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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

TEAM OF TECHNICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTS ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

Fifth Session

20–22 July 2021

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

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DATE AND TIMES

1. The Fifth Session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS Expert Team) will be held from 20 to 22 July 2021, as a virtual meeting and will be conducted in English.
2. The meetings of the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team will be held daily from 13:00 to 17:00 hours (CEST = UTC+2). Meeting times on day 2 and 3 may be different, if the ABS Expert Team so decides.

PRE-SESSION DOCUMENTS

3. The provisional agenda is available from the ABS Expert Team's dedicated website: <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/meetings/detail/en/c/1397979/>. Other documents may be downloaded, as they become available.

VIRTUAL MEETING

4. The Fifth Session will be held using the platform Zoom. Participants can access Zoom from all devices, via web browser or App. Guidelines applicable to the virtual meeting of the ABS Expert Team are contained in *Annex 1* to this document.

REGISTRATION FOR VIRTUAL MEETING

5. Members of the ABS Expert Team will automatically be registered for the Zoom virtual meeting by the Secretariat. Individualized links to access to the virtual meeting platform will be sent to the email addresses they provided in due time prior to the meeting.

ANNEX I

ZOOM MEETINGS GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

This Virtual Meeting will be held using the platform Zoom. The meeting will be held in English.

Participants can access Zoom from all devices, via the Zoom desktop client (installed on the computer) or using the mobile app.

We strongly recommend downloading the latest version of Zoom on your device for a better user experience and connecting your computer via an Ethernet (land wire) cable to your router, rather than using Wi-Fi. Disconnect all other devices from your network.

Zoom regularly provides new versions of the app. It is strongly recommended to check for updates frequently to ensure that the new features will work and to enhance the security of the platform.

Please pay specific attention to the following information:

1. A **technical test** will be held on **15 July 2021** and participants will be invited by separate email for this purpose.
2. A **waiting room** to verify participants prior to entering the meeting will be enabled. Please join the meeting on 20 July 2022 at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time to avoid delays in joining the meeting.
4. Preferably do not use your built-in computer microphone, as it will not provide sufficient sound quality.
 - Use a USB-headset with integrated microphone, if available.
 - If not available, cellphone earphones/ microphone are better than none, but only wired, not Bluetooth.
 - If no headset/ microphone is available, an external USB-wired microphone is the next best solution.
 - If participants are in a group and have to use one microphone, make sure whoever is speaking is close to the microphone.
5. Turn off all **sound notifications** (Skype, WhatsApp, emails, etc.) while attending the meeting and ensure you are in a place with no background noise or echo.
6. Make sure you enter the virtual meeting room in **Mute mode** and click the Unmute button only when speaking.
9. Please **have your video on** when you take the floor. You can switch the video off and mute the microphone when you have completed your intervention. This may conserve bandwidth and facilitate a smoother conference experience. After your intervention please use the **Lower Hand** function in the Participants menu.
11. Please adjust your speech to the remote distance environment (speak slower and more clearly, avoid excessive use of acronyms, etc.).

Annex 2

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE TEAM OF TECHNICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTS ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING EXCEPTIONAL TO ITS FIFTH SESSION

1. The procedures outlined in this document apply on an exceptional basis to the Fifth Session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS Expert Team) in light of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting virtual modality of this Session. The adoption of such procedures shall not create a precedent for the working methods of the ABS Expert Team or any other subsidiary body of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) for their future meetings.

FUNCTIONS OF THE TEAM OF TECHNICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTS ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

2. The Commission, at its Fourteenth Regular Session, requested each region to appoint up to two representatives by notifying its Secretary through their Bureau member, each of whom has expertise in access and benefit-sharing and preferably in genetic resources for food and agriculture, to form a team of technical and legal experts on access and benefit-sharing.¹

3. At its Seventeenth Regular Session, the Commission requested the ABS Expert Team to contribute to the preparation of the Survey of access and benefit-sharing country measures accommodating the distinctive features of genetic resources for food and agriculture and associated traditional knowledge and, after the review of the document by the Commission's intergovernmental technical working groups, to convene for the sole purpose of reviewing and providing technical and legal inputs.

4. The virtual modality of the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team does not alter its mandate as outlined above.

CONDUCT OF SESSIONS

5. All meetings of the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team will be conducted through the **Zoom platform**. All Members of the ABS Expert Team will be granted equal accessibility and capability inside the Zoom platform, ensuring their ability to be seen, and to view who is in attendance in the virtual meeting, and to address the ABS Expert Team.

6. Participants may **request the floor** by using the 'raise hand' function in the Zoom platform. This will draw up a list of speakers that the Chairperson will use to call participants to take the floor.

7. The **Members of the ABS Expert Team** are listed in the document **CGRFA/TTLE-ABS-5/21/Inf.1**.

8. Participants may use the **chat function of the Zoom platform** for exchanging information. However, views that should be taken into account in the preparation of the meeting report need to be orally expressed during the session.

AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND DOCUMENTATION

9. All the **documents** for the session are prepared and made available as per established practice on the website of the ABS Expert Team.²

10. The **time zone applicable** to the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team will be Central European Summer Time (CEST = UTC +2). This is the time zone of the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the location of the Session as if it were held as a physical meeting.

¹ [CGRFA-14/13/Report](#), paragraph 40 (xiii).

² <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/meetings/ttle-abs/en/>

11. The Chairperson(s) of the ABS Expert Team may call for a **short break** of up to ten minutes at any time during the session.

12. All other **working methods** of the ABS Expert Team outlined in this Note, in relation to the agenda, timetable and documentation, will be applied to the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team in accordance with established practice.

REPORTS AND RECORDS

13. The draft meeting report will be prepared by the *Rapporteur* of the ABS Expert Team, circulated by email to all experts and made available on the webpage of the ABS Expert Team. The Report will record the ABS Expert Team's consensus on the amended modalities for the session outlined in this Note.

14. All other working methods of the ABS Expert Team outlined in this Note, in relation to Reports and records of the session, will be applied to the Fifth Session of the ABS Expert Team in line with established practice.