



Prospectus for Global Stakeholder Meeting on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition

Rome, Italy, February 16-17, 2006

Introduction

The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is organizing a Global Stakeholder Meeting to discuss the implementation of the CBD's Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition. These three institutions are partners in the initiative and this meeting is an important step in its implementation.

The purpose of the meeting is to exchange experiences and take stock of steps undertaken to date as a guide for laying out options and planning future activities in support of the initiative.

Background

There has been strong support for a cross-cutting global initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition from many quarters and events including:

- A Resolution of the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity calling for a global cross cutting initiative to be developed through collaboration involving IPGRI, FAO and other partners (Decision Vii/32).
- The Intergovernmental Working Group for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture's endorsement of the importance of biodiversity for nutrition improvement
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, identified by the UN as a "keystone for achieving the Millennium Development Goals," including eradication of hunger

- The Chennai Consultation and report to the UN Secretary General on using Biodiversity and Neglected and Underutilized Species to address Millennium Development Goals in health and food security.
- The global community for nutrition in development, as represented at the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, which included this initiative under its working group on household food security.
- The interest and support from private and public agencies expressed at the first international Conference on Health and Biodiversity (COHAB) held in Galway, Ireland, August, 2005.
- The welcome by the International Union of Nutritional Sciences for the initiative at the 18th International Congress of Nutrition in Durban South Africa, September 2005.
- The International Rice Commission's recommendations for nutrition considerations of existing rice biodiversity
- The view shared by FAO/WHO's partners in the Fruit and Vegetables for Health Initiative that harnessing horticultural biodiversity can help contribute to improved access to nutrient-rich functional foods.
- A draft programme of work on options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition currently being developed to be presented at the 8th conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition identifies the contribution of agricultural biodiversity as a priority to improving the nutrition and health of the rural and urban poor. The focus on nutrition addresses major global health issues such as micronutrient deficiencies, and trends such as the decline of dietary diversity and the concomitant rapid rise in chronic diseases (for instance diabetes, obesity and coronary heart disease) which are on the rise in developing countries and particularly among the poor. While many nutrition interventions, including supplementation, fortification and bio-fortification of foods are addressing these challenges, this initiative focuses on promoting the use of local biodiversity—traditional foods of indigenous and local communities with their many sources of nutritionally-rich and functional foods—as a readily accessible, locally empowering, and sustainable source of quality nutrition through dietary diversity. This work addresses a new and emerging health problem that is becoming a major burden, particularly for poor people with little access to health and nutrition interventions. Furthermore, this effort recognizes that in an increasingly global, urban and commercial environment, realization of the potential of local resources must successfully integrate production, marketing, consumption and health of rural and urban dwellers alike as components of viable food systems.

The consultation on the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition organized by the CBD Secretariat, which took place in Brasilia, Brazil on 12-13 March 2005, outlined principles and a range of potential actions. Implementing the initiative requires a broad set of partnerships. Initial activities underway in India and sub-Saharan Africa have been successful in integrating promotional, policy and research activities under the direction of

national multi-sectoral working groups with expertise in production agriculture, marketing, nutrition and public health, policy and the social sciences. This meeting seeks ways to capitalize on and extend these achievements through an expanded set of international partnerships and activities.

Meeting Objectives

The general objective of the workshop is to develop elements of an impact-driven and global action plan to utilize agricultural biodiversity to improve the nutrition and health of the rural and urban poor. In doing this, the workshop will also contribute to the ideas and proposals that will be discussed at the 8th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Curitiba, Brazil in March 2006 (“Options for a cross-cutting initiative on food and nutrition”, UNEP/CBD/COP/8/26/Add.2).

The workshop has three specific objectives:

- (1) To take stock of accomplishments in this area up-to-date as well as related ongoing programmes;
- (2) To identify new partnerships and areas of collaboration;
- (3) To identify a set of specific and coherent actions to be carried out by partners to implement the initiative, particularly in the areas of: research, policy, public awareness and funding.

Expected Outputs

The main outputs of the workshop will be a mutually agreed partnership of different actors and institutions with a plan for action and a resource mobilization strategy to contribute to the implementation of this initiative.

Participants

The meeting will include:

- Professionals from national organizations engaged in policy and programmes addressing issues related to nutrition and the utilization of agricultural biodiversity;
- Professionals in international organizations including the CGIAR contributing to food-based approaches to nutrition and food security;
- Researchers contributing to food-based approaches to nutrition and food security;
- Representatives of national and international development agencies and foundations with complementary priorities;

Outline Programme

The stakeholder meeting will take place over two full days in the form of a plenary session in the morning of day one and the afternoon of day two, with facilitated working group discussions for the remaining two half days. Each working group will have specific Terms of Reference and will prepare a report of its findings to be presented and discussed by all participants during the final plenary session. The objectives and expected outputs will be presented, together with an overview of agricultural biodiversity and dietary diversity and nutrition during the first plenary session. We expect a final strategy document as a consultation output to be presented in the Wrap-up session of Day two.

Organization and support

The meeting will be held in Rome at IPGRI Headquarters. The organizational team includes:

IPGRI

Prof Timothy Johns
Dr. Ifeyironwa Francisca Smith
Dr. Pablo Eyzaguirre
Ms. Annie Huie

FAO

Dr Barbara Burlingame
Dr Linda Collette
Ms Alison Hodder
Ms Maddelina di Giorgio

Contact

Annie Huie
International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI)
Via dei Tre Denari 472/a
00057 MACCARESE (Fiumicino)
Rome, Italy
Tel. (39) 06 6118285
Fax (39) 06 61979661
email: a.huie@CGIAR.ORG