

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

Agenda item 4: Programme of work on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

June 12, 2007

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

As time is short I will note only three elements of CGRFA 11/07/11 of particular relevance to the work of the CGIAR Centres

1. In their work with partner countries, the CG Centres will continue to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. In this context we would like especially to recognize the important role that is being played by the various networks in which the different centres are involved. Both regional and crop networks can make an important contribution to implementing the various elements of the GPA as recognized in the relevant GPA Activity and as noted in the side event on implementation of the GPA that some of us participated in earlier today. Finding ways to strengthen the operation of networks and their contribution to effective conservation and use will continue to be important to our work and Commission inputs on this are welcomed.

2. The International Agricultural Research Centres host collections of over 1000 species and over 600,000 accessions of these have been placed under the framework of the International Treaty. Using the best standards for optimum maintenance of these accessions is extremely important. With the support of the World Bank we are undertaking a second phase of our Global Public Goods Project which will undertake work on genebank standards and will in particular explore the development of appropriate performance standards and risk management standards for ex situ collections. We look forward to working with FAO to make the results of this work available for the report on updated genebank standards as proposed in the report for the 13th Commission Meeting.

3. Finally, Mr Chair, I would like to note that we are also engaged in supporting efforts to strengthen in situ conservation in partnership with many countries around the world. This month sees the publication of a substantial new text distilling the available knowledge of on-farm maintenance of agricultural biodiversity including case studies from over 30 countries worldwide. A number of you have been involved in its production and will welcome this publication edited by my colleague Devra Jarvis and by Christine Padoch and David Cooper and entitled "Managing biodiversity in agricultural ecosystems". My own institute, Bioversity International has also collaborated on conservation of crop wild relatives in a substantial GEF supported project. In this context I would note that we are now at the mid point of a project with Armenia, Bolivia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, FAO, IUCN-the

World Conservation Union and other international organizations which is providing a practical framework for effective conservation and use of wild relatives both in and outside protected areas and for the development of information systems appropriate for their optimum maintenance.