

Statement of the Alliance of International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

Agenda item 6.5: International cross-sectorial policy matters on genetic resources

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Mr. Chair, thank you for providing the CG Centres the floor.

On World Food Day, October 16, 2006, the 11 CG Centres hosting *ex situ* collections of PGRFA signed agreements with the Governing Body of the International Treaty, placing their collections under the Treaty's framework. Pursuant to those agreements, since January 2007, the Centres have been using the standard material transfer agreement (adopted by the Governing Body during its first session in June 2006) for distribution of Annex 1 materials.

Mr Chair, the Centres very much appreciate the fact that the multilateral system of access and benefit sharing created by the International Treaty provides a sound foundation for the sharing of materials that are critical to food security for research, conservation and training. To that end, we want to thank the Commission for its leadership during the negotiations of the Treaty over several long, hard years.

The Centres now look forward to further leadership from the Commission on related issues, including perhaps additional work on access and benefit sharing concerning genetic resources for food and agriculture, in the context of the Commission's Multi-year Plan of Work, as anticipated in documents CGRFA-11/07/15.5 and CGRFA-11/07/21.

Mr. Chair, plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (both Annex 1 and non-annex 1 materials) do not exist in isolation in farmers' fields. Their sustainable use is integrally linked to the conservation and sustainable use of other components of agro-ecological systems. This point is reflected in several documents prepared by the secretariat and has been highlighted by many delegates throughout this meeting.

The Centres feel there is a case for exploring approaches to access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture in an integrated manner, taking advantage of the technical expertise of this Commission in all components of agrobiodiversity. We look forward to the Commission's guidance in this regard.