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Geneva

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FOR MEETINGS

Document prepared by the Office of the Union

1. The purpose of this document is to report on the conclusions of the Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, on the use of electronic communication for meetings.

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BACKGROUND

2. At its eighty-second session, held in Geneva on October 19 and on the morning of October 20, 2011, the Consultative Committee agreed to request the Technical Committee (TC) and the Administrative and Legal Committee (CAJ) to consider whether it would be appropriate to introduce the possibility to webcast sessions of the TC, CAJ and Technical Working Parties (TWPs) with the opportunity to participate in such sessions by electronic means.

3. The CAJ, at its sixty-fifth session, held in Geneva on March 29, 2012, considered documents CAJ/65/10 "Webcasting of UPOV sessions" and CAJ/65/11 "Report on developments in the Technical Committee", and received presentations on communication technologies. The CAJ noted that webcast meetings would be freely accessible on the internet. However, it noted that it was possible to restrict access

to meeting communications by Webinar and WebEx. The Vice Secretary-General clarified that questions concerning policy on access would be considered by the Consultative Committee (see document CAJ/65/12 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraphs 76 to 78).

4. The TC, at its forty-eighth session, held in Geneva March 26 to March 28, 2012, considered document TC/48/16 "Webcasting of UPOV sessions". The TC agreed that it would be appropriate to consider broadcasting live webcasts, and place video recordings on the UPOV website, for future sessions of the TC, subject to arrangements to be agreed by the Consultative Committee. It noted that the WebEx facility for the TC-EDC meeting had been very effective and endorsed the continuation of that practice. The TC also agreed that the Office of the Union should discuss with the hosts of the TWPs in 2012 whether they would wish to arrange for WebEx to be used for selected Test Guidelines' subgroup (TG Subgroup) discussions. It welcomed the offer of France to test WebEx for [a] selected TG Subgroup[s] at the forty-first session of the Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops (TWA), to be held in Angers, France, from May 21 to 25, 2012, and invited the host and the Chairperson of the TWA to investigate a suitable TG Subgroup, in conjunction with the Office of the Union and the relevant Leading Expert[s]. It also noted that the Chairman of the Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs (TWC) and the hosts of the thirtieth session of the TWC, to be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, June 26 to 29, 2012, would discuss possibilities to make selected presentations via the internet. The TC agreed to request the Office of the Union to prepare a report on the use of WebEx at the TWP session[s], in order that the TC could review how to develop that approach further (see document TC/48/22 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraphs 137 to 139).

5. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-third session, held in Geneva on March 30, 2012, considered the use of electronic communication for meetings. The Consultative Committee noted that the TC, at its forty-eighth session, had agreed that it would be appropriate to consider broadcasting live webcasts, and to place video recordings on the UPOV website, for future sessions of the TC, subject to arrangements to be agreed by the Consultative Committee. The TC had noted that the WebEx facility for the TC-EDC meeting had been very effective and had endorsed the continuation of that practice. The TC had also agreed that the Office of the Union should discuss with the hosts of the TWPs in 2012 whether they would wish to arrange for WebEx to be used for selected TG Subgroup discussions. It had welcomed the offer of France to test WebEx for [a] selected TG Subgroup[s] at the forty-first session of the TWA, to be held in Angers, France, from May 21 to 25, 2012, and had invited the host and the Chairperson of the TWA to investigate a suitable TG Subgroup, in conjunction with the Office of the Union and the relevant Leading Expert[s]. It had also noted that the Chairman of the TWC and the host of the thirtieth session of the TWC, to be held in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, from June 26 to 29, 2012, would discuss possibilities to make selected presentations via the internet. The TC had agreed to request the Office of the Union to prepare a report on the use of WebEx at the TWP session[s], in order that the TC could review how to develop that approach further.

6. The Consultative Committee noted that the CAJ, at its sixty-fifth session, held in Geneva on March 29, 2012, had noted that webcast meetings would be freely accessible on the internet. However, it had noted that it was possible to restrict access to meeting communications by Webinar and WebEx. The Vice Secretary-General had clarified for the CAJ that questions concerning policy on access would be considered by the Consultative Committee.

7. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-third session, agreed, that consideration of the use of electronic communication of meetings should be considered at its eighty-fourth session, to be held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, on the basis of a document to be prepared by the Office of the Union.

MULTIPLE INTERACTIVE WEB CONFERENCING

Introduction

8. The purpose of web conferencing (e.g. WebEx) is to facilitate group meetings with multiple remote participants in interactive mode. Web conferencing allows the participants to speak together, to share documents on screen and, if participants wish, to share a camera link to themselves.

9. One of the main advantages of web conferencing compared to a telephone conference is cost (connection generally via internet, rather than by landline). Furthermore, in relation to voice/image over the internet services (e.g. Skype), the main advantage is that documents can be shared with a high quality resolution and the audio quality is assured by the option to join by telephone in the case of a poor quality internet connection.

10. Another feature of web conferencing is that the meeting can be recorded. This allows, for example, the same presentation to be made without the original presenter.

Participation access

11. Participation in web conferencing is restricted to those invited to the meeting by the host by means of a unique password for each meeting. The host can also monitor who is participating in the meeting.

Current use of web conferencing

12. In 2012, web conferencing was used by the TC-EDC, TWPs and by the Office of the Union, as follows:

TC-EDC

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Host location</u>	<u>Remote participants</u>	
			<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>
<i>TC-EDC</i>	11-12.01.12	<i>Geneva</i>	7	Australia, Slovakia, South Africa

Technical Working Parties

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Host location</u>	<u>Remote participants</u>	
			<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>
<i>Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops</i>	21-25.05.12	<i>France</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Guidelines Subgroup for Rhodesgrass 			2	Australia (Leading Expert), Geneva (Office of the Union)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pluto Database Demonstration 			1	Geneva (WIPO Presenter and Office of the Union)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG Template for Drafters of Test Guidelines 			2	Australia (Co-presenter), Geneva (Office of the Union)
<i>Technical Working Party for Vegetables</i>	11-15.06.12	<i>Netherlands</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG Template for Drafters of Test Guidelines 			1	Australia (Co-presenter)
<i>Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs</i>	26-29.06.12	<i>Republic of Moldova</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of document TWC/30/26 			2	Australia (Drafter)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG Template for Drafters of Test Guidelines 			2	Australia (Co-presenter)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pluto Database Demonstration 			2	Geneva (WIPO Presenter)
<i>Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops</i>	30.07-03.08.12	<i>China</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test Guidelines Subgroup for Apple rootstock 			1	South Africa (Leading Expert)
<i>Subgroup of the Test Guidelines for Elytrigia Desv.</i>	19.06.12	<i>Argentina/Switzerland</i>	12	Argentina (Leading Expert), Belgium, Hungary, European Union, Poland, Geneva (Office of the Union)

Meetings of the Office of the Union

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Host location</u>	<u>Remote participants</u>	
			<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>
<i>World Seed Project (8 meetings)</i>	<i>April-August 2012</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	4-20	Worldwide (Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe)
<i>DL-305 Course planning (3 meetings)</i>	<i>April-August 2012</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	2	<i>Netherlands</i>
<i>Electronic Application Form</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full meeting 	10.05.12	Switzerland	11	France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, United States of America
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIPO Internet Service Section visit to the Community Plant Variety Office of the European Union (CPVO) 	21.08.12	France	1	Geneva (Office of the Union)
<i>Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Training Course "Internationally Harmonized PVP System"</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPOV question & answer session (introduction phase) 	03.09.12	Japan	1	Geneva (Office of the Union)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPOV question & answer session (introduction phase) 	23.10.12	Japan	2	Geneva (Office of the Union)

Conclusions of the Consultative Committee

13. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, approved the use of web conferencing by UPOV bodies, as considered appropriate by the UPOV body concerned, to facilitate participation by members of the Union and observers in accordance with the existing procedures. The Consultative Committee recalled that the procedures concerning the invitations to the sessions of the UPOV bodies were contained in the UPOV Convention, rules of procedure, guidance for members of UPOV on ongoing obligations and related notifications, rules governing the granting of observer status to States, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations in UPOV bodies and the rules governing access to UPOV documents. In accordance with those procedures, web conferencing participation would be by means of a password issued to the designated persons in the relevant UPOV body and participation would be monitored by the Office of the Union.

14. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, approved the use of web conferencing by the Office of the Union to facilitate participation by invited participants to its meetings, as considered appropriate by the Office of the Union (see document C/46/16 "Report by the President on the work of the eighty-fourth session of the Consultative Committee; adoption of recommendations, if any, prepared by that Committee", paragraphs 28 and 29).

WEBCASTING

Introduction

15. A webcast is a broadcast of an event (e.g. meeting, seminar, presentation etc.) over the internet to many simultaneous listeners/viewers. Webcasts can either be distributed "live" (see "Broadcast delay") or on demand.

16. The main purpose of webcasting is to enable participants that are not physically present to view an event. There can also be possibilities for interventions by remote participants but this is within narrower constraints than the multiple interactive web conferencing described in the previous section "Multiple Interactive Web Conferencing". In the case of a broadcast delay (see "Broadcast delay"), interventions by remote participants are not feasible.

Participation access

17. In the case of webcasting, various possibilities exist with regard to access, from unrestricted public access to access by invitation with password and with monitoring by the host. The choice of internet technology will determine the options for access and also the quality and features of the broadcast (e.g. microphone-linked roving camera, desktop sharing, remote presentation options etc.), for example according to compatibility with the internal audio-visual systems of the host.

Broadcast delay

18. In the case of webcasting, it should be noted that an event may be broadcast to an unlimited audience, similar to that of a broadcast by a radio or television channel. In radio and television, a broadcast delay for editing is often used to prevent profanity, violence, or other undesirable material from making it to air, or to eliminate technical malfunctions.

Current use of webcasting

19. At its eighty-second session, held in Geneva on October 19, and on the morning of October 20, 2011, the Consultative Committee was informed that a webcast of the twenty-ninth session of the TWC, held in Geneva, from June 7 to 10, 2011, was followed online by 25 participants from 10 members of the Union.

20. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-third session, held in Geneva on March 30, 2012, agreed that the "Symposium on the benefits of plant variety protection for farmers and growers" (Symposium), to be held in Geneva on November 2, 2012, be open for attendance to the public, subject to room capacity, with priority being given to participants from members of the Union, observer States and observer organizations. The Consultative Committee also approved the webcasting of the Symposium.

Conclusions of the Consultative Committee

21. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, approved the use of webcasting of sessions of UPOV bodies for viewing by members of the Union and observers in accordance with the existing procedures, as considered appropriate by the UPOV body concerned. The Consultative Committee noted that the procedures concerning the invitations to the sessions of the UPOV bodies were contained in the UPOV Convention, rules of procedure, guidance for members of UPOV on ongoing obligations and related notifications, rules governing the granting of observer status to States, intergovernmental organizations and international non governmental organizations in UPOV bodies and the rules governing access to UPOV documents. In accordance with those procedures, webcasting viewing would be by means of a password issued to the designated persons in the relevant UPOV body and participation would be monitored by the Office of the Union.

22. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, agreed that, in all other cases of webcasting, the Consultative Committee would be invited to approve any arrangements for a possible webcast.

23. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, agreed that the webcast of the "Symposium on the benefits of plant variety protection for farmers and growers", to be held in Geneva on November 2, 2012, be made available on the UPOV website after a suitable broadcast delay (see document C/46/16 "Report by the President on the work of the eighty-fourth session of the Consultative Committee; adoption of recommendations, if any, prepared by that Committee", paragraphs 30 to 32).

24. The TC is invited to note the conclusions of the Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, on the use of electronic communication for meetings, as set out in paragraphs 13, 14, 21 and 22 of this document.

[End of document]