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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS
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**TECHNICAL WORKING PARTY
ON
AUTOMATION AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS**

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PROJECT TO CONSIDER THE PUBLICATION OF VARIETY DESCRIPTIONS

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1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments in the Technical Committee (TC) and the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Publication of Variety Descriptions (WG-PVD), concerning the project to consider the publication of variety descriptions.

Technical Committee

2. The TC, at its forty-first session, held in Geneva from April 4 to 6, 2005, considered document TC/41/9, which provided a report on the progress in the model studies, as reported to the Technical Working Parties (TWPs) at their sessions in 2004. That report provided summaries of the data from all the model studies as reported to the TWPs in 2004 and also reported the comments made by the TWPs.

Ad hoc Working Group on the Publication of Variety Descriptions (WG-PVD)

3. The WG-PVD held a meeting in Geneva, on April 6, 2005. In addition to the members of the WG-PVD, which includes Mr. Uwe Meyer as Chairman of the Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs (TWC), the meeting was attended by

Mr. Chris Barnaby (Chairman of the Technical Working Party for Ornamental Plants and Forest Trees), Mr. Erik Schulte (Chairman of the Technical Working Party for Fruit Crops), Mr. Baruch Bar-Tel (Coordinator for the Model Study on Strawberry), Mr. Henk Bonthuis (joint Coordinator for the Model Study on Potato) and Mr. Kees van Ettehoven (Chairman of the Technical Working Party for Vegetables and Coordinator for the Model Study on Lettuce).

4. The WG-PVD based its discussions on document TC/41/9 and oral reports from Mr. Baruch Bar-Tel (Coordinator for the Model Study on Strawberry), Mr. Henk Bonthuis (joint Coordinator for the Model Study on Potato), Mr. Gerhard Deneken (Coordinator for the Model Study on Barley) and Mr. Kees van Ettehoven (Coordinator for the Model Study on Lettuce).

5. Mr. Uwe Meyer provided a report on the statistical guidance which the TWC had developed to assist coordinators of the model studies in the analysis and reporting of the results.

6. The participants exchanged thoughts on the initial results of the model studies and how far these provided indications in relation to one of the aims of the project i.e. whether it might be possible “to use appropriate elements of the variety description, in the process of examining distinctness, to eliminate varieties which do not require further comparison and to identify those varieties against which a further comparison is required”.

7. The initial results of the model studies indicated that the level of variation in variety descriptions obtained from different sources could be related, for example, to the type of variety and species, the type of characteristic, the geographical region where the variety was described and the way in which the characteristics were observed. It was noted that some measures might be possible to develop variety descriptions which had less variation e.g. selecting characteristics which had a low level of variation, using descriptions from within a region and improving the clarity of characteristics in the UPOV Test Guidelines. Thereafter, multivariate analysis, such as that provided by the GAIA software, might have potential as a useful tool to handle descriptions from different sources.

8. Nevertheless, it was noted that, whilst minimizing variation between variety descriptions obtained from different sources was desirable, it would be impossible to eliminate variation completely. It was also recognized that there would need to be confidence that the benefits of any measures to reduce variation would outweigh the costs involved.

9. It was recalled that an important form of harmonization within UPOV was the designation of asterisked characteristics in the Test Guidelines, which, in general, should always be examined for DUS and included in the variety description by all members of the Union. It was noted that such harmonization was particularly relevant for the exchange and purchase of DUS reports, irrespective of variations in variety descriptions.

10. On the basis of the discussions, the WG-PVD recommended that:

(a) the model studies should be completed;

(b) the Technical Working Parties (TWPs) and the TC should:

(i) review the results of the model studies and seek to draw conclusions on the sources and types of variation (e.g. regional variation, method of examination of characteristics);

(ii) draw conclusions in relation to the aim of the project concerning the possibility “to use appropriate elements of the variety description, in the process of examining distinctness, to eliminate varieties which do not require further comparison and to identify those varieties against which a further comparison is required”;

(iii) draw conclusions in relation to possible improvements in other relevant aspects of UPOV’s work e.g. in relation to the development of Test Guidelines;

(c) the WG-PVD should consider the conclusions of the TWPs and the TC at its next meeting.

11. The next meeting of the WG-PVD was provisionally set for April 2006.

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