

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

**Agenda item 6.1: The World's forest genetic resources: status and needs**

**Wednesday, June 13, 2007**

Mr. Chair, on behalf of the fifteen IARCs of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), I thank you again for an opportunity to address this meeting.

Forest and tree genetic resources have crucial roles in addressing the Millennium Development Goals, contributing to the alleviation of poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability. They can also play a major role in helping to mitigate climate change and address its consequences.

Document CGRFA-11/07/19.2 provides details of activities undertaken by the CG Centres since 2004 in relation to forest and tree genetic resources. Bioversity, CIFOR and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), as well as several other centres, with the support of the System-wide Programme for Genetic Resources (SGRP) are developing an integrated system-wide strategy for research on forest and tree genetic resources.

The CG Centres have a long history of collaboration with FAO in the conservation and sustainable use of forest and tree genetic resources, with Bioversity and ICRAF participating in the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Genetic Resources (the Forest Gene Panel) earlier this year.

For more than fifty years, the FAO Forestry Department has been assisting nations to conserve, develop and sustainably use their forest and tree genetic resources. The CG Centres strongly support the development of a report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, as recommended by the FAO expert panel. This will address a vital and urgent need to develop a comprehensive understanding of the status and trends of forest genetic resources, including practical indicators for forest genetic diversity.

ICRAF and Bioversity have extensive partner networks and capacity development programs and are well placed to contribute to the proposed review of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources. Further, we look forward to working closely with FAO in the compilation of this report.

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