



# The International Treaty

## ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

Mail: [pgrfa-treaty@fao.org](mailto:pgrfa-treaty@fao.org)

Facsimile: +39 0657056347

Telephone: +39 0657055430

Our Ref.: GB6-026 –DivSeek Initiative

23 October 2014

### NOTIFICATION

#### Progress with the DivSeek Initiative

Dear Madam/Sir,

Following up to the earlier notification on the same topic (GB6-017-DivSeek Initiative),<sup>1</sup> I am pleased to report on recent progress made with DivSeek, for close coordination with the International Treaty and, in particular, within the current work for the development of the Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GIS-PGRFA).

The mission of DivSeek is to enable breeders and researchers to mobilize a vast range of plant genetic variation to accelerate the rate of crop improvement and furnish food and agricultural products to the growing human population. Since my last notification, the DivSeek Initiative has set up a website (<http://www.divseek.org/>) where you can obtain additional information and updates, as well as a copy of the White Paper.<sup>2</sup>

The community of DivSeek stakeholders has mandated a small group of governance and legal experts to support the initiative towards a governance structure. Staff of my Secretariat, providing the joint facilitation unit with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, has organized a meeting of the group of experts in July, and has actively contributed to their work. The group has advised for DivSeek initiative to remain open and participatory, and with policy and operational linkages with the International Treaty.

Accordingly, an invitation for non-binding expressions of interest has been prepared and distributed to a broad spectrum of previously engaged institutions, including public sector entities of several Contracting Parties to the Treaty.

Following receipt of those expressions of interest, the first DivSeek Partners' Assembly will take place in January 2015, back-to-back with the expert consultation on the GIS-PGRFA,<sup>3</sup> to review and approve a Charter setting forth the principles and value propositions of DivSeek, as well as its institutional mechanisms. In parallel with the Assembly, a technical working group is expected to launch a series of scoping activities that will constitute the start-up of DivSeek.

In all these activities, I am to ensure an adequate collaboration with all stakeholders to facilitate their contribution to the Treaty work tracks, in particular for the development of the GIS-PGRFA and the information infrastructure of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing, as well as the operationalization of non-monetary benefit-sharing. I will continue communicating relevant developments concerning DivSeek from time to time, and stand ready to gather any views or input you may provide.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Dr Shakeel Bhatti

Secretary of the Governing Body  
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/017\\_GB6\\_NCP\\_DivSeek\\_en.pdf](http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/017_GB6_NCP_DivSeek_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.divseek.org/s/White-Paper-DivSeek-dcfc.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Resolution 10/2013.

