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LEIPZIG CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 20 JUNE 1996

An Open-Ended Working Group (WG) on the Leipzig Declaration (LD) met all day and into the evening on the fourth day of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITCPGR-4), while the WG on the Global Programme of Action (GPA) completed its work in a late session the previous night. The Plenary met briefly in the afternoon to hear country statements. Contact Groups (CG) on Farmers' Rights (FR) and implementation and financing of the Global Programme of Action (GPA) met, as did informal groups on unresolved text of the LD and GPA.

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON GPA

The WG finished its work during a late night session on Wednesday. AUSTRALIA on behalf of a Contact Group on FR, offered text with lengthy qualifiers to "realizing" FR. With no real agreement, delegates decided to forward original bracketed text on "the concept of Farmers' Rights" to the Plenary. The CHAIR then proposed that the section of the GPA on Cost Estimates and Sources of Funding be deleted, and referred to the Third Extraordinary Session of the CGRFA. EGYPT expressed concern, but the CHAIR's proposal was adopted. The CHAIR's suggestion to delete summary paragraphs containing Major Elements and Recommendations was accepted, given lack of time to renegotiate the text. SWEDEN then proposed deleting the section on Structure and Organization. After the CHAIR's humorous anecdote about "fresh fish", this was withdrawn.

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE LEIPZIG DECLARATION

The CHAIR opened discussion on the LD (ITCPGR/96/6). A proposal from the US, supported by MALTA, to delete bracketed sub-headings to the LD was accepted. In the first sentence, delegates agreed to drop references to forests, but extensively debated text which read "recognition of the vital importance of PGRFA [to food security]." EGYPT, supported by FRANCE, SUDAN, CHINA for developing countries of ASIA, MALTA, SOUTH AFRICA, and ARGENTINA, requested deletion of the reference to food security, since it was covered by a subsequent paragraph.

The US, supported by PERU, SWEDEN and PAPUA NEW

GUINEA, preferred linking PGRFA to food security explicitly in the first sentence. SWEDEN noted that the LD would be the conference's main message to the World Food Summit. In a spirit of compromise, ARGENTINA suggested changing "vital" to "essential", and PERU suggested adding the qualifier "in particular" before food security. The text was adopted with these two amendments. In a subsequent sentence in the first paragraph, delegates debated a reference to sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, including use of traditional knowledge. The CHAIR proposed replacing bracketed text with agreed language from the GPA. This proposal was supported by COLOMBIA, CHINA, PERU, INDIA on behalf of developing countries of ASIA, SWEDEN and the US. CANADA, supported by FRANCE, pointed out that the LD should be succinct and that "sharing of benefits from use of such resources" rather than a reference to indigenous knowledge, but accepted the CHAIR's suggestion in the interest of achieving consensus.

Delegates then deliberated on bracketed text which read: "We are convinced that these efforts are an essential contribution to the implementation of the CBD and Agenda 21." CHINA on behalf of the developing countries of ASIA and the PACIFIC, as well as COLOMBIA, TANZANIA, ZIMBABWE, PERU, SUDAN, TURKEY and PERU, proposed retaining the text intact. SWEDEN's proposal to add "World Food Summit," and IRAN's proposal to add "food security" were ultimately rejected. The CONGO's proposal to replace "efforts" with the stronger word "commitment" was supported by BURKINO FASO and COLOMBIA but opposed by the US. The US proposed replacing "implementation" with "realizing the objectives" of the CBD. The CHAIR's proposal to retain "implementation" (for Parties) and add "realization of the objectives" (for non-Parties) was supported by POLAND, TANZANIA on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, BRAZIL, BOLIVIA, COLOMBIA on behalf of GRULAC, CHINA on behalf of the ASIAN GROUP. Based on informal consultations, the amended text was eventually adopted to read: "We are convinced that these efforts can be essential to achieving the objectives and implementation of the CBD and Agenda 21." In the second paragraph, the CHAIR, later supported by CANADA, FRANCE, and the US, suggested language consistent with the GPA concerning "recognizing the rights of sovereign states over their biological resources". COLOMBIA, later supported by MEXICO urged removing reference to "confirming our common and individual responsibilities". CANADA proposed that the paragraph be relocated to the

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middle of the LD. This was not supported by MEXICO, ASIA and the PACIFIC, PERU and SENEGAL. MEXICO requested replacement of the word "heritage" with "resources". The CHAIR's original text with MEXICO's amendment was accepted. A bracketed paragraph on "satisfying the needs of growing populations for food through increasing production volume and efficiency" was deleted, after the CHAIR noted that it was redundant. The issue concerning CANADA's proposal to move the text remains unresolved.

The following paragraph which began by stating that PGR "are essential for world food security" was modified by dropping this reference, as proposed by the CHAIR. Delegates discussed the role of various groups in conserving and sustainably using PGRFA, using BELGIAN text as a starting point, which "acknowledged the role of generations of farmers and plant breeders in conserving and improving PGR". ARGENTINA, supported by INDONESIA, CANADA and SWEDEN called for a specific reference to women farmers. FRANCE, supported by SOUTH AFRICA and CYPRUS, felt that a specific reference to women was unnecessary. MEXICO, supported by SWEDEN and VENEZUELA, called for reference to indigenous and local communities. The CHAIR's proposal to amend the Belgian text with the words "role of generations of men and women farmers and plant breeders, and by indigenous and local communities" was adopted.

The US, supported by FRANCE, said that he was uncomfortable with the expression that "efforts to conserve genetic resources [are inadequate]." Delegates debated whether to refer to "ecosystems" or "farms and nature" in discussing loss of genetic diversity. The US proposed PGRFA rather than "genetic diversity". The CHAIR's formulation, which used "fields and other ecosystems" without the US proposal, was accepted. In the following paragraph bracketed text referring to existing institutions being inadequate "notably in developing countries" was not supported by CHINA, INDONESIA and FRANCE. Reference to developing countries was removed. In a following sentence which suggested that the linkage between conservation and utilization could be improved "[particularly in many developing countries]", FRANCE, supported by SENEGAL, the US, ISRAEL, PERU, INDONESIA and FINLAND, urged that the reference to developing countries be removed. This was not supported by PERU. BELGIUM introduced text, after consultations, saying "it is necessary to strengthen national capabilities, particularly in developing countries" as the concluding sentence. The whole paragraph was adopted with minor changes, introduced by TANZANIA and BRAZIL.

In a subsequent paragraph, discussion on technology transfer was deferred until the CG's deliberations on this subject were concluded. Bracketed text dealing with cooperation between states, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector, was adopted with no discussion. In the following paragraph, delegates chose "sustain" rather than "secure" *ex situ* collections of PGR, and changed a reference to *in situ* "sites" of PGR to *in situ* "habitats".

In the next paragraph, on the conference's primary objective, a formulation by CHINA which read "our primary objective must be to enhance world food security through conserving PGR, and using them sustainably" was modified by the US to read "conserving and sustainably using PGR" and adopted. In a subsequent sentence, CHINA suggested deletion of bracketed text on benefit sharing, as it had been covered earlier. PERU, supported by BELGIUM, preferred retention of the text here. Informal consultations resulted in a new text which read: "Means are needed to identify, increase, and share fairly and equitably the benefits derived from the sustainable use of PGR." This was

modified by COLOMBIA to read "conservation and sustainable use" and adopted.

After extensive negotiation, delegates were unable to reach consensus on the paragraph referring to the GPA, the IU and the FAO Global System. Compromise language stating that the "GPA and the non-binding IU are elements of the FAO Global System for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of PGRFA," and advocating revision of the IU, was acceptable to all. However, the remainder of the paragraph urging "that the Global System be strengthened, and reviewed and adjusted in harmony with the CBD" was not accepted by the US and VENEZUELA. The text will be taken up again in informal negotiations or the Plenary. The subsequent paragraph urging better utilisation of existing PGRFA collections was determined to be redundant and was deleted.

Delegates then turned to the closing paragraph of the LD, using as a basis for their deliberations the second of four alternative texts as selected by the host country Germany. SWEDEN's proposal to add "our fundamental responsibilities for meeting the most basic human rights, the right to life and the right to freedom from hunger" was rejected by MALTA as too pedantic, and by the US due to the domestic political overtones of the phrase "right to life." FRANCE and PERU objected to introducing a hierarchy of human rights, and proposed "right to freedom from hunger" instead. SWEDEN's proposal, later supported by the US, to add "conservation and sustainable use" of PGRFA was adopted. ARGENTINA's proposal for a simplified text served as the basis for the adopted paragraph. Most notably, the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of PGFA in agricultural policy as "an essential element" was replaced with "a cornerstone" of food security.

PLENARY

The CHAIR of the WG on the GPA (ITCPGR/96/5 Rev.2) reported that bracketed text remained over: structure and organization; FR; technology transfer; and benefits-sharing. Remaining differences will be resolved in informal meetings. The CHAIR then invited remaining country statements. Astrud Tshikung Naweji, Minister of Agriculture of ZAIRE, highlighted her country's substantial genetic diversity and high levels of endemism. SWITZERLAND supported the GPA, stating that remaining disagreement on access, finance and implementation, and FR would be resolved. MOVIMIENTO INDIGENA COLOMBIANO highlighted, *vis-a-vis* Indigenous Peoples: the importance of the CBD, Agenda 21 and ILO Convention 169; and the need to balance *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation goals with "spiritual issues."

IN THE CORRIDORS

The Leipzig Declaration, designed to be the Conference's key political output, dominated discussions in the corridors today. Delegates are concerned that the text's wordiness will reflect clumsy compromise rather than common cause. According to some, the LD may need to be converted into executive summaries by national governments, so as to be intelligible to the broader audience it is trying to target. Not all were critical, however. According to one delegate, "there are real gems amidst the muck of turgid prose."

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will convene Saturday morning to discuss negotiated text developed by the working groups and informal meetings on the LD, FR, and finance and implementation of the GPA.