

March 2007



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de las  
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para la  
Agricultura  
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### Item 4.1 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Eleventh Regular Session

Rome, 11-15 June 2007

**PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE SECOND  
STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: A BASIS TO UPDATE  
THE ROLLING GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This document provides information in response to the recommendations of the Tenth Regular Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, regarding the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* ("The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources")<sup>1</sup> as a basis to update the rolling *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* ("The Global Plan of Action").
2. This document first reviews the Commission's previous consideration of the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, and the linkages between *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and *The Global Plan of Action*. It provides information on progress in the preparation of *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* since the last Session of the Commission. It proposes a way forward to finalize the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* by the Commission's Twelfth Session, which will make possible the updating of *The Global Plan of Action* by the Thirteenth Session.

**II. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE TIMETABLE  
FOR THE SECOND STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**

3. In 1996, the first *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* was received by 150 countries at the Leipzig International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, which welcomed it as the first comprehensive worldwide assessment of the status and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. It was published in 1998. The primary source of information was 154 country reports.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* was to provide an analytical basis for the rolling *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, which the International Technical Conference adopted.
4. In 1999, at its Eighth Regular Session, the Commission agreed that a second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, and an amendment to *The Global Plan of Action*, should be considered by the Commission after the completion of the negotiation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.<sup>3</sup> In 2001, the first session of the Commission's Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources made recommendations for the content and process of preparing the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*,<sup>4</sup> which – it recalled – should provide objective information and analysis, as a basis for updating the rolling *Global Plan of Action*.
5. In 2002, at its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission reviewed and considered as realistic a timetable that FAO proposed for the finalization of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* by the time of the Eleventh Session of the Commission, provisionally

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<sup>1</sup> A report on other follow-up activities is contained in document CGRFA-11/07/11.

<sup>2</sup> Some 159 countries and many international and non-governmental organizations participated in a series of regional and sub-regional preparatory meetings, over a period of three years.

<sup>3</sup> CGRFA-8/99/REP, para. 19.

<sup>4</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/REPORT, para. 20-25.

scheduled for late 2006.<sup>5</sup> The Commission stressed that the preparatory process should be integrated with the monitoring of the implementation of *The Global Plan of Action*<sup>6</sup>, through a new approach. In November 2003, a technical workshop on information-gathering was organized, the outcome of which was verbally reported to the second session of the Working Group. The Working Group then recommended an indicative timeline for preparing the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*: if not adopted in 2006, it should be available for adoption by the Commission at its Twelfth Regular Session, provisionally scheduled for 2008.

6. In 2004, at its Tenth Regular Session, the Commission reviewed the document, *Progress in the Preparation of the Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.<sup>7</sup> It adopted the plan recommended by Working Group's Report for preparing the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*,<sup>8</sup> to be completed in 2008.<sup>9</sup> It encouraged Members, and other countries and organizations, such as IPGRI (now Bioversity), to participate in the preparatory process. It called upon donor countries and international organizations to assist, by providing financial resources for the full participation of all countries, including in the monitoring of the implementation of *The Global Plan of Action*.

7. The Commission also approved a list of thematic background studies,<sup>10</sup> to be carried out, as far as resources allowed, while giving priority to updating *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, focusing on changes that had taken place since 1996.

8. In October 2005, at the Working Group's Third Session, a revised timeline was presented.<sup>11</sup> This foresaw finalization of the second *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resource* by the Commission's Twelfth Regular (then planned for fall 2008). The Working Group also noted that "If the required financial resources are not all forthcoming, the Commission may need to consider extending deadlines or reducing activities".<sup>12</sup>

### III. LINKAGES BETWEEN *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES* AND *THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

9. *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and *The Global Plan of Action*, which were prepared together for the 1996 Leipzig International Technical Conference, are closely linked.<sup>13</sup> As the Commission reiterated at its Tenth Session, *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* provide objective information and analysis and identifies priorities, as a basis for updating the rolling *Global Plan of Action*.

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<sup>5</sup> CGRFA-9/02/8.

<sup>6</sup> CGRFA-9/02/REP, para. 20.

<sup>7</sup> CGRFA-10/04/05 Add.1.

<sup>8</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/REPORT, *Appendix D*.

<sup>9</sup> The Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity had earlier been informed by FAO that the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* would be available at the time of the review of its programme of work on agricultural biological diversity. The decision to postpone finalization of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* made it impossible to use it for this review.

<sup>10</sup> As given in *Appendix E* in CGRFA -10/04/REP.

<sup>11</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/3, *Annex 2*.

<sup>12</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/REPORT, para. 24.

<sup>13</sup> The Leipzig International Technical Conference recommended that the Commission develop a procedure for review of the *Global Plan of Action*. Such review "should deal with progress at national, regional and international levels in implementation, elaboration, and adjustment as appropriate, of the *Plan*, thus making it a "rolling" *Plan* as recommended in the Agenda 21." It recommended that a first review should be undertaken within four years, that is, by 2000.

10. This relationship, and the role of the Commission, is restated in the Treaty, which, in its Article 17.3, states that Contracting Parties “shall cooperate with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the FAO in its periodic reassessment of *The State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources* in order to facilitate the updating of the rolling *Global Plan of Action...*”.

11. FAO is making all efforts to streamline the application of the new monitoring approach for the implementation of *The Global Plan of Action* and the preparation of the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*. The Commission has emphasized the need for the two processes to be fully integrated, in order to minimize the reporting burden on Members, and that the monitoring approach should be country-driven and flexible, in order to respond to evolving needs and priorities:<sup>14</sup> such flexibility is critical, given the rolling nature of *The Global Plan of Action*. The new monitoring approach is progressing adequately, and has resulted in 35 country reports on the state of plant genetic resources being prepared, in the five years since the pilot phase started in 2002. It must be recognized, however, that the rolling-out of the monitoring approach to all countries is a long-term objective, while the need to finalize the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*, initially planned for 2006, is a short-term priority.

12. In considering the scheduling of the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*, within its work programme and the work programme of the Governing Body of the Treaty, the Commission may wish to take the following into consideration:

- The *Global Plan of Action* was prepared more than a decade ago. If not revised soon to incorporate new scientific knowledge and societal developments, and address emerging issues, it risks becoming obsolete and ineffective in responding to the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals. This would limit the usefulness of the new monitoring system in the medium term, and it will be difficult to mobilize countries and donors to continue to develop the system.
- If *The Global Plan of Action* becomes obsolete, it may hinder the work of the Governing Body of the Treaty in developing its Funding Strategy, where priority will be given to mobilizing resources for the implementation of agreed plans and programmes in developing countries and countries in transition. Resolution 1/2006 of the first session of the Governing Body noted “the importance of taking into account the rolling *Global Plan of Action...*, when establishing further priorities for the Funding Strategy and when establishing a target for funding, considering also the need for regular updating of *The Global Plan of Action.*”

The Commission will need to programme its work in two phases: (i) the review of the draft second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*, with its analysis of emerging issues and identification of priorities, in order to guide the updating of the rolling *Global Plan of Action*, and (ii) consideration of the draft of the updated *Global Plan of Action*.

13. This has been taken into account in the draft Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Commission, which suggests (i) that the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources* will be finalized at the Twelfth Session of the Commission, and (ii) that the updated *Global Plan of Action* will be adopted by the Thirteen Session.

#### **IV. PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST SESSION IN THE PREPARATION OF THE SECOND STATE OF THE WORLD’S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**

14. Countries have been requested to nominate national focal points to monitor the implementation of *The Global Plan of Action* and to prepare a country reports, using the guidelines adopted by the Commission, as a contribution to the preparation of the second *State of*

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<sup>14</sup> CGRFA-9/02/REP, para. 19.

*the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.<sup>15</sup> As of 6 February 2007, nominations of 80 national focal points had been received from 73 countries. Approximately 40 countries have so far participated in the monitoring approach, with support from the extra-budgetary funding available. Country reports, together with the databases from established information-sharing mechanisms in these countries, are expected by April 2007.

15. FAO is carrying out an assessment of the status of plant breeding and related biotechnology capacities in member countries, and has so far gathered information from 51 countries and led to the creation of the Global Partnership Initiative on Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB). Results of this work will be used in the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.

16. Three of the planned thematic studies are expected to have been finalized by the time the Commission meets:

- Study A: Plant genetic resources of forage crops, pasture and rangelands;
- Study H: Interactions between plant and animal genetic resources, and opportunities for synergy in their management;
- Study E: The conservation of crop wild relatives.

A number of the background study papers prepared for the Commission since 1996 will also inform the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.

## **V. FINALIZATION OF THE SECOND STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**

17. At its last Session, the Working Group noted that the Commission might need to consider extending deadlines or reducing activities for the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, if the financial resources were not forthcoming. It is therefore important to take stock of the current situation.

18. FAO is making all efforts to streamline the new monitoring approach and the preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, but a limited human capacity in FAO and the lack of financial resources to support countries in applying the new monitoring approach at national level has meant that country reports are being received at a considerably slower rate than had been anticipated. This is despite the fact that not all countries require external financial support. Nonetheless, considerable progress has been made in assisting developing countries that wish to use the monitoring system to do so, in the medium- and long-term perspective.

19. Rather than again postpone the finalization of the *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, it would seem most practical to maintain the current target for its finalization by the Twelfth Session, in order to provide a concise, up-to-date picture of the key changes occurred since 1996 and emerging issues, and identify priorities. This can be achieved by reducing the number of preparatory activities and separating clearly the delivery dates of each of the products, in order to capitalize on the various processes underway, including information so far available from the monitoring approach. The outline adopted by the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission<sup>16</sup> would be maintained, but the text would be concise and tactical, and would focus on the most important changes and emerging issues that have occurred since 1996, in order to ground the updating of the *Global Plan of Action*.

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<sup>15</sup> At its 10<sup>th</sup> Regular Session the CGRFA adopted the revised indicators and reporting format for monitoring of the GPA and took note of the guidelines for the preparation of the country reports. These later guidelines were further discussed at the Third Session of the Working Group on Plants, in October 2005.

<sup>16</sup> See CGRFA-9/02/8.

20. The Commission could request the fourth session of its Working Group to review the draft *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, guide its finalization, and make any necessary recommendations to the Commission's Twelfth Session (probably in November 2008), where it would be endorsed.

## VI. POSSIBLE SCENARIOS TO UPDATE *THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

21. Following the Commission's endorsement of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, and on the basis of its guidance, as well as any requests or advice that the Governing Body of the Treaty wishes to make,<sup>17</sup> *The Global Plan of Action* could be updated for the Commission's Thirteenth Session, drawing as well on the fuller information that will in the meantime have been generated by the extension of the monitoring approach to yet more countries. This has been assumed in the draft Multi-Year Programme of Work before the Commission.<sup>18</sup>

22. The Commission may wish to now provide a preliminary indication as to how it wishes to approach the updating of *The Global Plan of Action*, so that a proposal can be prepared for consideration at its next session. Three scenarios could be envisaged. All would take into account emerging issues<sup>19</sup> identified by the Commission in preparation of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*,<sup>20</sup> the new international processes of relevance to plant genetic resources, and country reports resulting from the monitoring approach.

- *In-depth review*: this could produce a fully reworked set of priority areas and activities, and provide a series of targets and indicators of progress for each priority. Such an in-depth review would take into account the emerging issues identified by the Commission through the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and new international processes.
- *Focused review*: this review would be based on the current structure of 20 priorities, but take into account emerging issues identified by the Commission through the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and new international processes. A few priorities could be added or removed in areas of emerging importance. Targets and indicators could be provided at the level of the priority areas of *The Global Plan of Action*.
- *Priority refinement*: a minimalist approach will be followed. The 20 priorities would remain unchanged, with possible textual changes within each to reflect developments since 1996. No targets or indicators would be included.

23. The Commission could request the fifth session of its Working Group to review the draft *Global Plan of Action*, guide its finalization, and make any necessary recommendations to the Commission's Thirteenth Session, where it would be finalized. It is foreseen that the Thirteen Session will be held in late 2010, in order for the Commission to have an opportunity to assess

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<sup>17</sup> See CGRFA-11/07/16, *Mechanisms for cooperation between the Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, paragraph 24.

<sup>18</sup> See CGRFA-11/07/21, *The Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Commission*.

<sup>19</sup> Emerging issues already identified that are not well reflected in the *Global Plan of Action* include: indicators of genetic diversity and erosion; the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture through breeding and seed systems; genetic resources of forage crops, pastures and rangelands; plant genetic resources and nutrition; managing genetic resources in agro-ecosystems; climate change; and biosecurity and the management of plant genetic resources.

<sup>20</sup> This includes the Treaty (in particular articles 5 and 6); the Global Crop Diversity Trust; the Svalbard Seed Vault; and the CBD's Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity. The updated *Global Plan of Action* would probably require a new section on implementation, to reflect the institutional changes that have occurred since Leipzig.

progress in the achievement of the 2010 Target of the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>21</sup> in the field of food and agriculture, and discuss future work in this field.

24. The adoption of a revitalized *Global Plan of Action* could contribute to mobilizing international and national commitments for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, in the face of new challenges such as climate change, and in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It would also provide a strong basis for the Treaty's Funding Strategy. Given that *The Global Plan of Action* is a pivotal supporting component of the Treaty, arrangements could be made for a joint adoption of the updated *Global Plan of Action*, perhaps at a special, high-level ceremony, in the context of the Thirteen Session of the Commission.

25. *Table 1* provides the proposed timeline for these processes:

October 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic inputs for preparation of the <i>State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources</i>, including available country reports, assembled</li> </ul>
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First draft of the second <i>State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources</i> made available in the web</li> </ul>
June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WG-PGR- 4:</b> Detailed review of the first draft</li> </ul>
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final draft of the second <i>State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources</i> made available in the web</li> </ul>
November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CGRFA-12:</b> Endorsement of the second <i>State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources</i> and adoption of a detailed plan for the process of updating <i>The Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>
May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of the second <i>State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources</i></li> </ul>
March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WG-PGR-5:</b> Revision of draft for the updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>
November 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CGRFA-13:</b> Finalization of the updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> <li>• <b>High level ceremony:</b> Adoption of the updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>

## VII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMISSION

26. The Commission is requested to consider and approve the proposals in this document for the finalization of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, and for the subsequent process of updating *The Global Plan of Action*:

27. If this is acceptable to the Commission, it may wish to:

- Request its Inter-governmental Technical Working Group, at its fourth meeting, to review and guide the finalization of the draft of the second *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*, for endorsement at its Twelfth Session;
- Request the Secretariat to inform the Governing Body of the Treaty of its plans for updating these supporting components of the Treaty, and invite the Governing Body to make comments and suggestions;
- Request the Secretariat to submit a plan for the process of updating *The Global Plan of Action* at the same time as *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* is made available to it at its Twelfth Regular Session;

<sup>21</sup> 2010 Biodiversity target: to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.



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- Encourage Members and other countries and relevant organizations to contribute to the preparation of the Second Report, in particular through the preparation of country reports, in the context of the monitoring approach to the implementation of *The Global Plan of Action*;
  - Call for mobilization of the necessary extra-budgetary resources to allow the full participation of developing countries in the monitoring approach.