

GB3, Tunis, 4 June 2009

Statement from Norway on agenda item 14 – Farmers’ Rights

Chair,

In response to Canada, we would like to stress that the Governing Body, according to Article 19.3, has the function to promote the full implementation of the Treaty, which also includes Article 9. In addition, Article 21 sets out that the Governing Body shall promote the compliance with the provisions of the Treaty, which means all provision, and not only obligations. The realization of Farmers’ Rights is vital to achieving the objectives of the Treaty, and promoting the implementation of Article 9 and related provisions is therefore among the central tasks of the Governing Body.

Norway welcomes the submissions that have been made by Contracting Parties and relevant organizations to the Secretariat on views and experiences regarding the implementation of Farmers’ Rights pursuant to Resolution 2/2007. We wish also to draw the attention to the submission by the state of Norway on the implementation of Farmers’ Rights in Norway, which has not yet been included in the documents for this session. In this paper, the state of Farmers’ Rights in Norway is analysed and views of central stakeholders are presented, based on a comprehensive report on Farmers’ Rights in Norway that will be published shortly. We would also like to draw your attention to the international Farmers’ Rights Project, which is carried out by the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway, to support the implementation of Farmers’ Rights set out in the International Treaty with research and capacity building. The project has submitted an own input paper to the Secretariat, with the reference IT/GB-3/09/Inf. 6, Addendum 3, which summarizes the views and experiences on Farmers’ Rights from many countries in the world, as documented by the project.

Based on the submissions to the Secretariat, it is our impression that there is a need to pay attention to national regulations on variety release and seed marketing. To our understanding, such regulations prohibit the exchange of seed and propagating material among farmers in an increasing number of countries. Moreover they tend to exclude varieties from the market that do not meet certain standards of genetic homogeneity. This can contribute to reducing the available crop genetic diversity and discourage the vital contributions of farmers to conserve and sustainably use crop genetic diversity.

To our understanding, there is a need to adjust regulations concerning variety release and seed distribution with a view to ensuring the Farmers' Rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm saved seed/propagating material that are necessary to enable farmers to continue to conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Norway also notes that the number of contributions on views and experiences received by the Secretariat has been limited, and we think that it is important to continue to collect additional views and experiences, for submissions to an agenda item at its Fourth Session, and would also welcome the continuation of the e-mail discussion, which has been useful.

Norway supports the resolution on Farmers' Rights proposed by Africa and Latin America, with the amendments made by Europe.

2. STATEMENT (Point of order)

Norway would like to stress the importance of the participation of farmers in decision making as set out in Art. 9.2.c and in Resolution 2/2007. There are farmers present at this Third Session, and I would therefore ask the chair to give them the floor on this agenda item, which is so important for them.