



4th High-Level Round Table on International Plant Treaty Convenes During 69th United Nations General Assembly

United Nations, New York (24 September 2014) – The Fourth High-Level Ministerial Round Table on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was convened at the United Nations under the patronage of the Sultanate of Oman and co-hosted by Norway and Austria. Under the topic of “The International Treaty, Climate Change and Food Security,” Ministers, Vice Ministers, executive heads of international organizations, eminent dignitaries and other high-level representatives discussed the importance of climate-adapted crops in helping farmers face challenges confronting the global food system.

Dr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, urged countries to work together under the International Treaty for the full implementation of the global gene pool of food crops, farmers’ rights and the sustainable use of the world’s food crops. He congratulated the Treaty for the progress made since the Rio Six-Point Action Plan for the International Treaty was adopted at the 2nd High-Level Round Table in 2012, and encouraged countries to provide additional resources for the activities of the Treaty, including especially its Benefit-sharing Fund and its Global Information System. He reiterated FAO’s full support for the International Treaty.

Minister Fuad bin Jaafar Al-Sajwani, host of the 4th High-Level Round Table and Chairperson of the High-Level Task Force for Resource Mobilization, highlighted the work to be accomplished before the next Governing Body in October 2015, particularly with regard to replenishing the Benefit-Sharing Fund and further enhancing its global impact in its fourth project cycle. The Chairman of the Sixth Session of the Governing Body, Mr Matthew Worrell, described that the production of new climate-adapted crops can be improved by integrating and enhancing the Treaty’s operational systems throughout the value-chain of using plant genetic resources and underlined the importance of adequately funding the Treaty and its Benefit-sharing Fund by the next Governing Body in 2015 in order to achieve this important goal.

Among the challenges discussed at the Round Table were: adapting food production to new conditions affected by climate change, feeding a growing population as traditional food crops disappear from farmers’ fields, and the importance of international collaboration in exchanging seeds, data and technologies for breeding new crop varieties for the emerging conditions of the 21st century.

The Round Table participants highlighted the contributions and future potential of the International Treaty for improving food security in the face of climate change. They spoke of how agricultural productivity and climate adaptation of food crops can be improved through the enhancement of the multiple stages of the value chain related to seeds. This includes the global seed gene pool, the exchange of related scientific, technical and environmental data and information, pre-breeding and plant breeding, the co-development and transfer of technology, and the protection of plant innovation, among others.



Minister Al-Sajwani of Oman chaired the meeting and introduced a draft [“New York Communiqué: The International Treaty, Food Crops and Food Security in a Changing Climate.”](#) available on the Treaty website until 20 October 2014 for comments by Contracting Parties before being finalized.

The meeting was co-hosted by H.E. Andrä Rupprechter, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria, and H.E. Tine Sundtof, Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, represented by Junior Minister Jens Frolich Holte.

The event was held on the occasion of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Secretary-General’s Climate Change Summit. Previous Round Tables have been held in Bandung, Indonesia (2013); Rio di Janeiro, Brazil during the Rio+ 20 Summit (2012); and in Rome, Italy (2010).

Other high-level participants at the 4th Round Table included: Dacian Ciolos, European Union Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development; Dr Adel El-Beltagy, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of Egypt; Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Oman; Luis Felipe Arouz, Minister of Agriculture of Costa Rica; Susil Premajayanth, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Energy of Sri Lanka; Solomon Owens, Minister of Agriculture of the Gambia; F. Umiich Sengeban, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism of Palau; Rusman Heriawan, Vice Minister of Agriculture of Indonesia; Jose Antonio Marcondes de Carvalho, Under-Secretary-General for Energy, Sustainable Development, Science and Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil; Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); Justin Lee, Australia’s Climate Change Ambassador; Mohamed Béavogui, Director, Office for Partnership & Resource Mobilization and Senior Adviser to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) President; Shantanu Mathur, Head of Grants at IFAD; Marie Haga, Executive Secretary of the Global Crop Diversity Trust; Peter Kendall, President of World Farmers’ Organization (WFO); Matthew Worrell, Chair of the Treaty’s Governing Body; Andrew LaVigne, President of the American Seed Trade Association on behalf of the International Seed Federation and the European Seed Association; Maria Helene Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General; and Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary of the International Treaty. In addition, video messages to the 4th High-Level Round Table were sent by Professor M.S. Swaminathan of India; Dr Braulio F. de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Francis Gurry, Secretary-General of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV); and Ann Tutwiler, Director-General of Bioversity International. The video messages and text of the speeches delivered during the 4th High-Level Round Table will soon be available on the website of the International Treaty.

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The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



Panelists during the 4th High-Level Round Table on the International Treaty during UNGA-69, New York. From L to R; Minister Ruppelcher (Austria), Secretary Bhatti (ITPGRFA), Minister Al-Sajwani (Oman), FAO Director-General da Silva, Chair Worrell (6th Governing Body)



Fuad bin Jaafar Al-Sajwani, Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries, Oman (host of HLRT4)



Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO



Andr  Ruppelcher, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water Management, Austria



Adel El-Beltagy, Minister of Agriculture & Land Reclamation, Egypt



Matthew Worrell, Chair, 6th Governing Body of ITPGRFA



Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary, ITPGRFA



Jens Frolich Holte, Junior Minister of Climate & Environment, Norway



Participants at the 4th High-Level Round Table

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