

Joint ECPGR and NENA PGR Workshop on the Implementation of the International Treaty of PGRFA, Turkey, 28-29 September 2011

The European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) and the Near East and North Africa Plant Genetic Resources Network (NENA PGRN) jointly organized a workshop on the Implementation of the International Treaty of PGRFA from 28-29 September 2011 in Menemen, Izmir-Turkey. The workshop aimed to exchange views, information and experiences related to the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty).

The NENA PGRN Network was represented by the Network Coordinator and members from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Sudan and Yemen. ECPGR was represented by the Secretariat and members from Germany, Sweden and Turkey. Representatives of the International organizations (Bioversity International, ICARDA and GFAR) in addition to the Secretary of the treaty attended the meeting. The workshop unfolded with presentations from both networks regarding the national and regional approaches to ex-situ conservation, documentation and information, implementation of the Multilateral System (MLS) of the treaty and its related policies and legislation. The workshop was an example of implementation of Article 8 of the treaty on technical assistance to Contracting Parties. The concept for A

European Gene Bank Integration System (AEGIS) was received as an interesting approach, even though NENA probably still needs to reflect on the most suitable approach for collaboration in the conservation of ex-situ PGR in its region.

A strong recommendation was directed from the meeting to NENA PGRN, indicating the need to reach self-sustainability through the acquisition of firm national commitment as a pre-requisite for regional collaboration. Shared examples showing various approaches to policy and legislation conveyed the impression that strong and comprehensive coordination at national level generally gives the most effective results. On the other hand, skilled staff is often a bottle neck in a number of countries and capacity building remains a high priority. Capacity building for the implementation of the Treaty at both regional and national levels was indicated by NENA PGRN as an immediate need for effective implementation of the treaty and its MLS in NENA. The workshop paved the way to further exchange of information between the two Networks and to possible opportunities for advice or training in the near future. It was also a successful example of interaction among two regions at the network level, which is probably one of the most effective ways to promote the principles of the Treaty and its implementation on a regional scale.