

April 1997



منظمة الأغذية
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Organización
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para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda

**COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

Seventh Session

Rome, 15-23 May 1997

CURRENT EXPENDITURES ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

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CURRENT EXPENDITURES ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

Introduction

1. As part of the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, the Secretariat surveyed governments' and multilateral institutions' current expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture conservation and utilization activities and programmes, in line with the Commission's recommendations at its Sixth Session (June 1995).¹ At its Second Extraordinary Session (April 1996), the Commission had "reiterated the need for a comprehensive compilation and analysis of existing national, bilateral and multilateral expenditures for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and requested that countries provide available information to the Secretariat. It also requested that the secretariat make available to the Leipzig Conference information which it has on this subject."² The Secretariat accordingly submitted an information document on *Current expenditures for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*³ to the International Technical Conference.

2. However, as that document noted, the survey showed a number of limitations in the availability and quality of information. For example, only 37 of the 154 countries surveyed reported national expenditures, and of these, nearly half were from a single region; the 37 expenditure reports also varied significantly in the type of activities covered.⁴

3. The International Technical Conference accordingly requested that "the analysis of information on activities on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture world wide and through all funding sources should be extended under the auspices of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. This work should help to utilize the funds more efficiently and assist national, multilateral, regional and bilateral organizations to develop effective programmes. It should be a continuing process of monitoring and should not be construed as a pre-condition to funding".⁵

4. Following the International Technical Conference, one country has provided the Secretariat with further information on expenditures for activities on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

5. The present document firstly identifies some issues that need to be considered before steps are taken to assemble further information, and then presents a number of possible actions for follow-up.

Issues for consideration by the Commission

6. The Commission may wish to consider the level of detail required in the data, as well as the frequency with which they need to be collected, in the light of the possible uses it would wish to make of such data. It may also wish to consider how government reporting of data on expenditures in the field of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture can be harmonized with other reporting exercises, and how to relate the data collected to the priority activities of the *Global Plan of Action*, and other expenditures on agro-biodiversity and agriculture.

What should the scope of data-collection be?

¹ CPGR/6/95/Rep, para. 66.

² CGRFA-Ex2/96/Rep, para. 19.

³ ITCPR/96/INF/1.

7. Information will probably be required on both domestic expenditure and on international financial flows, which, in the latter case, include bilateral and multilateral funding, and transfers through non-governmental organizations and the private sector. (See *Annex I* for a possible outline of a survey covering these various sources). To ensure capture of all relevant data, data would need to be acquired from both donor and recipient countries. A complementary exercise would be to request that existing information held by FAO, and other relevant regional and international bodies, including the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, be collated. This would be relatively simple, but would exclude information on expenditure at the national level. A further strategy to limit the data requirements, would be to seek information on official development assistance (ODA) and other international flows only, from bilateral and multilateral donors, rather than from recipient countries.⁶

How comprehensive do the data need to be?

8. The degree of comprehensiveness and precision in the data to be collected will have time and cost implications both for the Secretariat, and for countries. The greater the level of precision required, the greater will be the additional time and expense required, and such effort would be justified only to the extent governments require greater precision. Moreover, comprehensive, precise and comparable data would be difficult and time-consuming to gather, mainly because of the widely differing range of data that countries have available in their national reporting systems. The Commission may, however, consider that it does not need great precision, and that a more "rough and ready" body of data will suffice, which might, in the latter case, be obtained by extending the first survey.

How frequently is the data expected to be needed?

9. Depending on the Commission's objectives, a single updating of the expenditure reported to the International Technical Conference may suffice.⁷ On the other hand, the Commission may wish a regular series of reports on global expenditures in the field of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, which would require an ongoing, institutional engagement by FAO, possibly linked to the monitoring of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and the periodic publication of the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*. In considering the frequency of reporting, countries' existing reporting obligations to other multilateral organizations should be taken into account.

How does the data relate to other expenditure reporting programmes?

10. Governments have engaged themselves to reports on various matters related to expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in other international forums, such as to the Convention on Biological Diversity, under Article 26.⁸ For the development of efficient reporting procedures, governments will probably wish to coordinate reporting, and reporting formats.⁹ This may mean that reporting on expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including those related to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, may need to be harmonized with reporting on expenditure for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other national or international programmes and plans. Many of the financial indicators involved are similar in the various processes. It should

⁶ Inter-governmental flows of official development assistance (ODA) are relatively easy to track, because the number of actors is relatively small, including multilateral agencies, development banks, aid agencies and national governments. It is, however, more difficult to measure non-governmental flows, such as development assistance provided by foundations and non-governmental organizations, as well as private sector loans and investments. Such non-governmental funds are important, however, and may often exceed intergovernmental flows.

⁷ ITCPGR/96/INF/1.

⁸ "Each Contracting Party shall ... present to the Conference of the Parties, reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the provisions of [the] Convention and their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of that Convention."

also be noted that the twenty priority activities of the *Global Plan of Action* are directly relevant to the national strategies, plans and programmes called for under Article 6 of the Convention. Moreover, Decision III/11 of the Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity “encourages Parties to develop national strategies, programmes and plans, which should focus on, *inter alia* ... the key elements of the *Global Plan of Action*”. Harmonization and coordination of international commitments and the structure of national reporting systems will require action, both by international bodies, and by national ministries. (In this context, see para. 39 of document CGRFA-7/97/3).

How do national expenditures specifically relate to the Global Plan of Action?

11. Many governments already collect and maintain a range of statistical data which may directly or indirectly relate to expenditures for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. From the survey undertaken during the preparatory process of the International Technical Conference, it is clear that some governments may be only able at present to provide aggregate expenditures for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, while others may be able to disaggregate expenditure, so as to differentiate, for example, expenditures on *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation, plant breeding and biotechnology. It is likely, however, that most governments would have to revise their national accounting arrangements, to be able easily to categorize and account for national expenditures under each of the twenty priority activities of the *Global Plan of Action*. If such exercises were to be undertaken at the national level, it would probably be efficient for the data generated to be used in monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

Possible courses of action

12. The Commission may wish to consider one or a combination of the possible following courses of action:

- a) undertaking an expenditure survey,
- b) preparing national case studies, to provide in-depth assessments of expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture,
- c) hosting an expert group meeting to discuss and develop procedures to account for national, regional and international expenditures on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture,
- d) conducting regional workshops for national governments, on the development of harmonized data-reporting procedures,
- e) collaborating with the relevant conventions and commissions to develop accounting procedures specific to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, to complement accounting procedures for biodiversity in general.

Action (a): An expenditure survey

13. If requested, the Secretariat could conduct a second assessment of national expenditures on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, as was undertaken for the International Technical Conference, to obtain approximate estimates of expenditures. Countries might now be asked to report in the context of the priority activity areas in the *Global Plan of Action*. Alternatively the Secretariat could embark on a more comprehensive survey programme, which would probably need to be undertaken on a country-by-country basis, in close collaboration with national authorities. Such a programme would require more time, and extra-budgetary resources would need to be made available.

14. Several countries could be selected for in-depth analysis of expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture activities. These could include both developed and developing countries. Further countries could then be covered on a rolling basis. Such a data-acquisition process through national case studies, could help to develop specific accounting mechanisms for plant genetic resources activities, in relation to expenditures on other biodiversity activities. It would also help coordinate, as far as possible, national data-generating and reporting systems. Substantial resources would need to be allocated, at both national and international levels.

Action (c): An expert group meeting to establish reporting parameters

15. The survey undertaken for the International Technical Conference showed very differing national perceptions as to what constitutes plant genetic resources for food and agriculture activities, which often resulted in incomparable data. To address this question, FAO might be requested to convoke an expert group meeting, to identify and agree on parameters for future reporting, and a common core set of expenditure items or indicators to be covered. Extra-budgetary resources would be required.

Action (d): regional workshops on the development of harmonized data-reporting procedures

16. FAO could organize a series of workshops on data-reporting for national focal points for reporting data on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The workshops would focus on developing capacity to measure national expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, in a manner which would aid national decision-making, as well as in reporting expenditures. Through such a training programme, the capacity to report on the common core set of expenditure items or indicators could be established. Extra-budgetary resources would be required.

Action (e) Collaboration with other inter-governmental entities

17. As has been noted, various bodies, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the Convention to Combat Desertification, are developing accounting procedures for reporting expenditures in fields related or relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Many bodies are currently involved in the development and testing of such procedures, including leading international and national agencies, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations. It might therefore promote synergy, and help rationalize reporting, if a series of high-level, multi-stakeholder meetings were organized, supported by technical expertise, to harmonize accounting procedures and agree data-collecting responsibilities. Extra-budgetary resources would be required.

Combining these various possible actions

18. The Commission may wish to consider the possibility of updating the survey carried out for the International Technical Conference (para. 13 and *Annex 1*), perhaps within the context of the periodic publication of the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and the monitoring of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. It may also wish to re-examine the desirability of implementing some combination of the other possible actions outlined. For example, actions (c) and (d) would be most effective if implemented as a pair. A substantial programme to develop a comprehensive, precise and regular analysis of current expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture would be a major exercise, which would probably need to include several, if not all, of the elements listed above.¹⁰ In addition, such a survey programme would have substantial cost implications.

Action expected from the Commission

19. The Commission is invited to provide guidance to the Secretariat on how to proceed in extending the analysis of current expenditures, in line with the decisions of the International Technical Conference.

ANNEX 1**OUTLINE OF A POSSIBLE SURVEY OF CURRENT EXPENDITURES ON ACTIVITIES ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

1. A survey of current expenditures relating to the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture could cover the items listed below. The main purpose of the survey would be to characterize activities and associated expenditures carried out in relation to each priority activity of the *Global Plan of Action*.

2. For each priority activity, the following information could be requested from every country:

- total in-country expenditure
- summary descriptions of activities, programmes and projects
- an indication of the sources of finance:
 - government
 - official development assistance or other foreign sources
 - multilateral
 - bilateral
 - private
 - domestic, private or non-governmental
 - private sector
 - non-governmental organizations
 - executing agents
 - government agency
 - foreign agency
 - non-governmental organizations or private sector

3. For donor countries, the following information on each activity area would also be requested:

- total foreign or international assistance given
- a summary description of activities, programmes and projects
- indication of type of financing:
 - government
 - official development assistance or other foreign assistance
 - through multilateral channels
 - through bilateral channels
 - through private or non-governmental channels
- receiving countries/international organizations