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منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

### Item 7.4 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

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

**Eleventh Regular Session**

Rome, 11-15 June 2007

**REPORTS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON  
THEIR POLICIES, PROGRAMMES, AND ACTIVITIES ON  
AGRICULTURAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:**

**(3) INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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For reasons of economy, this document is produced in a limited number of copies. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring it to the meetings and to refrain from asking for additional copies, unless strictly indispensable. The documents for this meeting are available on Internet at <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/cgrfa11.htm>

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture regularly receives reports from relevant international organizations, including FAO, on their policies, programmes and activities of relevance to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. These reports contribute to understanding in this area between FAO and its Commission, and other international organizations, and to the development of appropriate mechanisms for cooperation and coordination.
2. FAO's own activities are reported in documents CGRFA-11/07/20.1, CGRFA-11/07/20.2 and CGRFA-11/07/20.3.
3. Reports from United Nations and other Inter-governmental Organizations are contained in document CGRFA-11/07/19.1, and reports from International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are contained in document CGRFA-11/07/19.2.
4. This document presents reports on the activities undertaken by some Non-governmental Organizations in relation to genetic resources for food and agriculture. FAO has limited itself to compiling the reports as submitted. Each report is fully the responsibility of the organization submitting it.

**II. ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL**

5. ActionAid International (AAI) is an international development NGO working in more than 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Our mission is to "work with poor and marginalized people to eradicate poverty by overcoming the injustice and inequity that cause it." AAI's 2005-2010 Strategy entitled "Rights to End Poverty" reaffirms our commitment to poverty eradication through the rights based approach. The ultimate aim of Action Aid's development work is to secure self-sufficiency for the community involved. In this context, the ActionAid's guiding vision is to engage poor people as partners in tackling the causes of poverty.
6. ActionAid International will launch an international campaign on the Right to Food and against Hunger in June 2007. This campaign will be implemented at national and international levels and will last for the next 3 years. To strengthen the synergies with our food rights program work worldwide, we will actively engage in other thematic areas of policy work including governance, women's rights and HIV AIDS.
7. *Access and Control over Natural Resources.* Activities in our work on seeds, patents and biodiversity include advocacy on patents and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), the implementation of seed banks and conservation and biodiversity protection projects, anti-GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) campaigns and the promotion of sustainable seed use. In some countries, biodiversity and nutrition are a core area of our work. We support community managed revolving seed schemes and will continue to work with researchers to improve traditional seed varieties using participatory research processes. Our program also promotes access to water in several countries. We will continue to promote these initiatives at local level.

8. Building on the food sovereignty approach, we will advocate for national public policies that promote poor people's access to and control over natural resources and local biodiversity. We will continue to place particular emphasis on national laws and policies regarding access to and control over land and will address international constraints to such policies. We will advocate for farmers' rights to biodiversity within the FAO and WTO (World Trade Organization) contexts.

9. *Agricultural development.* Most of AAI's interventions in agricultural development support small-scale farming. These include agriculture extension, credit schemes, irrigation, soil and water conservation, integrated pest management, improved seeds and so on. We intend to expand this program. Our local work will demonstrate the feasibility of an alternative agriculture development model based on small-scale farming and sustainable agriculture and will give us legitimacy to campaign and advocate for national and international food related policies that can expand such a model. We will also identify and advocate for the public policies required to further implement such sustainable agricultural development and will lobby at international level for the removal of international constraints that prevent the implementation of these policies. Our work on agriculture must also take into account the deepening impacts of climate change on poor people's capacity to produce and/or access food. AAI aims to build more resilient systems and reduce poor people's vulnerability to natural disasters.

### **III. INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR UNDERUTILISED CROPS (ICUC)**

10. ICUC is a global research, development and training organisation and a Partner Organisation to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). It is hosted by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). ICUC provides expertise and acts as a knowledge hub for tropical, sub-tropical and temperate plant development.

11. ICUC's mission is to promote the use of underutilised crops for the benefit of humankind and the environment, and its goal is reduced poverty and suffering through the improvement and promotion of underutilised crops for food, medicines, fodder and industrial needs, and also for environmental protection. Through its mission and the research and policy dialogue it initiates, ICUC contributes to the Millennium Development Goals, the CGIAR System Priorities and the goals of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

12. To achieve its aims, ICUC partners with the CGIAR Centres, and works with many smaller initiatives scattered around the world. ICUC has been instrumental in the founding of several professional networks, UTFANET (Underutilised Tropical Fruits in Asia Network), SEANUC (Southern and East Africa Network for Underutilised Crops) and ACUC (Asian Centre for Underutilised Crops).

#### *Specific projects*

13. Since its inception in 1992, ICUC has supported research on national priorities for germplasm collections, agronomy and post-harvest methodology of underutilised species and associated scientific conferences and training events through co-funding and coordination. More recently, the focus has expanded to include processing and marketing studies and between 2004-6 ICUC coordinated a regional project in South Asia to develop processing and marketing methodologies for underutilised crops.

14. In 2006, ICUC spearheaded the development of a Strategic Framework on Underutilized Plant Species Research and Development through a consultative process and is now implementing the agreed agenda through partnership with national and international partners. A Position Paper on Biotechnology and Underutilised Plants has been published and further Position Papers on Underutilised Plants and Biodiversity and Underutilised Plants Intellectual Property Rights are in preparation.

15. Research is ongoing to investigate underutilised germplasm pathways, post-harvest handling and specific product value chains for fruits and vegetables in Asia and Africa.

*Publications*

16. ICUC has produced and contributed to a number of policy documents and research publications with direct relevance to the work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. For more information on these publications, please visit our website: <http://www.icuc-iwmi.org/Publications/>

#### **IV. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE (IDRC)**

17. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) contributes to research on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) mainly through its Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) Program Area, which includes three Program Initiatives:

- Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health (Ecohealth);
- Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE); and
- Urban Poverty and Environment (UPE).

The goal of the ENRM Program Area is to help developing countries find feasible and sustainable approaches to enhance food and water security, human health and natural resources management, building their foundations on democratic participation, good governance and social equity.

*IDRC's RPE Program*

18. An important focus in GRFA is fair access and benefit sharing (ABS). Systematic research into the design, implementation and monitoring of practical, fair and appropriate mechanisms concerning conservation and ABS remains underdeveloped and developing countries in particular are feeling frustrated that they have been allowing access to their genetic resources (mainly to Northern based companies), but to date there has been little benefit sharing.

The effective and fair implementation of ABS mechanisms is largely the responsibility of national governments. Many countries have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), but very few have policy and legal rules, regulations and provisions in place to make the CBD work in practice. A strategic component of IDRC's RPE program initiative is a focus on locally grounded, national policy processes. RPE proposes to support projects that build ABS capacities through on-site, local level learning processes, that make direct connections to national and, where feasible, international policy agendas. The RPE program will support a limited number of research proposals that focus on key issues and questions related to ABS in selected countries.

19. *Projects supported by IDRC in the area of GRFA:*

- *Communicating Seed Knowledge (India and Nepal)*  
USC Nepal and the GREEN Foundation, India, have been working to stem the erosion of PGR and farmers' knowledge pertaining to them. Through its *Seed Literacy Project*, USC Nepal has created training materials for farmers, based on the traditional knowledge of the farmers themselves, to promote sustainable use of local landraces and crop varieties and water and soil conservation. IDRC's grant will allow both organizations to disseminate the results of their work to local farmers, NGOs and local government officials.
- *Dietary Diversity, Traditional Foods and PGR*  
This project aims to mitigate and where possible reverse unhealthy trends toward dietary simplification in sub-Saharan Africa. It will do so by identifying and promoting culturally

appropriate and sustainable use of diversity within local agro-ecosystems. The overall goal is to increase dietary diversity thereby reducing genetic erosion, conserving biodiversity and improving health.

- *Management of Seed Systems and Gene Flow (Cuba, Mexico, Peru)*  
Research has revealed that many farmers in developing countries participate in dynamic informal seed exchange networks and that such seed systems shape crop genetic diversity. In this project, researchers will work with farming communities in Cuba, Mexico and Peru to assess how local seed systems deliver and maintain crop genetic resources important to farmers' livelihoods.
- *Rural Livelihood Security and Policy Change (Guangxi, China)*  
This project aims to identify and promote rural development policies in support of the efforts of farmers in south-western China who still cultivate improved open pollen varieties and landraces of maize, and maintain a greater level of genetic diversity than the rest of the country.

## V. INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM)

20. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is the worldwide umbrella organization uniting over 750 member organizations and institutions in some 108 countries.

21. The federation's activities on genetic resources are integrated into work around biodiversity, and IFOAM actively cooperates on this issue with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in Germany. These organizations have held two international conferences (1999 and 2002) on the relationship between organic agriculture and biodiversity. In September 2004, the organizations joined forces with UNEP and FAO for the 3rd International Conference on Biodiversity in Nairobi, Kenya.

22. The federation has also published a comprehensive brochure and a leaflet on the relationship of organic agriculture and biodiversity. A two-page leaflet on the positive contribution of organic agriculture to seed diversity is available in English, French and Spanish at [http://www.ifoam.org/organic\\_facts/benefits/index.html](http://www.ifoam.org/organic_facts/benefits/index.html)

23. A Manual for an effective enhancement of biodiversity on organic farms is being elaborated, with particular emphasis on supporting a successful implementation of the forthcoming IFOAM Basic Standard section for biodiversity and landscape quality.

24. IFOAM is also cooperating on biodiversity-related matters with FAO. In 2004, the federation, along with the FAO and the International Seed Federation (ISF), successfully organized the 1st International Conference on Organic Seeds in Rome. Among the key themes were biodiversity and genetic resources.

25. The Federation, together with the Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva and Magda Aelvoet, former president of the Greens in the European Parliament, promoted and won the first legal "biopiracy patents" case at the European Patent Office for revoking a patent on a fungicidal product from seeds of the Neem tree, which is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and whose characteristics have been recognized by farmers over millennia.

26. IFOAM is working actively to protect genetic resources from the invasive threat of genetic engineering technologies, whose use is completely banned in organic farming and food processing. The organization is lobbying for a total ban in all of agriculture and food processing. IFOAM has produced a manual on how to set up GMO free regions as to safeguard seed from contamination and to help organic producers to produce GMO free.

27. IFOAM published a training manual on seed saving, which instructs trainers on how to set up a training programme to assist farmers and farmer groups in seed saving.

28. Some European organic associations are running, together with research institutes, the project "FarmSeedOpportunities" funded by VI framework programme EU. The project aims to contribute to the enlargement of the market of local varieties requested by the growing consumer demand for organic and locally produced food.

## **VI. THE NORDIC GENE BANK**

29. The Nordic countries have joined forces to conserve the biological cultural heritage of the region. In 1979 the Nordic Gene Bank (NGB) was established as an institution under the Nordic Council of Ministers and forms the core of Nordic co-operation on plant genetic resources. It is a centre for the conservation, characterization and utilization of plant genetic resources in the Nordic countries. The Nordic Gene Bank celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2004 and this achievement can be considered a flagship of the well-functioning Nordic co-operation in the field of biodiversity, genetic resources and Nordic cultural heritage. Internationally, this type of cooperation is unique. The seeds of cultivated plants from all Nordic countries are separately packed and stored in "off-the-shelf" freezers at the NGB headquarters in Alnarp, Sweden. The Nordic Gene Bank's freezers contain more than 30,000 accessions of seeds from more than 237 Nordic cultivated plant species. Varieties of crops such as cereals, forage crops, vegetables and oilseeds are thus conserved for the future.

30. The Nordic Gene Bank has over the years obtained an even more important role in common management of domesticated plant genetic resources in the Nordic countries. NGB is a joint Nordic institute reporting directly to the Nordic council of ministers. NGB's mandate is to:

- Conserve and document the genetic variation in Nordic material from plant species useful for agriculture and horticulture. The material stored is to be made available for plant breeding, research and any other bona fide use;
- Foster rational co-operation between the Nordic countries in their efforts to use plant genetic resources for plant breeding and plant breeding research; and
- Participate in international co-operation in the conservation and use of plant genetic resources.

31. In January 2007 NGB's base collection is moved to Denmark, where this important resource will be stored for the future, as a safety net for the active collection situated at the NGB headquarters in Alnarp, Sweden. In addition, NGB has been operating its own safety storage facility on Svalbard for more than 25 years. From 2008 onwards, the excellent storage facilities on Svalbard, owned by the Norwegian Government and managed by NGB together with other partners, will help to safeguard the diversity of seeds from all over the world in a new international facility; Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

## **VII. PRACTICAL ACTION**

32. Practical Action, also known as the Intermediate Technology Development Group or ITDG, is a specialist international development NGO founded in 1966. We work on a range of technological issues with and in support of communities in developing countries, from regional offices in East Africa (Nairobi), Southern Africa (Harare), South America (Lima) and South Asia (Colombo). In addition there are national offices in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sudan. Our headquarters are in the UK.

33. We have worked on agricultural biodiversity issues for more than 15 years with smallholder farmers, pastoralists and artisanal fisherfolk and have also been actively engaged in following the negotiations, and now the implementation, of the International Seed treaty

(ITPGRFA), the wider work of the Commission and its technical working groups, the implementation of the Leipzig Global Plan of Action, the refocusing of the Commission's priorities towards the development, conservation and sustainable use of livestock breeds and associated species, especially by pastoralists, herders and farmers, and the development of the Agricultural Biodiversity agenda by the Convention on Biological Diversity.([www.itdg.org/?id=advocacy](http://www.itdg.org/?id=advocacy)).

34. Through publications, fieldwork, seminars and policy advocacy, we promote the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity not only for food production but also for providing sustainable livelihoods, living landscapes and life support systems (biological and ecosystem functions). We seek to support (especially) small-scale producers to develop and maintain diverse agro-ecological production systems, which both generate and depend upon agricultural biodiversity and are an essential component of food sovereignty. We campaign for the full implementation of Farmers' Rights, the realisation of a broad bundle of Livestock Keepers Rights and the exclusion from monopoly privileges on all plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. We join other Civil Society Organizations and Social Movements in challenging the processes that threaten agricultural biodiversity, and the integrity and free-flow of genetic resources for food and agriculture, not least the promotion and spread of monocultural industrial agricultural systems, proprietary seeds and breeds and GMOs, especially Genetic Use Restriction Technologies (GURTs)/Terminator technology.

35. In 2006/7, we are co-organising meetings with the League for Pastoral Peoples for leaders of pastoral communities, traditional livestock breeders and others related to the Interlaken conference on farm animal diversity. This builds on earlier work that resulted in the Karen Commitment to Livestock Keepers' Rights ([www.ukabc.org/karen.htm](http://www.ukabc.org/karen.htm)) which promotes the conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, including associated species, and the genes they contain.

36. We maintain the UK agricultural biodiversity coalition website on behalf of the UK Food Group [www.ukabc.org](http://www.ukabc.org). This website covers many issues relating to agricultural biodiversity for food and livelihood security and food sovereignty.

#### **VIII. EUROPEAN SAVE FOUNDATION (SAFEGUARD FOR AGRICULTURAL VARIETIES IN EUROPE)<sup>1</sup>**

37. In many countries in Europe, there are organisations supporting and promoting the conservation of Agro-Biodiversity. The SAVE Foundation, founded in 1993, acts as a European umbrella organisation for these organisations. It promotes and co-ordinates activities to conserve endangered breeds of domestic animals and cultivated plant varieties. The SAVE Foundation does not work with a romantic ideal of how European agriculture once was, rather the SAVE Foundation undertakes practical work to ensure a sustainable future for the diverse genetic material stored within the traditional breeds and species of Europe. The SAVE Foundation supports, plans and realises on-farm conservation projects alongside collecting and disseminating information about the traditional and endangered European Agro-Biodiversity. This work is undertaken in conjunction with the SAVE Partner Organisations. The SAVE Foundation also acts practically, in areas where there is, as yet, no national organisation in existence. The SAVE Foundation and its Partners make up the European SAVE Network. The Network is a supranational co-ordination tool for national organisations. The Board of Directors is composed of 15 individuals from 12 countries.

38. The European Monitoring Institute for Rare Breeds and Seeds is the scientific research unit of the SAVE Foundation. It collects data, both historical and from the present. It also

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<sup>1</sup> Partners in the European SAVE Network: Albania: AlbaGene; Austria: VEGH; Belgium: SLE-FPV; Bulgaria: Semperviva; Czech Republic: GenoClub; Germany: GEDB, GEH, VEN; Greece: Aegilops, Amalthia; Ireland: ISSA, Italy: RARE; Netherlands: SZH; Poland: Carpathian Heritage Society; Switzerland: ProSpecieRara; Serbia: Natura Balkanika; Slovakia: Agro-Genofond.



assesses conservation work, raises the alarm where conservation work is lacking and facilitates cross-border monitoring of old and endangered rare breeds and cultivated plant varieties.

#### *SAVE eNews*

39. The "SAVE eNews" is an electronic information service, issued cost-free four times a year. It provides regular news on the topic of conservation of threatened animal breeds, cultivated plant varieties, agrobiodiversity and networking. The SAVE eNews is available in English and in German. For a subscription just write an e-mail with your address and e-mail to [info@monitoring.eu.com](mailto:info@monitoring.eu.com).

### **IX. SEEDNet**

40. The purpose of SEEDNet is to reinforce long term conservation of plant genetic resources and promote utilisation activities in the southeast European region. Ten countries are presently partners of SEEDNet. The network facilitates scientific exchange, information sharing, technology transfer and research collaboration, within and between plant genetic resources programmes and collaboration with other regional and international networks for the benefit of all PGR stakeholders in the region. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has assured a financial assistance of the SEEDNet activities during a period of 10 years. During the first three year phase of the SEEDNet programme which started during 2004 attention is specifically being focused on the following issues:

- establishment and strengthening of national programmes on PGR;
- *ex situ* and on farm conservation of PGR;
- capacity building, training, and education; and
- identification of and pooling of resources in the region.

41. Established SEEDNet regional crop working groups constitute the core of the network through which the regional activities and projects are being realized. The present activities of the WGs are being focused on the following:

- PGR policy development;
- Inventorying, collecting and exchange of PGR;
- Characterisation and evaluation of PGR; and
- Documentation of information on PGR and traditional knowledge related to plant use.

42. The SEEDNet concept of networking and conservation is based on the model of the Nordic countries and implemented with technical support from the Nordic Gene Bank. Close contact is also maintained with the European Cooperative Programme on Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) and harmonisation with ECPGR policies and activities is an important issue.

### **X. SLOW FOOD**

43. Slow Food, non-profit, eco-gastronomic member-supported organization, was founded in Italy 1986 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world.

44. Slow Food works to defend biodiversity in our food supply, spread taste education and connect producers of quality foods with co-producers through events and initiatives, locally and internationally.

45. Through the Ark of Taste and Presidia projects (supported by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity) and Terra Madre event, Slow Food seeks to protect our invaluable food heritage. The Ark of Taste is an in-progress catalogue of foods that have been forgotten or marginalized and are at risk of disappearing completely. The Ark identifies over 500 animal breeds, fruit and vegetable varieties, prepared foods and specific dishes and offers a resource for those interested in sourcing and promoting quality foods. The Presidia, the small-scale projects that protect traditional production methods by supporting producers in situ and helping them find markets for traditional foods now encompasses 291 projects all over the world. In 2006 the Foundation has created 33 new presidia.

46. The second edition of Terra Madre, the world meeting of “food communities”, brought together almost 9,000 people in Turin: 4,803 farmers, breeders, fishermen and artisan food producers from 1,583 food communities and 150 nations; 953 cooks; 411 professors and representatives from 225 universities; 2,320 observers and guides; 776 volunteers. Terra Madre 2006 offered opportunities for discussions as well as debates and earth workshops reserved for food communities, cooks and universities. Numerous influential leaders, scientists and experts spoke during the plenary sessions.

47. In 2003 the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, a joint initiative of the Region of Tuscany, Italy and Vandana Shiva, scientist and activist, published and disseminated the Manifesto on Future of Food ([www.arsia.toscana.it/cibo/index.htm](http://www.arsia.toscana.it/cibo/index.htm)). The Commission, that includes Slow Food, has now prepared the Manifesto on the Future of Seed: we believe it should be read and circulated, understood, thought about and presented for endorsement to as many national governments as possible (<http://www.arsia.toscana.it/petizione/semi.aspx>). The choice of seeds issue is connected to the choice between a pluralistic model of agriculture, like the one we want to keep, and a standardized model of agriculture, based on GMOs and ‘homogeneous hybrids’.

48. For more information, please visit our website at: [www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com).

## **XI. SOUTHEAST ASIA REGIONAL INITIATIVES FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SEARICE)**

49. The Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE) is a regional non-government organization based in the Philippines, working to strengthen farmers’ seed systems and farmers’ rights to plant genetic resources (PGR) in Southeast Asia. SEARICE undertakes direct field intervention in partnership with farmer groups, research institutions, extension agencies, local government units, national agencies and other stakeholders. Complementing the field work is policy advocacy campaigns on issues that threaten the realization of Farmers’ Rights such as intellectual property rights and genetic engineering in food and agriculture.

### *Community based work*

50. SEARICE is the regional coordinating unit of the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program and the Biodiversity Use and Conservation in Asia Program (CBDC-BUCAP) which are implemented in Bhutan, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. The program aims to strengthen the capacity of farmers’ to manage their PGR and secure their local seed systems through conservation and crop improvement work. Alongside, is the development of farmer groups to engage research institutions, policy makers and other stakeholders to support farmers’ initiatives and craft programs and policies responsive to their work on PGR diversity conservation. The community based work of SEARICE has gained recognition from local governments of Vietnam and the Philippines with the eventual development of local PGR conservation programs with farmers.

*Policy advocacy and campaigns*

51. SEARICE sets-up community models to address growing IPR concerns on common property resources. It also conducts policy researches with farmers on the possible impacts of genetic engineering on food safety, human health, and farming communities. It actively lobbies governments to implement stringent biosafety standards to prevent contamination and further loss of diverse PGR. SEARICE also undertake researches on the impacts of bilateral trade agreements, specifically relating to IPR on farmers' rights.

52. SEARICE initiated discussions with diverse farmer groups on Farmers' Rights which local and national groups used in their own policy advocacy and lobby towards the implementation of Farmers' Rights. Currently, SEARICE is into further popularization of Farmers' Rights.

53. SEARICE also provides policy support to relevant government agencies in Lao PDR, Bhutan and Vietnam in creating spaces for farmers to be involved in policy discussions and subsequent crafting of policies on farmers rights and seed regulations.

54. Through its combined field intervention and policy advocacy/campaign work, SEARICE contributes to the growing concern on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and the realization of Farmers' Rights.

## **XII. THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION (IUCN)**

55. IUCN's focus is on maintaining healthy ecosystems and promoting human-wellbeing. This is expected to most certainly contribute to genetic resources for food and agriculture. With the expansion of knowledge on genomics, many of the wild species of plants and animals that are the focus of IUCN attention have considerable relevance to the work of FAO, and especially its Commission on Genetic Resources. IUCN strongly supports the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which seeks to ensure that any release of Living Modified Organisms does not have a deleterious effect on genetic resources for food and agriculture.

56. We have been working especially closely with the Consultative Group on Agricultural Research, particularly in relation to Bioversity, where our interests are highly convergent. We have contributed to developing the Strategic Plan for Bioversity, and the Director of that Centre, Emile Frison, serves on the Board of Ecoagriculture Partners, an NGO that IUCN helped to establish in order to develop approaches to the production of food, fisheries, and forest products in ways that are consistent with biodiversity conservation.

57. IUCN's continuing work on threatened species of plants and animals also helps to contribute to genetic resources, and we are giving increasing attention to the genetic diversity of domesticated animals that may be under threat. Through our continuing support to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, we have contributed to the best available statement of the current status, trends and responses in the field of genetic resources for food and agriculture. We currently serve on the Bureau of the International Assessment of Agriculture, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). Through our work with the Convention on Biological Diversity, and specifically its Strategy for the Conservation of Plants and its Programme of Work on agricultural biodiversity, we are helping to support international efforts to conserve the diversity of plant genetic resources. Finally, our numerous field projects in many parts of the developing world are also addressing conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and we would very much welcome even closer collaboration with FAO in this regard.