

## **Inter-regional Cooperation Network**

The **new Terms of Reference** for the Inter-regional Network Coordinating Group/Task Force were drafted by the Secretariat and agreed by the Steering Committee in February/March 2009, including the composition of the NCG.

The agreed Terms of Reference were the following:

“During Phase VIII, the Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group will coincide with the Inter-regional Cooperation Task Force, with the following task:

<<Organization of one or two Inter-regional Workshops, in collaboration with Bioversity and the Treaty Secretariat, with the objective to convey to other regions similar views to those prevailing in Europe as regards the sharing of tasks, material and information, at the same time facilitating and promoting the ratification and implementation of the International Treaty. The Task Force will also liaise with other ECPGR Networks/WGs expressing specific interest for inter-regional cooperation.>>

The composition of the Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group (4-5 persons) will be defined by the Secretariat, on the basis of nominations received from the National Coordinators until 10 February 2009.”

The **Inter-regional Cooperation Network Coordinating Group** consisted of five members: Frank Begemann, Germany (Network Coordinator); Merja Veteläinen, Finland; Petra Engel, Italy; Silvia Strajeru, Romania; and Ayfer Tan, Turkey.

A workshop for capacity building was organized in March 2009 in Entebbe, Uganda, jointly by ASARECA, EAPGREN, ECPGR, the FAO-Treaty Secretariat and Bioversity. F. Begemann and L. Maggioni, representing ECPGR, brought to the workshop the European experience regarding the regional implementation of the Treaty (National information systems, EURISCO and AEGIS). As a result, a road map for the national implementation of the Multilateral System (MLS) was drawn up, with priority assigned to the documentation of designated material, including the establishment and management of information systems. However, in practice, the ECPGR travellers received the impression that no firm commitment was taken and of apparent stagnation at the regional network level.

As a lesson learned from this workshop, before other ECPGR actions are undertaken, it will be essential to verify in advance the existence of a genuine interest of the partner network to implement the MLS as soon as possible. Provision of inter-regional support should also be linked to the possibility of obtaining factual outcomes (i.e. MLS accessions designated, national or regional inventory established, etc.).

Opportunities for future actions will need to be carefully explored together with the FAO-Treaty Secretariat and Bioversity Regional Directors.

**Outlook for 2010:** activities planned by the Network include the organization of a second Capacity building Inter-regional Workshop on International Treaty implementation, jointly with the Documentation and Information Network.