



**GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST  
Donors' Council  
7<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**SUMMARY RECORD**

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2010, Rome**

**Annex 1 Agenda  
Annex 2 List of Attendees**

**Welcome from the Chair of the Meeting**

Peter Waddell-Wood, Chair of the Donors' Council, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Donors' Council. He provided a brief introduction to the Council's role and responsibilities within the governance framework of the Global Crop Diversity Trust. The provisional agenda was adopted with the addition of an item on a paper from the Bureau of the Governing Body of the Treaty regarding Board selection. The Chair also congratulated Trust Executive Director Cary Fowler on his recent receipt of a Heinz Award.

**Updates and Highlights of 2010**

Cary Fowler gave a presentation on the highlights of 2010, preceded by an explanation of the Trust's mandate and role in the conservation and availability of crop diversity. He described how the landscape of plant genetic resources has shifted in recent years. The International Treaty, agreed global, international and crop strategies, improved information systems, the founding of the Trust itself, and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault are some of the major developments which have made possible the achievement of the Trust's vision of an efficient and effective global system for plant genetic resources conservation and use.

The Executive Director explained that the first part of the process towards this vision is to ensure that plant genetic resources are alive and in good shape. This was not the case when the Trust was set up, and he went on to describe the Trust's work on regeneration (the rescue of samples): 53 projects, covering approximately 100,000 threatened unique accessions, working with 243 collections of 22 crops, in 86 institutes across 72 countries. The accessions covered by this work might otherwise have become extinct, and the Executive Director described it as the largest biological rescue effort in the world.

The Executive Director also reported on other areas of project work:

- grants were awarded for collection of cowpea, pearl millet, finger millet, pigeon pea and sorghum in East and West Africa;
- genebank upgrading was funded at CATIE and AVRDC;
- cryopreservation of banana in India and cryopreservation protocols developed for sweet potato, yam, cassava, aroids, and less successfully so far, coconut;

- the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, where two-thirds of the samples have been shipped there with Trust funding;
- funding proposals on screening/evaluation of 20 crops in 60 collections in 43 countries, for a total of 113 traits valuable for climate change adaptation and food security for the world's poor;
- the support of the FAO Global Initiative on Plant Breeding which has provided training (134 scientists trained in pre-breeding), e-learning, web-based resources, pre-breeding projects;
- information systems, in which the Trust has worked on GRIN Global (genebank management software system), working with USDA to update it and make it available to developing country genebanks with no license fee, with free training also provided;
- work on GENESYS, the sample-level information system which provides an umbrella over individual genebank systems and can search multiple genebanks simultaneously.

The Executive Director reported that all this work is putting in place the building blocks of a global system, which can then be maintained by the Trust's endowment fund. Regarding the Trust's long-term grants, the Executive Director explained that as the fund grows, more diversity will be protected, and that at the moment 15 crops in 18 collections receive support in the form of 'in perpetuity' grants: banana, barley, cassava, common bean, edible aroids, faba bean, forages, grasspea, lentil, maize, pearl millet, rice, sorghum, wheat, yam.

The Executive Director reported on the campaign that the Trust has spearheaded to prevent the destruction of the unique collections of fruits and berries held at the Pavlovsk Experimental Station in St Petersburg. The court cases surrounding this are ongoing and it is not yet known whether the collection will be saved.

Council members commented positively on the scale of the work programme and the speed of progress made by the Trust, and a discussion followed.

### **New procedures for Board member selection**

A paper was tabled from the Bureau of the Governing Body of the International Treaty, which suggested simplified procedures for how the Governing Body would select members of the Executive Board, as well as simplified consultation processes between the Governing Body and the Donors' Council. At the third meeting of the Treaty's Governing Body, the Bureau had been tasked with coming up with simplified procedures for the selection of members of the Trust Executive Board, and the paper shared with the Donors' Council is due to be tabled at the fourth Governing Body meeting. Gerald Moore, Legal Counsel for the Trust, confirmed that the simplified procedures represent essentially what has taken place in practice. The Chair commented that these were much improved and workable procedures, and consistent with the procedures applied by the Council in its own selection process. The Council endorsed the paper.

### **A progress report – the Report Card**

Mellissa Wood, Director of Operations, provided a presentation on progress, using the indicators established in the report card and the graphic dashboard, designed to

make the Trust easily assessed and transparent. The report covers both long-term grants and also shorter-term project activities.

During the year a new long-term grant agreement had been set up for maize with CIMMYT. It was pointed out that the Trust long-term grants have also leveraged money from the institutes hosting the genebanks, guaranteeing funding which was to have been committed to the genebanks and thereby ensuring that the genebanks enjoy enhanced security under these contracts, rather than simply providing replacement funds.

It was also explained that due to the nature of the long-term grants (i.e. grants made in perpetuity for the maintenance of collections), milestones were not an appropriate performance measure. Therefore the report card uses a number of performance indicators to measure progress. The indicators include figures such as the percentage of seed accessions held under long-term storage, or the percentage of seeds duplicated in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, as well as measures of data availability or the backlogs on testing for pathogens. These have been developed in partnership with CGIAR centres and are also under consideration by the new CGIAR consortium office so as to keep standards and expectations uniform.

Donors welcomed the Trust's efforts to develop useful performance reporting mechanisms over the past two to three years. The Council urged that further work be conducted to lift the analysis from output to outcome level where the Trust can report against its overall objectives. It is important for donors and the Board to have available snapshots of performance which are easily understood.

### **Changing Landscape of Partners**

Cary Fowler gave a presentation on how the context in which the Trust's work has changed and continues to change. In particular he discussed two vital components of the Trust's operating environment - the International Treaty and the CGIAR.

He described how, as part of the funding strategy of the Treaty, the Trust is dependent on the Treaty functioning well. Countries have largely organized their plant genetic resources around stand-alone systems. The Treaty, however, creates the possibility of a coordinated cooperative approach – a global system. Each individual country could think of the global system as an essential component of their own system and thus have a political and technical interest in its functioning. For a rational, efficient global system a minimal number of genebanks could offer long-term conservation. Such efficiency depends on a collective willingness to abide by and implement the Treaty. The change in approach required to maximise the benefits of the Treaty is still awaited, though the Trust has been at the forefront of its conceptualization and implementation.

The Trust is goal-oriented, and pursues concrete measurable objectives in a scientific and non-political manner. It is also an essential mechanism for implementing the Treaty, and recognized as such by the Treaty's Governing Body. In this regard, the Trust would be concerned if Treaty implementation came to be seen as being accomplished solely through the complementary mechanism of the Treaty's Benefit Sharing Fund. Or, if one mechanism or element came to be seen as more legitimate or important than another. The Trust's focus is on the ex situ

conservation and availability of crop diversity. Genebanks offer robust and secure conservation and they are the direct source of almost all genetic resources used by plant breeders. The Trust's role as an "essential element" of the Treaty's funding strategy in regards to ex situ collections makes the Trust's work and Treaty implementation completely, and officially, indistinguishable.

The CGIAR is a major partner for the Trust, and the collections of the CGIAR – identified in Article 15 of the Treaty – are vital for the global system which the Trust wishes to help establish. These collections conserve and distribute more diversity than any others. The CGIAR has recently undergone major restructuring, and will in the future be organized around large cooperative research programmes (CRPs). However, the genebanks will not be part of any CRP, meaning the question of how these genebanks are to be funded and coordinated is somewhat unresolved. It is the Trust's aim, as part of an efficient and effective global system, to fund the maintenance of these collections, and discussions are already underway, with the Consortium Office of the CGIAR, on how this can be best accomplished cooperatively and efficiently.

### **Fundraising Report**

This item opened with the announcement by Norway of a pledge to the Trust for a new \$50m programme, over 10 years, on collecting, conserving and preparing crop wild relatives in order to adapt agriculture to climate change. The announcement was greeted with applause by the donors present. The project was set in the context that Norway has funded a great deal of climate change mitigation activity, for example through forestry initiatives, but preparing for new climates means preparing for new growing conditions as well. It was also pointed out that although this is a significant amount of funding, it forms only a part of the picture and Norway hopes that other donors will come forward to face this huge challenge together.

Julian Laird, Director of Development & Communications, gave an update on other pledges from the year and on current negotiations. He also described the strategy for 2011 and beyond, explaining that governments remain the most likely source of funds but that the foundations will also be put into place for raising funds from new private sources.

There was a lively discussion, in particular about some of the thinking behind the crop wild relatives project. The Chair, in summing up, applauded Norway's contribution to the Trust, noting the intention to attract other donors to support this work.

### **Finance and Investment Report**

The Executive Director gave an update on developments, first outlining the long-term requirements of the endowment fund, and the need for sustainability as a primary consideration. The Trust has pursued an extremely conservative strategy, particularly in the light of the high volatility in the markets recently.

The Trust has recently changed independent financial advisers. Cambridge Associates will be providing models on the potential mix of investments as well as fund managers. The Board's Finance and Investment Committee will also be looking at the spending rate from the endowment, and whether to adjust this to 4% instead

of 4.5%, and whether to increase the number of quarters over which the retrospective decision on rates is made. Recommendations from the new investment advisors on new investment managers, by category, are expected in spring 2011.

A discussion followed. Canada raised the question of the importance of operational support, noting that Canada provides funding (CAD\$10m over 10 years) for operations. Cary Fowler stressed that ensuring operational costs are covered remained the greatest institutional challenge facing the Trust. The original model for the organization was to have an endowment from which 0.5% would cover operational expenses. Yet this model only works if/when the Trust has its complete endowment. Covering operational costs while the endowment is being built, though central to the organization's success, is a major challenge and one probably best met by raising funds specifically for that purpose.

The Donors' Council welcomed the presentation by the Executive Director and, recognizing that further discussions are to take place in the Board meeting, noted the recent appointment of Cambridge Associates and looked forward to hearing the outcomes of the new investment strategy.

### **2011 Budget**

Cary Fowler presented the 2011 budget, which was endorsed by the Council.

### **The Wider Context - Looking Forward**

Cary Fowler gave a presentation on the wider context within which the Trust is working, and in particular the future directions of the Trust. He reminded the Council that last year he had shared five items on which the Trust intends to work, and the top of that list had been crop wild relatives. A major project is about to take off, and Norway is providing key initial funding. Detailed project planning will take place in 2011. The Executive Director described in more detail the purpose and scope of the decade-long project, and the importance and urgency of the work. There was a discussion on various aspects of this and the wider issues of agriculture's adaptation to climate change.

The Executive Director then moved on to some of the organizational issues facing the Trust. He explained that when the Trust started, the endowment goal was based on rough estimates of the costs of CGIAR genebanks in particular. With the establishment of the CGIAR Consortium, it has become much more important to have a clear costing of the genebanks across the CGIAR, and hence the Consortium and the Trust co-commissioned a study to assess costs – the first rigorous study of this issue. Though very welcome, this study will have obvious implications for the endowment target, which will rise.

The Executive Director also described how the Trust's work is at the intersection of some of the major issues of our times - food security, climate change, water scarcity, sustainable development etc. Conserving and using crop diversity is vital to addressing these issues, and indeed, there is no real solution to such issues without crop diversity. Yet crop diversity is absent from high political discourse. This is particularly frustrating when high level political attention is devoted to these major issues, but no visibility is being given to a major component of the solution to solving

them. The Executive Director called on donors for assistance in raising crop diversity to a high level on political agendas.

A discussion followed in which donors suggested it would be useful for the Trust to develop a strategic positioning paper to address issues such as how to engage donors on climate change and biodiversity, and more generally the approach of the Trust after the Gates Foundation work finishes.

The Executive Director also drew attention to the fact that the issue of the Trust's permanent headquarters was scheduled to be discussed by the Executive Board meeting. At the moment the Trust has no permanent Headquarters agreement, and has been pursuing discussions with a small number of potential host countries.

### **Executive Board Report**

Adel el Beltagy, Vice Chair of the Trust's Executive Board, and two new Board members (Roberto Rodrigues and Åslaug Haga) joined the Donors Council meeting during the day, as part of their familiarization with the Trust. This was welcomed by the Council.

Adel el Beltagy gave a report on the Board's activities during the year. He talked about the importance of the Trust's mission, and started his remarks by thanking Norway for their generosity and for their support in the past, and said that the Trust hopes to see a bigger commitment from all donors in the future. He noted the challenge of climate change for agriculture, and the importance of the Trust's work in ensuring that we can adapt. Donors thanked him for his passionate speech.

### **Other Business and closing remarks**

The Chair thanked the assembled donors for their support of the Trust. He drew the Council's attention to the fact that his second and final term as Chair will expire next year, so the 2011 Council meeting will have to elect a new Chair. Advice about the election process will be provided closer to the next meeting.

The meeting was drawn to a close and followed by a reception.

## **Donors' Council Meeting, November 19, 2010**

### **Provisional Agenda**

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 9.00 | 1 | Welcome and Introductions                    |
|      | 2 | Adoption of Provisional Agenda and Timetable |
| 9.15 | 3 | Updates and Highlights of 2010               |

10.30 Coffee

11.00 4 A progress report – the Report Card

11.30 5 Changing Landscape of Partners

12.00 Lunch

13.00 6 EB7 paper - Fundraising Report 2010

13.30 7 EB7 paper – Finance and Investment Report

14.15 8 2011 Budget

15.00 Coffee

15.30 9 Executive Board Report

16.00 10 The Wider Context - Looking Forward

16.30 11 Other Business

17.00 Meeting Close

**Followed by reception**

## Donors' Council Meeting: November 19<sup>th</sup> 2010

### List of Attendees

Representative	Donor Country
Peter Waddell-Wood (CHAIR)	Australia
Kristina Gill	Australia
Olyntho Vieira	Brazil
Fabiono Soares	Brazil
Marco Valicenti	Canada
Essam Fayed	Egypt
Swantje Nilsson	Germany
Shobhan Pattanayak	India
Stefano Marguccio	Italy
Rita Mannella	Italy
Anne Kristin Hermansen	Norway
Elías José Guía López	Spain
Katrin Graf	Switzerland
Franklin Moore	USA

### Global Crop Diversity Trust: Staff and Board Attending

Adel El-Beltagy	Vice-Chair, Executive Board
Aslaug Haga	Executive Board Member
Roberto Rodrigues	Executive Board Member
Julian Laird	Director of Development and Communications
Cary Fowler	Executive Director
Mellissa Wood	Director of Operations
Jane Toll	Project Manager
Jenin Assaf	Programme Specialist
Maria Dodson	Assistant Professional Officer