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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

GENEVA

**WORKING GROUP ON BIOCHEMICAL AND MOLECULAR
TECHNIQUES AND DNA-PROFILING IN PARTICULAR**

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ASSINSEL POSITION ON CHARACTERISTICS FOR DUS TESTING

Document prepared by ASSINSEL

ASSINSEL Position on Characteristics for DUS Testing
adopted by the General Assembly of Friday, May 30, 1997 in Stockholm

ASSINSEL proposes the following classification of characteristics used for DUS testing:

1. UPOV characteristics (Guidelines)
 - 1.1 Asterisk characteristics
 - 1.2 Non-asterisk characteristics

2. Additional "phenotypic" characteristics, more or less consistent with the 1991 UPOV definition of a variety (Variety means a plant grouping defined by the expression of the characteristics resulting from a given genotype). Those characteristics are mainly physiological.
 - Yield
 - Sugar content
 - Disease resistance
 - Combining ability (for autogamous parental lines)
 - Herbicide resistance

This list of additional "phenotypic" characteristics is not exhaustive and subject to changes on a crop-by-crop basis.

3. Additional non-phenotypic convincing evidence

In general, they are electrophoretic characteristics. They should be used:

- with the agreement of the applicant
- if all other characteristics failed to establish sufficient distinctness, despite some evidences
- if a test procedure has been agreed upon between the competent authority and the applicant.

If used, they can establish distinctness only in combination with other characteristics, as indicated in categories 1 and 2 ⁽¹⁾.

In fact, that definition is close to that of "last resort characteristics" proposed by UPOV, with the important difference that they cannot be used alone for establishing distinctness.

If these definitions should be accepted, ASSINSEL considers that the problem of introduction of new characteristics for DUS testing would be solved without putting new obligations on the breeders of the already protected variety. Those breeders should simply be informed by the authority that their varieties have been used in a comparison with new varieties in DUS testing using new characteristics. Only the original official reference sample of the already protected variety could be used for comparison with the "new" variety.

⁽¹⁾ This means that phenotypic characteristics may give two levels of evidence:

- the first level that can be used alone
- the second level needing additional evidence given by non phenotypic characteristics