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Item 9 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Third Session

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST, ITS RELATIONSHIP AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL WITH FAO AND IPGRI AND ITS INTER-RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ONGOING INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

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Table of Contents

	Paragraphs
1. OVERVIEW	1
2. INTRODUCTION	2 - 3
3. SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	4 - 9
4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRUST, FAO AND IPGRI ON TECHNICAL MATTERS	10 - 14
5. RELATIONSHIP OF THE TRUST WITH ONGOING INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES	15 - 19
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	16 - 24
ANNEX 1: MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM PANEL OF EMINENT EXPERTS	

1. OVERVIEW

1. The Global Crop Diversity Trust is being established within the framework of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, as an element of the *Treaty's* funding strategy. The Trust will operate under the policy guidance of the Governing Body of the *Treaty* as an independent international fund whose goal is to support the efficient and effective *ex situ* conservation of crop diversity over the long term. At its centre is an endowment that will provide a permanent source of funding for important crop diversity collections around the world. The intention is to raise a minimum of USD 260 million from governments, corporations, foundations, non-governmental organizations and individuals. The success of the Trust will greatly enhance agricultural research and assure the viability of crop collections into the future. The Trust will promote and assist the development of an effective global arrangement for crop diversity conservation and will provide technical and capacity building assistance to eligible collections, particularly those in developing countries that seek to meet the Trust's criteria for long-term funding. Technical support for the work of the Trust is being provided by both FAO and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), primarily through the creation of a joint Technical Advisory Committee.

2. INTRODUCTION

2. The Global Crop Diversity Trust was presented to the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in October 2002. The Commission supported the initiative and requested that progress be reported at sessions of its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture¹. The Commission noted that the Trust was being established to "provide, in perpetuity, a flow of funds for *ex situ* conservation by national and international institutions, and for relevant capacity-building" and that it "would operate in the framework of the International Treaty, and be an essential element of its Funding Strategy." The Commission expressed the hope that the Trust would "attract new and additional funds from a wide-range of donors" and "stressed the need for the Governance of the Trust to work in a transparent and efficient manner".

3. At the Tenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Rome, Italy, 8 – 12 November 2004, the Chairman of the Trust's interim Executive Board (the Interim Panel of Eminent Experts) - Ambassador Fernando Gerbasi - informed the Commission that the Global Crop Diversity Trust had been legally established as an independent international organization on 21 October, 2004. He stated that the development of regional and crop conservation strategies, on which the allocation of the Trust's resources would be based, was well underway and that a few initial grants had already been awarded. The Commission requested the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to "Consider the development of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, its relationship at the technical level with FAO and IPGRI in particular, and its inter-relationship with other ongoing international processes"².

¹ *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Ninth Regular Session, Rome, 14-18 October 2002, para. 49-50 and Annex F.

² *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Tenth Regular Session, Rome, 8-12 November 2004, paras. 34 and 38

3. SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4. The Agreement to Establish the Global Crop Diversity Trust had, as of May 2005, been signed by 19 countries from six of the seven regions recognized in the Basic Texts of FAO³.

5. As of May 2005, the Trust had received pledges of funding amounting to approximately USD 56 million from developed and developing country governments, private foundations, corporations, a farmers' organization and several individuals. Approximately USD 24 million has been received for the endowment fund and has been invested. Further donations are under active consideration by a number of other donors.

6. At the request of the Commission, acting as the Interim Committee of the International Treaty, the Interim Panel of Eminent Experts has agreed to continue to govern the Trust until an Executive Board has been established in accordance with the Trust's constitution. A list of the 11 members of the Interim Panel of Eminent Experts, which were appointed by the Directors General of FAO and IPGRI, is given in Annex 1. The Donor Council of the Trust is expected to put in place a mechanism for making its appointments to the Board at its meeting in October 2005. Arrangements are also being made to facilitate the appointment of members of the Executive Board by the Governing Body of the International Treaty at its first meeting. According to the Constitution of the Trust, "Before making their appointments, the parties appointing members of the Executive Board shall consult with each other ... with a view to ensuring that the Executive Board has the balance and range of skills necessary for it to perform its functions effectively."

7. The Trust is supporting the development of conservation strategies on a regional and crop basis. The strategies will identify the plant genetic resources of greatest importance nationally, regionally and internationally and propose cooperative mechanisms for their efficient and effective conservation. The strategies are being developed through a highly consultative process involving regional and crop networks, collection holders, experts and other stakeholders. The Trust will allocate resources to collections and conservation activities that meet approved principles and criteria based on the priorities identified in these strategies. The development of all the regional strategies is well underway⁴ and these are expected to be completed by the end of 2005 or in early 2006. Crop conservation strategies, covering the crops included in Annex 1 of the *International Treaty*, will be completed by the end of 2006 or early in 2007. The development of many of the crop strategies has already been initiated.

8. While strategy development is still in progress, it has nevertheless already been possible to identify a number of high priority plant genetic resources eligible for support from the Trust. Thus, in late 2004 and early 2005, the Trust was able to make its first six awards for upgrading collections and building the capacity of genebanks. Grants have been made to: the Vavilov Institute, Russia (for regeneration of field crop collections); Southern African countries (for increasing seed drying capacity and training); Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (for rejuvenation of apple field collections); the Africa and Indian Ocean International Coconut Collection, Côte d'Ivoire (for rejuvenation of the coconut field collection); Malaysia and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines, (for an international rice documentation system); and the Central Asia and Caucasus countries (development of a regional information system). Further

³ Countries that have signed the Establishment Agreement as of May 2005 are: Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Jordan, Mauritius, Kingdom of Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Samoa, Togo and Tonga

⁴ Conservation strategies are being developed for: the Americas, West and Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, West Asia and North Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus, South, Southeast and East Asia, the Pacific and Oceania, and Europe.

projects arising from the early development of the regional strategies are also under consideration for funding by the Trust in a number of other countries and regions.

9. The Interim Executive Secretary, Dr. Geoff Hawtin, will retire at the end of July, 2005. Following an extensive international search, Dr. Cary Fowler has been appointed to take over as Executive Secretary from the beginning of August.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TRUST, FAO AND IPGRI ON TECHNICAL MATTERS

10. A Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded between FAO, IPGRI and the Global Crop Diversity Trust with respect to arrangements for hosting the Secretariat of the Trust and providing support for its activities. The Memorandum includes an article on the establishment of a joint Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to advise the Executive Secretary of the Trust on scientific and technical matters. The TAG is made up of seven members: three each from FAO and IPGRI, and one member appointed by the Trust to serve as secretary.

11. The Terms of Reference of the TAG are to:

- Advise the Executive Secretary on the process for developing and updating crop and regional conservation strategies, which will guide the allocation of resources from the Trust to the most important and needy collections.
- Review the crop and regional strategies and recommend to the Executive Secretary whether or not they should be adopted and advise on how they might be improved.
- Review and provide comments and recommendations to the Executive Secretary on pre-proposals and proposals submitted to the Trust, as well as related documents, as required by the Trust's project preparation and approval procedures.
- Review and comment on project, annual and final technical reports in accordance with the Trust's monitoring procedures, and advise the Executive Secretary as to whether or not they should be accepted or need further improvement.
- Provide advice on any other scientific or technical matters as requested by the Executive Secretary.

12. The TAG is expected to remain active for the period that the Trust remains in Rome, hosted by FAO and IPGRI. Once a decision has been made on the final headquarters location of the Trust Secretariat, the further provision of scientific and technical support to the Trust by FAO and IPGRI will be reviewed. However, it is anticipated that these two organizations will continue to perform a significant role in this regard.

13. In addition to the formal role of the Technical Advisory Group, many individuals in both IPGRI and FAO provide support to the Trust on a range of technical and other matters. In addition, through IPGRI's leadership of the CGIAR's System-wide Programme on Genetic Resources (SGRP), the Trust is able to tap technical expertise in all of the Future Harvest Centres.

14. While strong technical back-stopping is provided by both FAO and IPGRI, the Trust also makes use of other expertise, e.g. for facilitating the development of the regional and crop conservation strategies and in the external review of pre-proposals and proposals. The Trust is developing an international roster of experts on whom it can draw for scientific and technical advice and support.

5. RELATIONSHIP OF THE TRUST WITH ONGOING INTERNATIONAL PROCESSES

15. The Trust is an element of the funding strategy of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It will operate under the policy guidance of the Governing Body of the *Treaty* and will report to the Governing Body on a regular basis. As noted above, the Governing Body will, in consultation with the Donor Council of the Trust, appoint four members of the Trust's Executive Board.

16. It is envisaged that the Executive Board of the Trust will enter into an agreement with the Governing Body of the *International Treaty*, defining the relationship between the Trust and the *International Treaty*. This agreement could include:

- recognition of the Trust as an essential element of the funding strategy of the *International Treaty*;
- recognition of the Trust as an independent institution operating under policy guidance provided by the Governing Body of the *International Treaty* on all matters within the purview of the *International Treaty*; and
- a definition of the reporting obligations of the Trust to the Governing Body of the *International Treaty*.

17. The technical framework for the Trust is set by the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The Trust responds to at least 15 of the 20 priority activities in the *Global Plan of Action*.

18. While the Trust is an element of the *Treaty*'s funding strategy, its work is also highly relevant to the achievement of the objectives of other international agreements. For example, the Trust contributes directly to the achievement of at least three of the *Millennium Development Goals*⁵, is listed in the *Partnership Database of the Commission on Sustainable Development*, and responds directly to the *G8 Action Plan on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development*⁶, adopted at the G8 Summit in Evian in 2003.

19. In addition to the above, the Trust has been recognized by the Parties to the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. Article 9 of the *Convention*, *inter alia*, calls on Parties to the *Convention* to "establish and maintain facilities for ex situ conservation of and research on plants, animals and micro-organisms" and to "cooperate in providing financial and other support for the establishment and maintenance of ex-situ conservation facilities in developing countries." Its Seventh Conference of the Parties in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2004, adopted, in

⁵ The Trust contributes directly to Millennium Development Goals 1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger 7) to ensure environmental sustainability and 8) to develop a global partnership for development

⁶ Article 3.1 of the G8 Action Plan on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development states:

"We will:

3.1 Promote the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture:

" support the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* by concluding negotiations over a standard material transfer agreement that facilitates access to plant genetic resources for agricultural research and development and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use;

" support efforts to ensure funding for genetic resources conservation in the framework of the priorities set up by the *Food and Agriculture Organisation Commission on Genetic Resources*;"

Decision VII/3, the statement that it: “Welcomes, *within the framework of the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and as part of its funding strategy, the development of the Global Crop Diversity Trust first launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development as this contributes towards the development of an important endowment fund to support ex situ conservation centres worldwide*”.

ANNEX 1: MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM PANEL OF EMINENT EXPERTS

Ambassador Fernando Gerbasi (*Venezuela*)

- Chairman, Interim Panel of Eminent Experts, the Global Crop Diversity Trust
- Former Chairman of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- Former Chairman of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Acting as Interim Committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Andrew Bennett (*United Kingdom*)

- Executive Director, the Syngenta Foundation

Lukas Brader (*The Netherlands*)

- Former Director General, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria

Lewis Coleman (*United States*)

- President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Tewolde Gebre Egziabher (*Ethiopia*)

- General Manager, Environmental Protection Authority, Ethiopia

Cary Fowler (*United States/Norway*)

- Executive Secretary, the Global Crop Diversity Trust

Walter Fust (*Switzerland*)

- Director General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Chebet Maikut (*Uganda*)

- President, Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE)
- Chair, International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) Committee on Science and Technology

Mohammad H. Roozitalab (*Iran*)

- Deputy Director General, Agricultural Research and Education Organization, Iran

Setijati Sastrapradja (*Indonesia*)

- Senior Scientist, Indonesian Institute of Sciences

Ismail Serageldin (*Egypt*)

- Director, New Library of Alexandria, Egypt