



SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



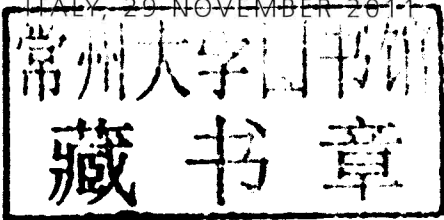
COMMISSION ON
GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE



SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

ADOPTED BY THE FAO COUNCIL, ROME, ITALY, 29 NOVEMBER 2011



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Foreword

The Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, prepared under the aegis of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, was adopted by the FAO Council on 29th November 2011. It updates the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, adopted in 1996, at the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

The Second Global Plan of Action responds to the needs and priorities identified in the *Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, a global assessment that FAO published in 2010. It was prepared through a series of regional consultations, with the participation of 131 countries and representatives of the international research community, the private sector and civil society.

The need to conserve and sustainably use the world's plant genetic diversity is more critical than ever. It is the basis of food security, in a world facing many challenges. Over one billion people already suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition, while the world's population is projected to reach 9.2 billion by 2050. To feed them all, we will need to increase agricultural production by 60%. At the same time, the resource base is threatened, by global warming and climate change, dwindling land and water resources, and environmental degradation. The continuing loss of plant genetic diversity for food and agriculture greatly reduces our options, and the options of future generations, for adapting to these changes and ensuring food security, economic development, and world peace.

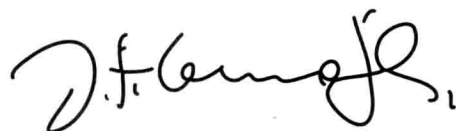
The Second Global Plan of Action lays out a series of agreed priority plans and actions that can protect our rich portfolio of diverse genetic resources, while ensuring a sustainable flow of improved varieties, by harnessing enhanced traits to deliver better quality foods, in quantities that match our burgeoning needs. Only by doing so can we put an end to food insecurity and poverty. International cooperation has become even more imperative than a few decades ago. It is urgent that we together broaden and deepen our efforts to conserve and sustainably use plant diversity.

The adoption of the Second Global Plan of Action reflects an international consensus, and testifies the political will to identify and carry out agreed priorities to achieve these aims. It plays an important role in the international policy framework for world food security, as a supporting component of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as a crucial contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Difficult as the world economic situation currently is, we cannot afford not to continue and increase national and international investments in the priorities and programmes that Governments have agreed on through the Second Global Plan of Action. This means a substantial increase in current activities in countries, and the active involvement of international and regional organizations, donors, scientists, farmers, indigenous and local communities, the public and private sectors, civil society, and research and educational institutes. The full implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action will require cooperation between countries and regions, and mutual support between agriculture and the environmental and food sectors.

This is not something that we can delay, or only partially achieve, without putting the world's environments at risk, particularly as climate change accelerates, and without mortgaging our children's future. Progress so far, particularly since the first Global Plan of Action was adopted, demonstrates that sound strategies can overcome the many current obstacles, when backed by political will and adequate financial resources. Plant genetic resources are a common concern of humanity, and it is both sound economic management and a moral imperative to conserve the resources that millions of years of evolution and thousands of generations of farmers all over the world have given us, and use them sustainably and profitably, to ensure that we can feed the generations to come.

FAO is committed to the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action. I call upon all countries, together, to seize the moment, and strengthen our investment in the sound stewardship of the world's heritage of plant genetic resources, by carrying out the Second Global Plan of Action with realism, determination and commitment.



José Graziano da Silva
Director-General
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Executive Summary

1. Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture provide the biological basis for agricultural production and world food security. These resources serve as the most important raw material for farmers, who are their custodians, and for plant breeders. The genetic diversity in these resources allows crops and varieties to adapt to ever-changing conditions and to overcome the constraints caused by pests, diseases and abiotic stresses. Plant genetic resources are essential for sustainable agricultural production. There is no inherent incompatibility between the conservation and the use of these resources. In fact, it will be critically important to ensure that the two activities are fully complementary. The conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources are international concerns and imperatives. These are the objectives of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which is in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity. In the context of the sovereign rights of states over their biological resources and the interdependence of countries with regard to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is an appropriate manifestation of the international community's continued concern and responsibility in this area.
2. Over the past 15 years, the Global Plan of Action has been the main reference document for national, regional and global efforts to conserve and use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture sustainably and to share equitably and fairly the benefits that derive from their use. As part of the FAO Global System for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, the Global Plan of Action has been the key element used by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to fulfil its mandate with respect to plant genetic resources. The Global Plan of Action has also provided an important reference for other genetic resources sectors. It has assisted governments in the formulation of national policies and strategies on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. It has also been used by the international community to define priorities at the global level, to improve coordination of efforts and to create synergies among the genetic resources stakeholders. The Global Plan of Action has proven to be instrumental in reorienting and prioritizing the research and development agendas of relevant international organizations with regard to activities related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
3. The adoption of the Global Plan of Action by 150 countries in 1996 in Leipzig was a milestone in the development of the international governance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. It set the stage for the successful completion of the negotiation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic

Resources for Food and Agriculture under the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

4. Since its adoption, there have been a number of major developments with respect to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, which called for an update of the Global Plan of Action. The recently published *Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* has provided a solid foundation for this updating process. The world is facing increasing food insecurity, reflected *inter alia* in highly volatile food prices. Climate change, increasing urbanization, the need for more sustainable agriculture and the need to safeguard plant genetic diversity and minimize genetic erosion all require that greater attention be given to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. At the same time, there are important new opportunities that can improve the management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including powerful and widely available communication and information technologies as well as significant advances in biotechnology and the development of bioproducts derived from agriculture. Furthermore, the policy environment has changed significantly over the past 15 years, particularly with the entry into force of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and among others, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, as well as with the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization. The world has also seen a renewed commitment to agriculture and related research and development activities. An updated Global Plan of Action is needed to respond to, and reflect, these developments.
5. The Second Global Plan of Action addresses the new challenges and opportunities through 18 Priority Activities. The *Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, a series of regional consultation meetings, as well as inputs from experts worldwide have provided the inputs needed to make the Second Global Plan of Action current, forward looking and relevant to global, regional and national perspectives and priorities. Updating the Global Plan of Action also strengthens its role as a supporting component of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
6. Based on the various inputs listed above, it has been possible to streamline the number of Priority Activities, reducing them from 20 in the original Global Plan of Action to 18. This was done by merging former Priority Activities 5 and 8 (*Sustaining existing ex situ collections and Expanding ex situ conservation activities*) into the new Priority Activity 6, *Sustaining and expanding ex situ conservation of germplasm*. Former Priority Activities 12 (*Promoting development and commercialization of underutilized crops and species*) and

14 (*Developing new markets for local varieties and “diversity-rich” products*) have been merged into the new Priority Activity 11, *Promoting development and commercialization of all varieties, primarily farmers’ varieties/landraces and underutilized species*.

7. In addition, the focus of a number of other Priority Activities has been adjusted so as to accommodate newly defined priorities. The Second Global Plan of Action gives greater emphasis and visibility to plant breeding, as reflected in Priority Activity 9, *Supporting plant breeding, genetic enhancement and base-broadening efforts*. An effort has also been made, based on guidance from the regional consultations, to simplify and clarify the document.

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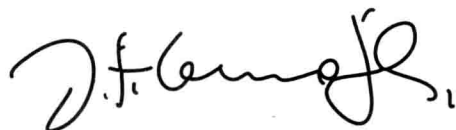
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