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| INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS | | |
| Geneva | | |

Technical working party ON AUTOMATION AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS

Thirty-Fourth Session  
Shanghai, China, June 7 to 10, 2016

Report

Document prepared by the Office of the Union  
  
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Opening of the session

The Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs (TWC) held its thirty‑fourth session in Shanghai, China, from June 7 to 10, 2016. The list of participants is reproduced in Annex I to this report.

The session was opened by Mr. Adrian Roberts (United Kingdom), Chairman of the TWC, who welcomed the participants and thanked China for hosting the TWC session. Mr. Yang Xiongnian, Director General of Development Center of Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) (Director General of DUS Testing Station of New Plant Varieties, MOA), Mr. Cai Youming, President, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Mr. Ma Zhiqiang, Division Chief of Variety Management, Bureau of Seed Management, MOA, welcomed the TWC to China. Copies of the opening speeches are reproduced in Annexes II to IV to this document, respectively.

The TWC received a presentation by Mr. Cui Yehan, Professor, Director, Plant Variety Protection Division, Development Center of Science and Technology, MOA, on “Development of Plant Variety Protection System in China”, a copy of which is reproduced in Annex V to this report.

## Adoption of the agenda

The TWC adopted the agenda as presented in document TWC/34/1 Rev.

## Short reports on developments in plant variety protection

1. *Reports on developments in plant variety protection from members and observers*

The TWC noted the information on developments in plant variety protection from members and observers provided in document TWC/34/25 Prov.

1. *Reports on developments within UPOV*

The TWC received a presentation from the Office of the Union on the latest developments within UPOV, a copy of which is provided in document TWC/34/16.

Molecular Techniques

The TWC considered document TWC/34/2 and received an oral report from Mr. Kees van Ettekoven (Netherlands), Chairperson of the BMT.

The TWC noted that the BMT, at its fifteenth session, had been invited to develop a list of possible joint initiatives with OECD and ISTA, including the development of a list of terminology (definitions) used by OECD, UPOV and ISTA for consideration at the TC, at its fifty-third session, to be held in 2017.

The TWC noted that a Joint OECD/UPOV/ISTA/AOSA Workshop on Biochemical and Molecular Methods would be held in Paris, France, on June 8, 2016.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed a draft question and answer concerning the information on the situation in UPOV with regard to the use of molecular techniques for a wider audience, including the public in general, as set out in paragraph 23 of this document, and subject to agreement by the CAJ, at its seventy-third session, and the Consultative Committee, at its ninety-second session, the draft would be presented for adoption by the Council, at its fiftieth ordinary session.

The TWC welcomed the offer by the Netherlands to report on projects on the use of molecular techniques in DUS examination to the TWC, at its thirty-fifth session (see documents BMT/15/21 “Efficient DUS test in French bean by using molecular data” and BMT/15/22 “Can molecular distance be used as a characteristic?”).

The TWC welcomed the offer by China to report its experience on the use of DNA databases of maize, rice and wheat when selecting similar varieties for the examination of distinctness.

The TWC agreed to invite presentations from members on the statistical aspects of using molecular markers in DUS examination, including the selection of similar varieties and organization of growing trials. The TWC welcomed the offer by France to make a presentation on current work with databases that include molecular information with computation of molecular distances using the GAIA software.

The TWC agreed that software and databases as well as associated statistical methods were important elements of DUS examination and of increasing relevance to plant variety protection. The TWC agreed that the Chairperson of the TWC should report on these particular elements of the work of the TWC to the Technical Committee.

## TGP documents

The TWC considered the TGP documents below on the basis of document TWC/34/3.

### Matters for adoption by the Council in 2016

The TWC noted the revisions to documents TGP/0, TGP/7 and TGP/8 to be put forward for adoption by the Council at its fiftieth ordinary session, as set out in document TWC/34/3, paragraphs 6 to 13.

### Future revision of TGP documents

The TWC noted that the proposals for future revisions of TGP documents to be discussed by the TWPs at their sessions in 2016 would be dealt with under separate documents.

The TWC noted the new proposals for revision of TGP documents to be discussed by the TWF at its session in 2016 on duration of DUS tests in the fruit sector and the definition of “recurved” in document TGP/14.

The TWC noted that the Technical Committee (TC), at its fifty-second session, held in Geneva, from March 14 to 16, 2016, had requested the TWF to review whether the existing guidance in TGP documents precluded the conclusion of a DUS examination after one growing cycle on document TGP/7.

The TWC noted the plans of the TWF to consider whether to propose to revise the definition of “recurved” in document TGP/14.

### Program for the development of TGP documents

The TWC noted the program for the development of TGP documents, as set out in Annex III to document TWC/34/3.

The TWC agreed to request the expert from China to prepare a proposal for reorganizing document TGP/8 to facilitate searches and use by DUS examiners for consideration at the thirty-fifth session of the TWC for consideration.

### TGP/7: Development of Test Guidelines

#### Revision of document TGP/7: Drafter’s Kit for Test Guidelines

The TWC considered document TWC/34/9 and received a presentation by electronic means from the Office of the Union on the web‑based application for drafting of Test Guidelines (web-based TG Template).

The TWC noted the issues addressed in response to the comments by Leading and Interested Experts that participated in the testing of the prototype of the web-based TG Template, as set out in document TWC/34/9, paragraphs 21 and 22. The TWC noted that further comments by users of the web‑based TG Template could be sent to the Office of the Union.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed the format of the Table of Characteristics in all Test Guidelines with a structure as set out in document TWC/34/9, paragraph 16.

The TWC noted that the TC had agreed that guidance should be developed on the order of the methods of observation for a characteristic in the Table of Characteristics to indicate that the most commonly used method was displayed first.

The TWC noted that the development of Version 2 of the web-based TG Template would not start before 2018, subject to availability of resources, after Version 1 had been fully stabilized and tested.

The TWC noted that document TGP/7 would be revised to reflect the introduction of the web-based TG Template after Version 1 was fully stabilized and tested.

The TWC noted that the system specifications of the web-based TG Template allowed the future development of a web-service application to allow data extraction from the web-based TG Template to other databases, which could offer possibilities to support the development of authorities’ own test guidelines. The TWC noted that such a functionality could be developed in the future if data mapping of their own databases was done by the authorities.

### TGP/8: Trial Design and Techniques Used in the Examination of Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability

#### Revision of document TGP/8: Part II: Section 9: the Combined-Over-Years Uniformity Criterion (COYU)

The TWC considered document TWC/34/10.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed to request members of the Union to provide larger data sets to the United Kingdom for developing probability levels for the new method that would match results obtained using the previous probability levels, as set out in document TWC/34/10, paragraph 20.

The TWC noted that the Office of the Union had issued UPOV Circular E-16/098 to invite UPOV members’ experts to provide to the United Kingdom, by May 27, 2016, data sets including at least 100 candidate varieties, with a possibility that data for those 100 varieties could be derived from several years.

The TWC noted the report by an expert of the United Kingdom that a data set on red fescue had been submitted by Slovakia and that Denmark had agreed to submit a data set on spring and winter canola later in 2016.

The TWC welcomed the offers from China and France to submit data sets on maize and fescue, respectively. The TWC noted the invitation for submission of other data sets with 100 candidates from as many crops as possible for developing probability levels for the new method. The TWC agreed to invite the expert from the United Kingdom to report on progress during the thirty-fifth session of the TWC.

#### Revision of document TGP/8: Part II: New Section: Examining DUS in Bulk Samples

The TWC considered document TWC/34/11.

The TWC noted that guidance for examining DUS in bulk samples would be developed on the basis of the criteria set out in document TWC/34/11, paragraph 22, and agreed with the proposal by the expert from the Netherlands to use the approach “Control of the characteristic before it is accepted in the relevant guideline”.

The TWC also agreed that approaches “subplots” and “plant number” would be acceptable on the basis of examples and discussions in the relevant Technical Working Parties, as proposed in the Annex to document TWC/34/11.

The TWC noted that DNA markers could be used to assess characteristics on the basis of the existence of a reliable link between the marker and the characteristic and there was no need to develop guidance in this regard under a general guidance for characteristics observed on the basis of bulk samples.

#### Revision of document TGP/8: Part II: New Section: Data Processing for the Assessment of Distinctness and for Producing Variety Descriptions

The TWC considered documents TWC/34/12 and TWC/34/12 Add.

The TWC agreed to request the expert from France to continue developing the study on the comparison of methods used for producing variety descriptions to provide further information to explain the results obtained in the practical exercise.

The TWC agreed to invite the experts from France, Germany, Italy and Japan to provide a short description of their methods to transform measurements into notes and to provide examples where the methods would not be appropriate using a similar structure to the information submitted by the United Kingdom, as presented in document TWC/34/12 Add.. The TWC agreed that the description of the methods and example situations where they could or should not be used could form the basis for future guidance.

The TWC received an oral presentation by an expert from the United Kingdom and noted that the method for peas used a combination of delineating example varieties and crop expert judgement. The TWC noted the explanation that example varieties were not used when the range of values was not continuous, to avoid distortion in the division of the scale of notes into equally spaced states (“notes stretching”).

The TWC noted that in China some quantitative characteristics without normal distribution were transformed (e.g. log) before dividing the range of expression into equally spaced states for the conversion of observations into notes.

### TGP/10: Examining Uniformity

#### Revision of document TGP/10: New Section: Assessing uniformity by off-types on basis of more than one growing cycle or on the basis of sub-samples

The TWC considered documents TWC/34/13 and TWC/34/27.

The TWC noted that the TWA had agreed to request a video link with experts from the TWC to discuss the new proposed “Approach 3: Combining the results of two growing cycles” at its forty-fifth session, to be held in 2016.

The TWC considered the draft guidance as presented in document TWC/34/13, Annexes I and II, for inclusion in a future revision of document TGP/10, and agreed that cost of trials, consistency of results, time required for decisions and technical aspects of each approach could influence the selection of the most suitable approach for each situation.

The TWC agreed that future guidance should provide parameters for decisions on the most suitable approach based on experience of members and agreed to invite examples of different types of crops and the criteria for selecting the approach used for the assessment of off-types. The TWC welcomed the offers from Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to provide examples to be presented at its thirty-fifth session.

The TWC noted the importance of identifying whether differences in number of off-types between cycles was due to biological reasons or sampling variation and agreed that the relevant part of approach 2 and 3 of the draft guidance should be amended to read as follows, respectively:

“Care is needed when considering results that are very different in each of the growing cycles, such as when a type of off-type is observed at a high level in one growing cycle and is absent in another growing cycle. A statistical test for consistency should be applied when appropriate.”

“Care is needed when considering results that are very different in each of the growing cycles, such as when a type of off-type is observed at a high level in one growing cycle and is absent in another growing cycle. A statistical test for consistency ~~is possible~~ should be applied when appropriate.”

The TWC considered document TWC/34/27 “Practical experience of assessing uniformity by off-types on oilseed rape and cauliflower” and received a presentation by an expert from France, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/27.

The TWC noted the simulation of decisions using approaches 1 and 3 on different crops and agreed on the usefulness of the worked examples. The TWC noted that cases of diverging results between 2 growing cycles are not common as most varieties would either meet or fail to meet requirements in both cycles.

The TWC noted the explanation of the requirement of “independent growing cycle” by an expert from France and the preference for a third growing cycle to increase reliability of observations, as presented in the document TWC/34/27, Annex, page 4.

## Information and Databases

### (a) UPOV information databases

The TWC considered document TWC/34/5.

#### UPOV code system

The TWC noted that the European Union proposal “Proposal to the ‘Guide to the UPOV Code System’ on the principal botanical name for inter-generic and interspecific hybrids” from Community Plant Variety Office of the European Union (CPVO) presented in document TWC/34/23, was considered under agenda item “Proposal to the ‘Guide to the UPOV Code System’ on the Principal Botanical Name for Inter-generic and Interspecific Hybrids“ (see paragraph 113 of this report).

The TWC noted the developments concerning UPOV codes, as set out in document TWC/34/5, paragraph 8.

The TWC noted that the Office of the Union would prepare tables of UPOV code additions and amendments, for checking by the relevant authorities, for each of the TWP sessions in 2016.

#### PLUTO database

The TWC noted the summary of contributions to the PLUTO database from 2012 to 2015 and the current situation of members of the Union on data contribution, as presented in Annex II to document TWC/34/5.

The TWC noted that the CAJ, at its seventy-second session, had agreed that the Working Group on Variety Denominations (WG-DEN) had considered proposals for the expansion of the content of the PLUTO database to include all recognized varieties, including those that had not been, or were no longer, registered/protected.

The TWC noted that the WG-DEN, at its first meeting, had agreed to defer the consideration of the matters concerning the possible expansion of the content of the PLUTO database to include all recognized varieties, including those that had not been, or were no longer, registered/protected until its second, or a subsequent, meeting.

The TWC noted the information concerning the training courses “Contributing data to the PLUTO database”, held in Geneva in September and October 2015, as set out in document TWC/34/5, paragraphs 20 to 22.

### (b) Variety description databases

The TWC considered document TWC/34/6.

The TWC noted the developments reported in document TWC/34/6 and, in particular, that:

(a) the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed to invite members of the Union to make presentations at the next session of the Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, and DNA-Profiling in Particular (BMT) on how databases containing molecular data might be developed in UPOV; and

(b) the outcome of discussions during the BMT on how databases containing molecular data might be developed in UPOV would be reported to the TC at its fifty-third session.

The TWC noted that there were two presentations made on databases containing molecular data at the BMT, at its fifteenth session;

(a) Towards durable DNA databases to support DUS testing (document BMT/15/16)

(b) Advances in the Construction and Application of DNA Fingerprint Databases in Maize (document BMT/15/20)

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from the Netherlands on “Naktuinbouw application and information database: Integrated IT-tool to manage applications, requests, trials, reports and variety collections”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/22.

The TWC noted that it was important to take the cost of maintenance into account when creating a database.

### (c) Exchange and use of software and equipment

The TWC considered document TWC/34/7

#### Document UPOV/INF/16 “Exchangeable Software”

The TWC noted that the Council, at its forty-ninth ordinary session, held in Geneva, on October 29, 2015, had adopted document UPOV/INF/16/5 “Exchangeable Software”.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed to propose the revision of document UPOV/INF/16/5 to include information on the use of software by members of the Union, and that it would be reported to the CAJ at its seventy-third session and, if agreed by the CAJ, a draft of document UPOV/INF/16/6 “Exchangeable Software” would be presented for adoption by the Council at its fiftieth ordinary session.

#### Document UPOV/INF/22 “Software and equipment used by members of the Union”

The TWC noted that the Council, at its forty-ninth ordinary session, held in Geneva, on October 29, 2015, had adopted document UPOV/INF/22/2 “Software and equipment used by members of the Union.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed to propose the revision of document UPOV/INF/22/2 to include information on the use of software by members of the Union, and if agreed by the CAJ, a draft of document UPOV/INF/22/3 would be presented for adoption by the Council at its fiftieth ordinary session.

The TWC agreed to propose that a note be added to document INF/22 that the information in that document was the responsibility of the contributing authority. The TWC agreed that reference to documents INF/16 and INF/22 should be made on training materials and presentations to promote the use of that information such as for facilitating the construction of databases.

The TWC agreed to suggest that information in INF/22 be presented in an alternative form (e.g. on-line format) rather than an INF document.

### (d) Electronic application systems

The TWC considered document TWC/34/26 and received a presentation by the Office of the Union via electronic means. The TWC noted the main functionalities developed during the period and the program for development of prototype electronic application form Version 2 (PV2) by October, 2016.

### (e) Management of databases

The TWC received an oral presentation from an expert of the Netherlands on the development of a search platform technology that would enable searching of multiple, independent databases constructed using different architecture.

The TWC noted that the construction of portals could facilitate access to technology and noted that it could allow searches to be conducted across databases constructed using different architecture.

The TWC noted the experience of France on the construction and management of a platform for DUS data (GEMMA Platform). The TWC also noted the experience of Germany in sharing a database with France and Spain of morphological characteristic data of maize varieties using unique identifiers and the use of an interface to exchange data.

The TWC suggested that guidance on the development and management of databases may be of benefit.

The TWC agreed to invite presentations from members on experiences with using databases, and proposals for guidance on the management of databases to be presented to the TWC at its thirty-fifth session.

The TWC welcomed the “Database to search for TWC working documents” that was developed by the experts from Germany and distributed to participants to the TWC session as a CD-ROM. The TWC noted that the database was updated every year with TWC documents tagged with indexed keywords. The TWC agreed that the database provided a useful search mechanism for scanned TWC documents.

### (f) Bio-informatics

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from the Netherlands on “Bioinformatics”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/24. The TWC agreed that bioinformatics was a field of work closely related to the mandate of the TWC.

### (g) Experiences in the development of databases

The TWC invited members to present their experiences in the development of databases, including the main elements to be taken into consideration, to be considered during the thirty-fifth session of the TWC.

### (h) Search in multiple databases using a portal

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from the Netherlands on “Search Plant: A search portal to facilitate tracking and tracing of ornamental varieties”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/20.

The TWC noted that the Search Plant portal ([www.searchplant.eu](http://www.searchplant.eu)) could search three independent databases with a single search function. The TWC noted the data structure and information technology requirements for other databases to join the portal and noted the plans for identification of similar varieties in the future by recognition of images.

## Statistical methods

### (a) Excluding varieties of common knowledge from the second growing cycle when COYD is used

The TWC noted the information presented in document TWC/34/8.

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from the United Kingdom on “Calculated thresholds for excluding varieties of common knowledge from the second growing cycle when COYD is used”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/8 Add.

The TWC noted the request for submission of data sets from different crops for developing the method and welcomed the offer from Denmark, Finland, Germany and Slovakia to provide data sets. The TWC noted that software to calculate thresholds for excluding varieties would be developed to facilitate the application of the method, with a possibility to be integrated into the GAIA software.

### (b) Statistical methods for visually observed characteristics

The TWC considered document TWC/34/18

The TWC noted the report from the expert from France that a study on the development of software to implement the method developed by experts from Denmark and Poland would be reported to the TWC, at its thirty-fifth session.

The TWC considered the description of the method presented in the Annex to document TWC/34/18 and agreed that appropriate naming and drafting guidance should be considered once further experience had been acquired and software was available to facilitate its use in DUS examination.

### (c) Statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from China on “Statistical methods used in the DUSTC software package”, including a demonstration of the software package that incorporates statistical analysis procedures, including the methods for calculating COYU and COYD.

## Software for DUS examination

### (a) A tool to define reference collection

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from France on “A tool to define reference collection”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/28, including a demonstration of the prototype software.

The TWC noted the series of functions performed by the software automating searches from a theoretical collection of all varieties of common knowledge to the identification of most similar varieties for comparison in growing trials. The TWC noted that development of the software was expected to be completed in 2017.

*(b) A single tool for DUS computation process*

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from France on “A single tool for DUS computation process”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/29. The TWC noted the integration of new functions in the GAIA software and use of the same interface for different processes, such as COYD and COYU, using the same data set.

The TWC noted the changes to the data structure in the Excel file used to upload data to GAIA with the introduction of information on replicates and number of plants per replicate. The TWC noted that the improvements made would still allow GAIA to be available free of charge.

The TWC agreed to invite France to report on progress in the development of a single tool for DUS computation process at the thirty-fifth session of the TWC.

### (c) A ring-test comparing three different software packages for COYD

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from China on “A ring-test comparing three different software packages for COYD”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/30. The TWC noted that the same data set was used to compare results generated for the COYD procedure using the statistical packages developed in China (DUSTC), Germany (SAS) and the United Kingdom (DUST). The TWC noted that the three different software packages produced the same result.

## Image analysis

### (a) Demonstration of Chinese software on image analysis

The TWC received a demonstration of the Chinese software on image analysis and noted the series of functions, including the management of a photo database, photo editing, automatic analysis of shape and color, direct comparison between objects and analysis of similarity rate of shape and color.

The TWC noted that China planned to improve the conditions to acquire images (e.g. light source and exposure, shape and color scales) allowing accurate direct comparison of images and automatic selection of similar varieties from a photo database. The TWC welcomed the invitation by China for other experts to join the project for improvement of the software.

## Minimizing variation between observers

The TWC received a presentation by an expert from Finland on “Minimizing variation between observers – practical example from Finland”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/19.

The TWC noted the steps taken in Finland for minimizing variation between observers when more than one observer was used for the assessment of MS/VS characteristics in turnip rape, such as Leaf: undulation of margin, Leaf: dentation of margin; and Leaf: number of lobes. The TWC noted that Finland conducted training with the observers prior to beginning of work and calibration exercises in different occasions during the same day of data collection on the field.

## Genotype-by-environment interaction, DUS tests and data transformation into notes

The TWC received a presentation by experts from Finland and Italy on “Genotype by Environment Interaction (GEI) - DUS test and data transformation into notes”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/17.

The TWC agreed that the information presented by the experts from Finland and Italy should be considered along with the guidance currently being developed on transformation of observations into notes and the criteria for choosing among different existing approaches. The TWC agreed to request the experts from Finland and Italy to provide a summary of the presentation to support the development of guidance in document TWC/34/12, to be presented to the TWC at its thirty-fifth session.

## Matters concerning variety descriptions

The TWC considered document TWC/34/14.

The TWC noted the purpose of the variety description developed at the time of the granting of the breeder’s right (original variety description), and the status of the original variety description in relation to the verification of the conformity of plant material to a protected variety for enforcement of the breeder’s right, as set out in document TWC/34/14, paragraph 28.

The TWC noted the presentations on “Matters concerning variety descriptions” received by the TWPs, at their sessions in 2015, as set out in document TWC/34/14, paragraph 7.

The TWC noted the comments by the TWPs, at their sessions in 2015, on matters concerning variety descriptions and the role of plant material used as the basis for the DUS examination, as set out in document TWC/34/14, paragraphs 8 to 26.

## Number of growing cycles in DUS examination

The TWC considered documents TWC/34/15, TWC/34/15 Add. and TWC/34/21.

The TWC noted that the TC, at its fifty-second session, had agreed to invite members of the Union to simulate the impact of using different numbers of growing cycles on DUS decisions using actual data and to report on their results at the TWP sessions in 2016 and at the fifty‑third session of the TC.

The TWC received a presentation by the expert from Finland on “Number of growing cycles in DUS examination -simulation of impact on DUS decisions”, a copy of which is reproduced in document TWC/34/15 Add, and by an expert from the Netherlands on “Minimum number of growing cycles”, a copy of which is reproduced in the Annex to document TWC/34/21.

The TWC noted that for some members DNA tests were being considered for reducing the number of growing cycles while retaining decisions based on a growing trial.

The TWC noted the experience of an expert of Argentina that, in the case of vegetatively propagated and self-pollinated crops, a second growing cycle would not be necessary in cases where distinctness was confirmed with clear differences between varieties (e.g. disease resistance characteristics) in a first growing cycle.

The TWC welcomed the offers by France, Germany and the Netherlands to simulate the impact of using different numbers of growing cycles on DUS decisions using actual data to be reported to the TWC at its thirty‑fifth session.

The TWC noted that, for cross-pollinated varieties, for some UPOV members a third growing cycle was used to examine distinctness, such as in meadow fescue, red clover, timothy, turnip rape and white fescue in Finland.

## Proposal to the “Guide to the UPOV Code System” on the Principal Botanical Name for Inter-generic and Interspecific Hybrids

The TWC noted the information on a “Proposal to the ‘Guide to the UPOV code system’ on the principal botanical name for inter-generic and interspecific hybrids” provided in document TWC/34/23.

## Date and place of the next session

At the invitation of Argentina, the TWC agreed to hold its thirty-fifth session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from November 13 to 17, 2017, with the preparatory workshop on November 12, 2017.

## Chairperson

The TWC agreed to propose to the TC that it recommend to the Council to elect Mr. Christophe Chevalier (France), as the next chairperson of the TWC.

## Variety denominations

The TWC considered document TWC/34/4.

The TWC noted the work on the possible development of a UPOV similarity search tool for variety denomination purposes by the Working Group for the Development of a UPOV Denomination Similarity Search Tool (WG-DST), as set out in document TWC/34/4, paragraphs 5 to 13.

The TWC noted that a revision of document UPOV/INF/12/4 (document UPOV/INF/12/5), in relation to changes of registered variety denominations had been adopted by the Council, at its forty-ninth ordinary session (see document TWC/34/4, paragraph 14).

The TWC noted that the mandate and the composition of the WG-DST had been expanded to prepare recommendations for the CAJ concerning a possible revision of document UPOV/INF/12 (to become the WG‑DEN).

The TWC noted that the first meeting of the WG-DEN had been held in Geneva, on March 18, 2016.

## Experience with new types and species

The TWC noted the experience of Argentina with DUS examination of new varieties of the following genera and species: *Lippia integrifolia* (Gris.) Hieron, *Glandularia aristigera* (S. Moore) Tronc., *Macroptilum* spp., *Camelina sativa* L. Crantz, *Chenopodium quinoa* Willd. and *Nierembergia linariaefolia*.

## Future program

The TWC agreed the following program for the thirty-fifth session of the TWC:

1. Opening of the session

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Short reports on developments in plant variety protection

(a) Reports from members and observers (written reports to be prepared by members and observers)

(b) Reports on developments within UPOV (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

4. Variety denominations (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

5. Matters concerning variety descriptions (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

6. TGP documents (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

7. Consideration of possible reorganization of TGP/8 (document to be prepared by China and documents invited)

8. Uniformity assessment by off-types

(a) Practical experience of uniformity by off-types (documents invited)

(b) Factors influencing the choice of approach for off-types over two or more cycles (documents to be prepared by Germany, Netherlands and United Kingdom)

9. Molecular techniques (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

(a) Selection of similar varieties for maize, rice and wheat using a DNA database (document to be prepared by China)

(b) Use of molecular markers in DUS examination (document to be prepared by the Netherlands)

(c) Experience in the use of molecular markers in DUS examination (document to be prepared by France)

(d) Statistical issues (bio-informatics) related to the use of molecular markers in DUS examination (documents invited)

10. Number of growing cycles in DUS examination (documents to be prepared by France, Germany and Netherlands)

#### 11. Data Processing for the Assessment of Distinctness and for Producing Variety Descriptions:

#### (a) Short descriptions (documents to be prepared by France, Germany, Italy and Japan)

(b) Review results of practical exercise (document to be prepared by France)

(c) Genotype-by-environment interaction, DUS tests and data transformation into notes (documents to be prepared by Italy and Finland and documents invited)

12. Software, information and databases

(a) UPOV information databases (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

(b) Variety description databases (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union and documents invited)

(c) Exchange and use of software and equipment (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union and documents invited)

(d) Electronic application systems (document to be prepared by the Office of the Union)

(e) Management of databases

(i) Experience of members on the application of databases (documents invited)

(ii) Development of new ideas regarding the management of information (documents invited)

(iii) Guidance on the management of databases (documents invited)

(f) A single tool for DUS computation process (document to be prepared by France)

13. Statistical methods

(a) Excluding varieties of common knowledge from the second growing cycle (document to be prepared by the United Kingdom)

(b) Statistical methods and software for visually observed characteristics (document to be prepared by France and the United Kingdom)

(c) The Combined-Over-Years Uniformity Criterion (COYU) (document to be prepared by the United Kingdom)

14. Image analysis (documents invited)

15. Date and place of the next session

16. Future program

17. Report on the session (if time permits)

18. Closing of the session

Technical Visit

On the afternoon of June 9, 2016, the TWC visited the Zhuanghang Experimental Station of the Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences (SAAS), in Shanghai. The TWC was welcomed by Ms. Zhou Changyan, Deputy Director, Institute for Agri-food Standards and Testing Technology and Ms. Chu Yunxia, Researcher. The TWC received presentations on SAAS and on DUS testing at the Zhuanghang Experimental Station, copies of which are reproduced in Annexes VI and VII to this report, respectively. The TWC visited the field and greenhouses for DUS trials, and greenhouses for collections of varieties of ornamental plants (alstroemeria, anthurium, guzmania) and vegetables (cowpea, hot pepper, lettuce).

[Annexes follow]

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I.  MEMBERS | | |
|  | ARGENTINA | | |
|  |  | Alberto BALLESTEROS, Examiner for Cereal, Cotton, Rice and Forage Crops, Registro de Variedades, Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadaría y Pesca, Instituto Nacional de Semillas (INASE), Ministerio de Agroindustria , Venezuela 162, 3 piso, of. 347, 1095 Buenos Aires (tel.: +54 11 3220 5424 fax: +54 11 4349 2444 e-mail: aballesteros@inase.gov.ar) | |
|  | CHINA | | |
|  |  | | Xiongnian YANG, Director, Development Center of Science & Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China, Nongfeng Building, No. 96, Dong San Huan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District, 100122, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 9696 fax: +86 10 5919 9374 e-mail: yang.xn@126.com) |
|  |  | | Youming CAI, President, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China, No. 1000 Jinqi Road, Fengxian District, Shanghai (tel.: +86 21 6220 1920 fax: +86 21 6220 1920 e-mail: caiyouming@saas.sh.cn) |
|  |  | | Mingqi LI, Deputy Director, Office for the Protection of New Plant Varieties, State Forestry Administration, East Street 18, Hepingli, Dongcheng District,100714, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 8423 8709 fax: +86 10 6421 3084 e-mail: limingqi709@126.com) |
|  |  | | Zhiqiang MA, Division chief, Division of Variety Management ,Bureau of Seed Management, MOA, P. R. China, No. 11 Nong Zhan Nan Li, Chaoyang District, 100125, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 1621 fax: +86 10 5919 2815 e-mail: zzjpzglc@agri.gov.cn) |
|  |  | | Yehan CUI, Division chief, Division of Protection of New Varieties of Plants, Development Center of Science & Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Nongfeng Building, No. 96, Dong San Huan Nan Road, Chaoyang District, 100122, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 9398 fax: +86 10 5919 9396 e-mail: cuiyehan@agri.gov.cn) |
|  |  | | Hao TANG, Division chief, Division of DUS Testing, Development Center of Science & Technology, MOA, P. R. China, Room 709, Nongfeng Building, No. 96, Dong San Huan Nan Road, Chaoyang District, 100122, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 9395 fax: +86 10 5919 9393 e-mail: Tanghao1973@126.com) |
|  |  | | Yuanyuan DU (Ms.), Senior agronomist, Division of DUS Testing, Development Center of Science & Technology, MOA, P. R. China, Nongfeng Building, No. 96, Dong San Huan Nan Road, Chaoyang District, 100122, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 9393 fax: +86 10 5919 9393 e-mail: 13501269171@163.com) |
|  |  | | Kun YANG, Deputy Director, Beijing DUS Testing Station, Institute of Vegetables and Flowers, No. 12 Zhongguancun Nandajie Street, Haidian District, 100081 Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 8210 5623 fax: +86 10 8210 5623 e-mail: yangkun@caas.cn) |
|  |  | | Chuanhong ZHANG (Ms.), Associate Researcher, Research Institute of Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry, Dongxiaofu No.1, Haidian District, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 6288 8565 fax: +86 10 6287 2015 e-mail: zhangchenator@163.com) |
|  |  | | Mei MA (Ms.), Officer, Science and Technology Development Center, State Forestry Administration, 18 Hepingli East Street, 100714 Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 8423 9106 fax: +86 10 8423 8885 e-mail: mm5557@sina.com) |
|  |  | | Faji HUANG, Officer, Office for the Protection of New Plant Varieties, State Forestry Administration, East Street 18, Hepingli, Dongcheng District, Beijing 100714  (tel.: +86 10 8423 9104 fax: +86 10 8423 8883 e-mail: huangfaji@sina.com) |
|  |  | | Ruixi HAN, DUS Examiner, Development Center of Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Nongfeng Building, No. 96, Dong San Huan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District, 100122, Beijing  (tel.: +86 10 5919 9394 fax: +86 10 5919 9393 e-mail: wudifeixue007@163.com) |
|  |  | | Hairong CHEN, Researcher, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China, No. 888 Yezhuang Road, Fengxian District, 201415, Shanghai  (tel.: +86 21 5746 0009 fax: +86 21 5746 0009 e-mail: sh57460009@163.com) |
|  | D:\Users\longV\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\Huang,Zhicheng(CHN).jpg | | Zhicheng HUANG, Research Associate, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences, No. 888 Yezhuang Road, Fengxian District, 201415, Shanghai (tel.: +86 21 5746 0009 fax: +86 21 5746 0009 e-mail: hzauhzhch@126.com) |
|  |  | | Yunxia CHU (Ms.), Researcher, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China, No. 888 Yezhuang Road, Fengxian District, 201415, Shanghai  (tel.: +86 21 5746 0009 fax: +86 21 5746 0009 e-mail: chuyx@189.cn) |
|  |  | | Shan DENG (Ms.), Researcher Associate, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China, No. 888 Yezhuang Road, Fengxian District, 201415, Shanghai  (tel.: +86 21 5746 0009 fax: +86 21 5746 0009 e-mail: dengshan85@163.com) |
|  | H:\资料\任丽简介\一寸xiu.JPG | | Li REN (Ms.), Researcher Associate, Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA, P. R. China No. 888 Yezhuang Road, Fengxian District, 201415, Shanghai  (tel.: +86 21 5746 0009 fax: +86 21 5746 0009 e-mail: renliaqx@163.com) |
|  |  | | Xuedan YU (Ms.), Research Institute of Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry Sciences, Dongxiaofu 1, Xinagshan Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100091 (tel: +86 10 6288 9645 fax: +86 10 6288 8565 e-mail: Yuxd@caf.ac.cn) |
|  |  | | Yang YANG, Maize Research Center, Beijing Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Dongxiaofu 1, Xinagshan Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100091 (tel: +86 152 1092 2199 fax: +86 105 1503 986 e-mail: caurwx@163.com) |
|  |  | | Zi SHI (Ms.), Maize Research Center, Beijing Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Dongxiaofu 1, Xinagshan Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100091 (tel: +86 185 1556 5612 fax: +86 10 5150 3404 e-mail: [Shizi\_baafs@126.com](mailto:Shizi_baafs@126.com)) |
|  | FINLAND | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\6058.jpg | | Sami MARKKANEN, Senior Officer, Control Department, Finnish Food Safety Authority (EVIRA), Tampereentie 51, P.O. Box 111, FI-32201 Loimaa (tel.: +358 40 8294543 fax: +358 29 530 5318 e-mail: sami.markkanen@evira.fi) |
|  | france | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\6057.jpg | Christophe CHEVALIER, Manager, IT Department, Groupe d’étude et de contrôle des variétés et des semences (GEVES), rue Georges Morel, BP 90024, 49071 Beaucouzé (tel. : +33 2 41 22 86 36 fax : +33 2 41 22 86 02 e-mail : christophe.chevalier@geves.fr) | |
|  |  | Anne-Lise CORBEL (Ms.), Head of DUS studio on OSR,flax & hemp, Groupe d'étude et de contrôle des variétés et des semences (GEVES), Domaine de l'Anjouère, 49370 La Poueze  (tel.: +33 24 122 8705 fax: +33 24 122 8660 e-mail: anne-lise.corbel@geves.fr) | |
|  | GERMANY | | |
|  |  | Uwe MEYER, Referatsleiter Informationstechnologie, Referat 101, Bundessortenamt, Osterfelddamm 80, D-30627 Hannover (tel.: +49 511 9566 5689 fax: +49 511 9566 9689  e-mail: uwe.meyer@bundessortenamt.de) | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\6383.jpg | Thomas DROBEK, Referat 101,Bundessortenamt, Osterfelddamm 80, D-30627 Hannover (tel.: +49 511 9566 5688 fax: +49 511 9566 9600  e-mail: thomas.drobek@bundessortenamt.de) | |
|  | Italy | | |
|  |  | Maurizio GIOLO, Senior Scientist, Council for Agricultural Research aud Economics CREA SCS, Experimentation and seed certification Center, Via Ca' Nova Zampieri, 37, S.G., Lupatoto (Verona) 37057 (tel.: +390 45 545164 fax: +390 45 545 250 e-mail: maurizio.giolo@crea.gov.it) | |
|  | japan | | |
|  |  | Hiroshi UCHIZAWA, Senior Examiner, Plant Variety Protection Office, New Business & Intellectual Property Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8950 (tel.: +81 3 6738 6466 fax: +81 3 3502 6572 e-mail: hiroshi\_uchizawa450@maff.go.jp) | |
|  | NETHERLANDS | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\7995.jpg | | Kees VAN ETTEKOVEN, Head of Variety Testing Department, Naktuinbouw NL, Sotaweg 22, Postbus 40, NL-2370 AA Roelofarendsveen (tel.: +31 71 332 6128 fax: +31 71 332 6565 e-mail: c.v.ettekoven@naktuinbouw.nl) |
|  |  | | Lysbeth HOF (Mrs.), DUS Examiner, Agricultural Crops, Naktuinbouw, Binnenhaven 1, 6709 PD Wageningen  (tel.: +31 6 29 55 06 26 fax: +31 71 3326363 e-mail: l.hof@naktuinbouw.nl) |
|  | REPUBLIC OF KOREA | | |
|  |  | | Youn-Yong SHIN, Deputy Director, Crop Seed and Distribution Division, 119, Hyeoksin 9-ro, gyeongsangbuk-do,  (tel.: +82 54912 0195 fax: +82 54 9120198 e-mail: nolbukorea@korea.kr) |
|  |  | | Jun-Hwan CHOI, DUS Expert, Seobu Branch, Korea Seed & Variety Service, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), 1177 Hamnang-ro, Nangsan-myeon, Iksan-si, Jeollabuk-do 54521  (tel.: +82 63 861 2597 fax: +82 63 8612593 e-mail: seed@korea.kr) |
|  | UNITED KINGDOM | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\7281.jpg | | Adrian M. I. ROBERTS, , External Development Manager, Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland (BioSS), James Clerk Maxwell Building, The King's Buildings, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ Scotland  (tel.: +44 131 650 4893 fax: e-mail: a.roberts@bioss.ac.uk) |
|  |  | | Haidee PHILPOTT (Ms.), Statistician, National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 OLE  (tel.: +44 1223 342258 fax: +44 1223 277 602 e-mail: haidee.philpott@niab.com) |
|  | II.  OFFICER | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\7281.jpg | | Adrian M.I. Roberts, Chair |
|  | III.  OFFICE OF UPOV | | |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\23317.jpg | | Jun KOIDE, Technical/Regional Officer (Asia), International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), Geneva 1211, Switzerland (tel.: +41 22 338 7442 fax: +41 22 733 0336 e-mail: jun.koide@upov.int) |
|  | N:\AppDocMXP\MDCS\Pictures\21398.jpg | | Leontino TAVEIRA, Technical/Regional Officer (Latin America, Caribbean), International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), Geneva 1211, Switzerland (tel.: +41 22 338 9565 fax: +41 22 733 0336 e-mail: leontino.taveira@upov.int) |

[Annex II follows]

OPENING SPEECH BY MR. YANG XIONGNIAN, DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT CENTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DIRECTOR GENERAL, DUS TESTING STATION OF NEW PLANT VARIETIES, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE)

Good morning! Mr. Chairman, Mr. Jun Koide, Mr. Leontino Rezende Taveira, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Shanghai to attend the 34th Session of UPOV-Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs. Please allow me to express my sincere welcome to all of you on behalf of Center for Science and Technology Development, and DUS Testing Station of New Plant Varieties of Ministry of Agriculture, and congratulation for the holding of the conference!

DUS testing system has achieved great success since its establishment in 2000 in China. By now it has completed testing of over 11,000 varieties of 75 plant categories, and provided technical support for the authorization of over 6,000 new varieties; it has finished database software development of known varieties, collected more than 13,000 known varieties of 43 plants, 50,000 pieces of relevant description, 32,000 pieces of picture data, and DNA fingerprint data of more than 6,000 varieties; it has provided important technical basis for the authorization and enforcement of variety rights.

Now there are over 100 professional technicians in the testing system. All of them have gone through skill training of DUS, and 70% of them have received technical training of UPOV and its member countries, including Netherlands, the US, France and Germany, etc., forming a qualified and professional DUS testing team.

2016 sees the first year of China’s “13th Five Year Plan” as well as an important year for the reform and development of DUS testing system. It is made clear in Seed Law which was implemented since January 1st 2016 that DUS testing is the basic technical basis for variety management, which brings about great changes to our service objects and tasks: for the past 15 years, the test was mainly for varieties applied for protection. According to the revised Seed Law, DUS testing is not only for variety protection, but also for variety certification, registration and market enforcement. The service objects cover variety administrator, cultivator, operator, and law-executor; meanwhile, with the issue of the 10th new variety protection list in April this year, the number of testing varieties will reach 138, and plus the annually examined varieties and non-major agricultural varieties in China, it is predicted that the annual task of DUS testing will increase from 1200 to 7000.

In face of the new changes and challenges, we will work with greater effort on hardware building. We will build and rebuild the DUS test stations in 2016. 5 new stations will be established, and the number of stations will increase from 14 to 22. Through the rebuild, field management will be mechanized, devices will be modernized, data collection will be automated, and analysis and processing will be intellectualized, so as to meet the requirements of DUS testing. At the same time, activities to improve the quality of DUS testing will be launched. Technical Committee of DUS Testing was founded in Jinan last May, and 6 technical working parties were set up according to the system of UPOV. The aim is to improve technical level through the study of the latest technologies of UPOV and its member countries.

Testing system in China cannot go this far in the past 15 years without the support of UPOV and many countries. I know some of you have come to Shanghai last week to communicate with our staff on data sharing and utilization. Thank you very much for your work! I wish the conference a complete success, thanks!

[Annex III follows]

OPENING SPEECH BY MR. MA ZHIQIANG, DIVISION CHIEF, VARIETY MANAGEMENT, BUREAU OF SEED MANAGEMENT, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me express my warm welcome to all of you on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Office for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants!

Since its joining in UPOV in 1997, China has paid great attention to the plant protection of new varieties which has gained quite great achievements. There were 2069 new varieties of plants applied by China in 2015, and we were only after the EU among all UPOV members in terms of annual application; by the end of 2015, 15552 new agricultural plant varieties had been applied in China, among which 6258 had been authorized. We ranked the 4th among UPOV members. The whole society, especially seed companies have stronger awareness of new variety protection, and companies have become the main body applying for variety right. Taking last year as the example, China National Seed Group applied for 64 variety rights, accounting for over 50% of the application of the company for the last 16 years. The newly revised Seed Law which was officially implemented on January 1st this year separates the protection of new varieties of plants in one chapter, which improves the legal hierarchy of new plant variety protection, and clarifies the management property of new variety protection and DUS testing. I believe the protection of new varieties of plants in China will have greater achievements.

The system of new variety protection has a late start in China, but we attach great importance to communicating and cooperating with UPOV members. We are open to the advanced experience that we can digest, improve and create. We have established a relatively complete DUS testing system covering the whole country, trained a professional team of examination and testing, and achieved great success in technical research and application. TWC Session in Shanghai is a perfect platform of communication through which we can work together to make progress. We are happy to provide service for you.

China has a vast territory and abundant resources with rich culture and local customs. Shanghai is the miniature of modernization in China. I hope more and more UPOV meetings can be held in China so that China can have more opportunities to communicate with UPOV members and also, you can have a better understanding of China.

Last but not least, I wish a complete success of the conference, and I wish you a happy week in Shanghai!

[Annex IV follows]

WELCOME SPEECH BY MR. CAI YOUMING, PRESIDENT, SHANGHAI ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES (SAAS)

Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to attend the UPOV-Technical Working Party on Automation and Computer Programs (TWC) 34th Session (TWC/34) in Shanghai. Please allow me to express my sincere welcome to all of you on behalf of the organizer Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA and Shanghai Academy of Agricultural Sciences (SAAS).

SAAS was founded in 1960 and it has a history of 56 years. SAAS is affiliated with the People’s Government of Shanghai, with 10 institutes such as crop breeding and cultivation, horticulture and edible mushrooms, etc. and 1 testing station. It now has 908 employees, with the research fields covering all aspects of agricultural sciences. Since its foundation, SAAS has obtained over 360 scientific awards at ministerial and municipal levels, among which 30 are scientific awards at national level, and 29 are first awards of scientific progress at ministerial and municipal levels.

SAAS pays great importance to agricultural intellectual property such as new plant variety rights. Since the implementation of the system of new plant variety protection, SAAS has applied for 128 new plant variety rights, and 47 have been authorized; 63 have been applied since 2011, involving 13 plant varieties.

Shanghai Station for DUS Testing Center of New Plant Varieties, MOA was set up in September 2000 by SAAS. Shanghai Station is designed to carry out the comprehensive testing of horticultural plants, DUS testing of vegetables, horticultural plants and edible mushrooms as well as relevant technical research. It has undertaken the tests of specificity, consistency and stability of over 500 new plant varieties of 21 categories such as pepper and guzmania.

It is TWC Session organized by China for the first time. We hope the seminar could promote the application and development of automatic operation and computer programs in the field of protection and testing of new plant varieties in China, and improve the quality and efficiency of data processing.

Finally I wish the conference a complete success, and I wish you a happy stay in Shanghai.

[Annex V follows]

[Annexes V to VII only available in the pdf version of the document]

[End of Annexes and of document]