



Statutes of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

(as adopted by the FAO Council, at its [110th Session](#))

1. Membership

The Commission shall be open to all members and associate members of the Organization. It shall be composed of those members or associate members which notify the Director-General of their desire to be considered as members of the Commission.

2. Terms of Reference of the Commission

The Commission shall have a coordinating role and shall deal with policy, sectoral and cross-sectoral matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture. Its terms of reference shall be:

- i. to keep under continuous review all matters relating to the policy, programmes and activities of FAO in the area of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture, including their conservation and sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their utilization, and to advise the Director-General and the Council and, as appropriate, its technical committees, including in particular the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, on such matters;
- ii. to recommend such measures as may be necessary or desirable to ensure the development, as appropriate, of a comprehensive global system or systems on genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture and to monitor the operation of its/their components, in harmony, where applicable, with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant international instruments;
- iii. to provide an intergovernmental forum for negotiations and to oversee the development, upon the request of the FAO Governing Bodies, of other international agreements, undertakings, codes of conduct or other instruments relating to genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture, and to monitor the operation of such instruments;
- iv. to facilitate and oversee cooperation between FAO and other international governmental and non-governmental bodies dealing with the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, in particular with the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and to seek to develop appropriate mechanisms for cooperation and coordination in consultation with such bodies;
- v. subject to approval by the Governing Bodies of FAO, as appropriate, to respond to requests from the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in the specific area of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture, including the provision of information and other services to the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, especially in the areas of early warning systems, global assessment and clearing house facilities, in particular, and as appropriate, through the Global System for the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

3. Intergovernmental Technical Sectoral Working Groups of the Commission

- i. The Commission may establish intergovernmental technical sectoral working groups ("Sectoral Working Groups"), with appropriate geographical balance, to assist it in the areas of plant, animal, forestry and fisheries genetic resources;
- ii. The purpose of the Sectoral Working Groups shall be to review the situation and issues related to agrobiodiversity in the areas under their respective competences, to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters and to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission;
- iii. The composition and terms of reference for each Sectoral Working Group shall be established by the Commission.



4. Sessions of the Commission and its Sectoral Working Groups

- i. The Commission shall normally hold one regular session each biennium. It may also decide to convene extraordinary sessions as necessary, subject to the approval of the FAO Council. Sessions of the Commission shall normally be held at the Organization's Headquarters;
- ii. The Sectoral Working Groups, where established, shall hold no more than one regular session annually.

5. Other Subsidiary Bodies

The Commission may establish such other Subsidiary Bodies as it may deem necessary for the effective discharge of its functions.

6. Funding of Sectoral Working Groups and other Subsidiary Bodies

- i. The establishment of any Sectoral Working Group or other Subsidiary Body shall be subject to the determination by the Director-General that the necessary funds are available in the relevant chapter of the budget of the Organization or from extra-budgetary sources;
- ii. Before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of Subsidiary Bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the programme, administrative and financial implications thereof.

7. Reporting

The Commission shall report to the Director-General, who shall bring to the attention of the Conference through the Council any recommendations adopted by the Commission which have policy implications or which affect the programme or finances of the Organization. As soon as they become available, copies of each report of the Commission will be circulated to members and associate members of the Organization and also to international organizations and agencies that are concerned with genetic resources.

8. Secretariat and expenses

- i. The Secretary of the Commission shall be appointed by the Director-General and shall be administratively responsible to him. The Secretariat of the Commission will monitor and coordinate the preparations for the Commission meetings and the work for the Sectoral Working Groups, where established. The expenses of the Secretariat of the Commission shall be determined and paid by the Organization within the limits of the relevant appropriations in the approved budget of the Organization;
- ii. Secretariat services for each Sectoral Working Group, where established, will be provided by the respective technical division of FAO as part of its annual programme of work;
- iii. Expenses incurred by representatives of members of the Commission and its Working Groups, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Commission, its Sectoral Working Groups or other Subsidiary Bodies, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.

9. Observers

Meetings of the Commission shall be open to observers from members and associate members that are not members of the Commission, from states that are non-members or associate members of the Organization, and from international organizations, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the rules and principles adopted by the Conference.

10. Rules of procedure

The Commission may adopt and amend its own rules of procedure, which shall be in conformity with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization and with the statement of principles governing commissions and committees adopted by the Conference (see Basic Texts, Section O).