

Council

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to be considered by correspondence

FAQ “HOW THE UPOV SYSTEM SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”*Document prepared by the Office of the Union**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance*

1. The following text for an FAQ is proposed for adoption by the Council:

How does the UPOV system support sustainable development?

The vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>) includes a world where “food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious”, there is “sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger” and one in “which development and the application of technology are climate-sensitive, respect biodiversity and are resilient”.

World population is growing and urbanization increasing, which places greater demands on the quantity and quality of agricultural production. At the same time, conservation of biodiversity depends on sustainable agriculture and a halt or reversal to the expansion of agricultural land, while there are parallel demands on agricultural land for food and energy production. This means that there is a need to produce more from existing agricultural land, in a sustainable way.

The tremendous progress in agricultural productivity in various parts of the world is largely based on improved varieties, combined with improved farming practices. Breeding plant varieties with improved yield, more efficient use of nutrients, resistance to plant pests and diseases, salt and drought tolerance and better adaptation to climate change can sustainably increase productivity and product quality in agriculture, horticulture and forestry, whilst minimizing the pressure on the natural environment. At the same time, new varieties that are adapted to the environment in which they are grown increase the choice of healthy, tasty and nutritious food while generating a viable income for farmers.

The UPOV system of plant variety protection supports long-term investment in breeding and provides a framework for investment in the delivery of seed and other propagating material of varieties suited to farmers’ needs. UPOV was created in 1961 for the development of agriculture and, since that time, has proven to be an effective system for supporting various types of breeders: individuals, farmers, SMEs and larger breeding institutes/enterprises, in the private and public sectors.

From the outset, the UPOV system was conceived to deliver greatest progress in plant breeding and, therefore, to sustain greatest advances in agriculture for the benefit of farmers and society as a whole. This concept is enshrined in the “breeder’s exemption”, a key feature of the UPOV system since its creation. This exemption enables protected plant varieties to be available for further breeding by all types of breeders, thus recognizing that access to genetic resources is a prerequisite for any type of breeding.

2. The Council is invited to adopt the text of the FAQ “How does the UPOV system support sustainable development?”, on the basis of the text in paragraph 1 of this document.

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