

Non-paper

Co-Chairs of the contact group on digital sequence information on genetic resources

COP-14 agenda item 18

The Conference of the Parties,

Mindful of the three objectives of the Convention,

Recalling Articles 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of the Convention and decisions VIII/11, XII/29 and XIII/31,

Noting the reports of discussions on this issue and related issues in other United Nations bodies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization,

Recognizing the importance of new technologies for the current and future utilization of genetic resources, and noting that the medium in which information is stored and shared is continuously evolving,

Noting that the term “digital sequence information” may not be the most appropriate term and that it is used as a placeholder until an alternative term is agreed,

1. *Recognizes* the importance of digital sequence information on genetic resources for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components while *emphasizing* that the three objectives of the Convention are interlinked and mutually supportive;

2. *Recognizes* that the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources and public access to this information contributes to scientific research;

3. *Recognizes* also that further capacity to use, generate and analyse digital sequence information on genetic resources is needed in many countries and *encourages* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to support capacity-building and technology transfer to assist in the use, generation and analysis of digital sequence information on genetic resources to contribute to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;

4. *Notes* that the creation of digital sequence information requires initial access to a physical genetic resource;

5. *Notes* that some Parties have adopted measures that regulate the use of digital sequence information as part of their access and benefit sharing frameworks;

6. *Also recognizes* the need for balance between open and free access to information on genetic resources for non-commercial research purposes and fair and equitable sharing of benefits with countries and communities providing these genetic resources from which the information was generated;

7. *Notes* that, when genetic resources are accessed for their utilization, mutually agreed terms can cover benefits arising from the commercial use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, in accordance with applicable domestic measures;

8. *Decides* to establish an evidence-based process to expand the knowledge base on digital sequence information as set out in paragraphs 9 to 12 below;

9. *Invites* Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, relevant stakeholders and organizations to submit views and information to clarify the concept of digital sequence information;

10. *Invites* Parties, other Governments and indigenous peoples and local communities to submit information on their capacity-building needs regarding the use, generation and analysis of digital sequence information;

11. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources:

(a) To compile and synthesize the views and information submitted;

(b) To commission a peer-reviewed study on the concept of digital sequence information and how digital sequence information is currently used;

(c) To commission a peer-reviewed study on ongoing developments in the field of traceability, including how traceability is addressed by databases, and how these could inform discussions on digital sequence information on genetic resources;

(d) To convene a meeting of an ad hoc technical expert group to consider the compilation and synthesis of views and information and the peer-reviewed studies, develop an operational term to provide conceptual clarity and identify key areas for capacity-building;

12. *Requests* the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to consider the outcomes of the ad hoc technical expert group and to make a recommendation on appropriate terminology and next steps in the consideration of this issue to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

13. *Decides* to establish a process to consider the sharing of benefits arising from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources aligned with the process for the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework.