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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

Geneva

COUNCIL

**Thirty-Third Extraordinary Session
Geneva, March 17, 2016**

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

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1. The Annex to this document contains a draft press release for publication after the thirty-third extraordinary session of the Council.

2. *The Council is invited to consider the draft press release, contained in the Annex to this document, subject to developments in the Council.*

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ANNEX

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

UPOV Press Release 104

Geneva, March 17, 2016

UPOV Council Holds its Thirty-Third Extraordinary Session

The purpose of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is to provide and promote an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society.

The Council of UPOV held its thirty-third extraordinary session on March 17, 2016.

Developments included:

Test Guidelines

The Council welcomed the adoption by the Technical Committee (TC) of 5 new Guidelines for the Conduct of Tests for Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (Test Guidelines) and 10 revised Test Guidelines. UPOV has now developed 316 Test Guidelines, all of which are freely available on the UPOV website (http://www.upov.int/test_guidelines/en/).

Experience of members of the Union in the Examination of New Plant Varieties

The Council noted that the number of genera and species for which members of the Union had indicated their practical experience in the examination of distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS) had increased from 3,382 in 2015 to 3,462 in 2016 (+2.4%). The Council also noted that information on members of the Union with practical experience in DUS examination was freely accessible via the GENIE database (see <http://www.upov.int/genie/en/>).

Interrelations with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

The Council welcomed the decision by the Governing Body of the ITPGRFA, at its fifth session, to request the Secretary of the ITPGRFA to invite UPOV and the ITPGRFA to jointly identify possible areas of interrelations between the ITPGRFA and the UPOV Convention. It further welcomed the presentation by the Secretary of the ITPGRFA on that subject at the ninety-first session of the Consultative Committee, held in Geneva on March 17, 2016. The Council agreed to propose a joint UPOV-ITPGRFA Symposium on areas of interrelations between the ITPGRFA and the UPOV Convention, to be held in Geneva on October 26, 2016, with a recommendation that the Symposium be open to the public.

Seminar on Propagating and Harvested Material in the context of the UPOV Convention

The Council agreed that the "Seminar on Propagating and Harvested Material in the context of the UPOV Convention," to be held in Geneva on October 24, 2016, should be open to the public and that a publication of the proceedings of the Seminar would be made available on the UPOV website.

Award of Silver Medal

Mr. Alejandro Barrientos-Priego (Mexico) was awarded a UPOV Silver Medal on completing his term as Chairman of the TC, from 2014 to 2016, at its fifty-second session, held in Geneva from March 14 to 16, 2016. In awarding the medal, Mr. Francis Gurry, Secretary-General of UPOV, recalled that Mr. Barrientos-Priego had been Mexico's representative at the UPOV Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops (TWF) since 1999, during which time he had: acted as the Leading Expert for nine UPOV Test Guidelines (Cactus Pear and Xoconostles; Avocado; Hawthorn; Vanilla; Cacao; Dragon Fruit; Pecan Nut; Papaya; and Avocado rootstock); and had previously been Chairman of the TWF from 2006 to 2008; Vice-Chairman of the TC from 2011 to 2013 and Chairman of the Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, and DNA-Profiling in Particular (BMT) from 2012 to 2014. Mr. Barrientos-Priego had also acted as a speaker and trainer in several UPOV capacity-building activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With regard to the achievements of the TC under Mr. Barrientos-Priego's chairmanship, Mr. Gurry highlighted: a review to seek ways of improving the effectiveness of the TC, Technical Working Parties and Preparatory Workshops; introduction of "Open discussion sessions" on a range of issues in the TC; organization of joint UPOV/OECD/ISTA workshop on molecular techniques; adoption of document INF/22 "Software and equipment used by members of the Union"; revision of documents TGP/7 "Development of Test Guidelines", TGP/8 "Trial Design and Techniques Used in the Examination of Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability", TGP/9 "Examining Distinctness" and TGP/14 "Glossary of Terms Used in UPOV Documents"; the introduction of the web-based TG Template to facilitate development of Test Guidelines and the adoption of 56 new or revised Test Guidelines.

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