.

The Director-General would appreciate receiving, as soon as possible, the names, official titles and addresses of the representatives designated to attend the International Workshop. Online registration is accessible through the password-protected FAO Members Gateway at: <http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>. Instructions for online registration can be downloaded from this site. Online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph of each participant.

Observers are requested to forward to the Commission, as soon as possible, their names, official titles and addresses by email to cgrfa@fao.org, together with a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Participants requiring visas must obtain these from the Italian Consulate or competent Diplomatic Mission in their country before leaving for Rome. Visa applications must be submitted well in advance of departure, as three weeks or more may be required for an Italian visa to be issued. Exclusively those participants traveling from a country where there is no Italian Consulate or other competent Diplomatic Mission may obtain a visa on arrival in Rome, provided that they advise the Secretariat of the meeting of their full name, date of birth, nationality, passport number, issue and expiry dates, flight number, date and hour of arrival and their full travel itinerary, which must not include any other Schengen country. This information must reach FAO at least three weeks before the arrival of participants to permit FAO to request that a visa be issued at Rome airport. Participants failing to comply with the above will not be allowed to enter Italy by the Italian authorities.