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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

Geneva

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**Eighty-Ninth Session
Geneva, March 27, 2015**

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

*Document prepared by the Office of the Union**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance*

1. The purpose of this document is to report on developments concerning the communication strategy workplan approved by the Consultative Committee, to present a proposal to revise an FAQ to reflect OAPI's membership of UPOV in 2014 and to report on the planned presentation of a proposed new UPOV logo.

WORKPLAN

2. At its eighty-sixth session, held in Geneva on October 23 and 24, 2013, the Consultative Committee approved the communication strategy as reproduced in the Annex to this document.

Communication materials*Publications*

3. The Trilogy¹ publication, including the Executive Summary, has been published in French in Spanish.

Stakeholder-focused features on UPOV website

4. In order to facilitate use of the UPOV system and to improve the level of understanding of the UPOV system, stakeholder-focused features, based on existing information, will be introduced on the UPOV website as follows:

- Breeders (priority)
- Seed producers / plant propagators (priority)
- Farmers (priority)
- Processors, wholesalers and retailers
- Policy-makers
- General public

¹ Publication combining the proceedings of the "UPOV Seminar on Plant Variety Protection and Technology Transfer: the Benefits of Public-Private Partnership", the "Symposium on Plant Breeding for the Future" and the "Symposium on the benefits of plant variety protection for farmers and growers".

5. The stakeholder-focused features will be introduced on the UPOV website during 2015.

General Information

(a) *Answers to frequently-asked questions about the UPOV system*

(i) *FAQs agreed by the Council*

6. On the basis of the recommendation of the Consultative Committee, the Council agreed answers to the following FAQs at its forty-eighth ordinary session, held in Geneva on October 16, 2014:

- Does the UPOV Convention regulate varieties that are not protected by plant breeders' rights?
- Is it possible for subsistence farmers to exchange propagating material of protected varieties against other vital goods within the local community?
- Under the UPOV system, breeders decide the conditions and limitations under which they authorize the exploitation of their protected varieties. Can farmers, for instance, be allowed to exchange seeds of protected varieties freely within the local community?

and agreed a revision to the following FAQ:

- Why is plant variety protection necessary?

(ii) *FAQs for further consideration*

7. The Consultative Committee agreed that the draft FAQ concerning information on the situation in UPOV with regard to the use of molecular techniques for a wider audience, including the public in general, should be referred to the Technical Committee for consideration. The conclusions of the Technical Committee will be reported to the Consultative Committee for consideration at its ninetieth session, in October 2015.

8. In order to reflect OAPI's membership of UPOV in 2014, it is proposed to invite the Council to revise the answer to the FAQ "Can I obtain protection for more than one country from a single application?" as follows:

"In order to obtain protection the breeder needs to file an application with the authority of each UPOV member where protection is sought. The European Union operates a ~~(supranational) community~~ plant variety breeders' rights system which covers the territory of its 28 member States. The African Intellectual Property Organization operates a plant breeders' rights system which covers the territory of its 17 member States. Contact details of the authorities responsible for the granting of breeders' rights are provided at http://www.upov.int/members/en/pvp_offices.html."

(b) *A brief, illustrative explanation of the benefits of the UPOV system aimed at an audience with no previous knowledge of plant breeding or plant variety protection and/or illustrative examples of the benefits of plant variety protection (e.g. case studies such as the Ashiro Rindo video, animated stories)*

9. The Office of the Union will seek to develop such a feature in 2015 or 2016.

(c) *An update of the Impact Study*

10. At its eighty-eighth session, the Consultative Committee deferred plans for the updating of the Impact Study pending work to identify with the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Secretariat of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) possible areas of interrelations among the international instruments of the ITPGRFA, WIPO and UPOV with a view to a possible joint publication on interrelated issues regarding innovation and plant genetic resources. Document CC/89/9 "Interrelation with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)" provides a report on the situation with regard to that matter.

Communication methods

Electronic workshops (e-workshops)

11. A report on the use of e-workshops will be made to the Consultative Committee at its ninetieth session and to the Council at its forty-ninth ordinary session.

Social media

12. The introduction of a UPOV channel on YouTube will be arranged after the introduction of a new UPOV logo (see paragraphs 15 and 16 below).

Measuring results

13. The results of the communication strategy will continue to be reported as a part of the annual report of the Secretary-General and performance report for the biennium, with regard to the following:

- Visits to UPOV website
- Visits to stakeholder-focused features on UPOV website
- Participation in workshops

14. *The Consultative Committee is invited to:*

(a) note that:

(i) stakeholder-focused features will be introduced on the UPOV website during 2015;

(ii) conclusions of the Technical Committee on the draft FAQ concerning information on the situation in UPOV with regard to the use of molecular techniques for a wider audience, including the public in general, will be reported to the Consultative Committee for consideration at its ninetieth session;

(iii) the Office of the Union will seek to develop a brief, illustrative explanation of the benefits of the UPOV system aimed at an audience with no previous knowledge of plant breeding or plant variety protection and/or illustrative examples of the benefits of plant variety protection, in 2015 or 2016;

(iv) a report on the use of e-workshops will be made to the Consultative Committee at its ninetieth session and to the Council at its forty-ninth ordinary session;

(v) the introduction of a UPOV channel on YouTube will be arranged after the introduction of a new UPOV logo;

(vi) the results of the communication strategy will be reported as a part of the annual report of the Secretary-General and performance report for the biennium; and

(b) propose to the Council to revise the answer to the FAQ "Can I obtain protection for more than one country from a single application?", as set out in paragraph 8 above.

UPOV LOGO

15. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-eighth session, approved the development of a proposal for new logo for consideration by the Consultative Committee at its eighty-ninth session and approval by the Council at its thirty-second extraordinary session in March 2015, as set out in document CC/88/8, paragraphs 2 to 6 (see document CC/88/16 "Report on the Conclusions", paragraph 56).

16. The proposed new UPOV logo will be presented to the Consultative Committee at its eighty-ninth session.

17. The Consultative Committee is invited to consider the proposed new UPOV logo, to be presented to the Consultative Committee at its eighty-ninth session.

UPDATING OF INFORMATION IN UPOV LEX

18. The Office of the Union has recently reviewed the legislation governing breeders' rights and genera and species notified by members of the Union in UPOV Lex. In those cases where the Office of the Union was aware of changes in the legislation or the list of genera and species to which the Convention applies, relevant members of the Union were contacted. Since October 1, 2014, the Office of the Union has contacted 16 members of the Union. Nine members were requested to confirm their agreement in relation to the uploading in UPOV Lex of recent amendments to their legislation and seven members were requested to provide information concerning genera and species to which the Convention applies. On the basis of the responses received, the Office of the Union updated UPOV Lex in relation to the legislations of Australia, Belarus, Bolivia, China, Georgia, Lithuania, Panama, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago. With regard to the legislation of Belarus, the Law has not yet been uploaded in UPOV Lex, pending translation into English. In relation to information on genera and species, UPOV Lex has been updated with regard to Brazil, Bulgaria and South Africa, on the basis of the responses received.

19. The Consultative Committee is invited to note the updating of information on UPOV Lex, as set out in paragraph 18.

[Annex follows]

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

(approved by the Consultative Committee at its eighty-sixth session)

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I. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. The aim of the communication strategy is to improve awareness and understanding of the UPOV system in order to support the development of plant variety protection for the benefit of society.
2. In order to achieve that aim, the objectives of the communication strategy are to:
 - (a) raise awareness of UPOV and the benefits of the UPOV system of plant variety protection;
 - (b) provide improved information for members of the Union on the operation of the UPOV system; and
 - (c) enhance the understanding of the UPOV system by stakeholders.

II. AUDIENCE

3. The following table summarizes the audience focus around which this communication strategy is based:

Objective	Authorities of UPOV members	States / Intergovernmental organizations that contact the Office of the Union	Policy makers	International Intergovernmental Organizations	Breeders/Applicants	Seed producers / plant propagators	Farmers/Growers	Non-Governmental Organizations	Education professionals and students	General Public
(a) to raise awareness of UPOV and the benefits of the UPOV system of plant variety protection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
(b) to provide improved information for members of the Union on the operation of the UPOV system	X									
(c) enhance the understanding of the UPOV system by stakeholders	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

III. CURRENT SITUATION AND GAP ANALYSIS

4. This section reviews the current situation and seeks to identify gaps as a basis for possible future work, which is considered in Section IV "Workplan".

Materials

5. The following sections list the most relevant materials that UPOV currently has with regard to the objectives set out in Section I "Aim and Objectives":

(a) *Raising awareness of UPOV and the benefits of the UPOV system of plant variety protection*

6. The most relevant materials that UPOV currently has are:

<u>Material</u>	<u>Location</u>
Introduction to UPOV (microsite)	http://www.upov.int/overview/en/
Ashiro Rindo story	http://www.upov.int/multimedia/en/2011/ashiro_rindo.html
Video interviews	(UPOV YouTube channel –see below)

<u>Material</u>	<u>Location</u>
UPOV leaflet (Publication No. 437)	http://www.upov.int/about/en/list_publications.html
UPOV Report on the Impact of Plant Variety Protection (Impact Study)	http://www.upov.int/export/sites/upov/about/en/pdf/353_upov_report.pdf
Declaration/Proceedings from the Second World Seed Conference	http://www.worldseedconference.org/en/worldseedconference/home.html
Trilogy ² publication	
UPOV events and presentations	
UPOV Posters	
Articles in general press	
Articles in specialist press	

7. As indicated in the list above, UPOV has a considerable quantity of material that explains the objectives of the UPOV system of plant variety protection. However, the objective to increase awareness of the objectives of the UPOV system of plant variety protection might be aided by the following:

- (i) answers to frequently-asked questions about the UPOV system;
- (ii) additional illustrative examples of the benefits of plant variety protection (e.g. case study videos such as Ashiro Rindo, animated stories); and
- (iii) an update of the Impact Study to incorporate new information including, for example, information from the Trilogy and on the development of regional systems of plant variety protection.

(b) *Providing improved information for members of the Union on the operation of the UPOV system*

8. The most relevant materials that UPOV currently has are:

<u>Material</u>	<u>Location</u>
UPOV Collection	http://www.upov.int/upov_collection/en/
Distance Learning Courses	http://www.upov.int/resource/en/training.html
UPOV Lex	http://www.upov.int/upovlex/en/
Plant Variety Database (PLUTO)	http://www.upov.int/pluto/en/
GENIE database	http://www.upov.int/genie/en/
Presentations at UPOV/other events	

9. The materials and methods of communication for members of the Union on the operation of the UPOV system are covered by the regular work of the UPOV bodies and the Office of the Union according to programs approved by the Council. That work is kept under constant and detailed review, for example in relation to the UPOV Collection. That review also includes consideration of new initiatives, such as the development of the advanced distance learning course DL-305 “Examination of Applications for Plant Breeders’ Rights” (DL-305) and would include responses to developments such as the letter of the International Seed Federation (ISF) of January 21, 2013, on the subject “Application, examination and granting aspects of PBR applications”.

² Publication combining the proceedings of the “UPOV Seminar on Plant Variety Protection and Technology Transfer: the Benefits of Public-Private Partnership”, the “Symposium on Plant Breeding for the Future” and the “Symposium on the benefits of plant variety protection for farmers and growers”.

(c) *Enhancing the understanding of the UPOV system by stakeholders*

10. The most relevant materials that UPOV currently has are:

<u>Material</u>	<u>Location</u>
Introduction to UPOV (microsite)	http://www.upov.int/overview/en/
Ashiro Rindo story	http://www.upov.int/multimedia/en/2011/ashiro_rindo.html
Video interviews	(UPOV YouTube channel –see below)
UPOV Report on the Impact of Plant Variety Protection	http://www.upov.int/export/sites/upov/about/en/pdf/353_upov_report.pdf
Trilogy publication	
UPOV events and presentations	
Articles in specialist press	
UPOV Collection	http://www.upov.int/members/en/upov_membership.html
Distance Learning Courses	http://www.upov.int/resource/en/training.html
UPOV Lex	http://www.upov.int/upovlex/en/
Plant Variety Database (PLUTO)	http://www.upov.int/pluto/en/
GENIE database	http://www.upov.int/genie/en/

11. The Seminar on Plant Variety Protection and Technology Transfer: the Benefits of Public-Private Partnership (Seminar) and the Symposium on the Benefits of Plant Variety Protection for Farmers and Growers (Symposium) demonstrated that plant variety protection provides benefits for breeders in both the private and public sectors and can enable farmers and growers to become breeders. The Symposium also demonstrated that plant variety protection can play an important role in improving incomes for farmers and growers. One of the means to support the objective of improving the level of understanding of the UPOV system by stakeholders would be to improve awareness of the ways in which plant variety protection can be used for their benefit. In addition, the effectiveness of plant variety protection relies on the respect and understanding of the rights of breeders by all stakeholders.

12. Presenting information from the perspective of different stakeholders could be an important means of improving the level of understanding of the UPOV system by stakeholders. For, example the UPOV Collection contains a wealth of information, but which is unlikely to be suitable for stakeholders without extensive knowledge of UPOV and without knowledge of where to find the relevant material. However, such materials might be the basis for the development of material that is suitable for breeders and farmers in a way that complements information provided by the authorities of members of the Union and observer organizations. If such material was developed, it would be useful to ensure that breeders and farmers visiting the UPOV website would be able to find that information easily, for example by the creation of a link to a “breeders” or “farmers” page.

13. On that basis, it could be helpful to develop features of the UPOV website that are focused from the perspective of different types of stakeholders, such as:

- Breeders: e.g. private breeders, public breeders, farmer-breeders
- Seed producers / plant propagators
- Farmers: e.g. commercial farmers, small-holder farmers, farmer cooperatives
- Processors, wholesalers and retailers
- Policy-makers
- General public

14. In order to provide information that is focused on the needs of particular groups of stakeholders, “UPOV events and presentations” in this context would include workshops and meetings on themes identified by stakeholders. Such events might be organized by UPOV, by the stakeholders or by other parties in which UPOV’s participation would help to fulfill the objectives.

Communication methods

15. UPOV currently uses the following methods of communication:

- UPOV website
- UPOV sessions
- UPOV activities (hosted by governments)
- UPOV training courses (e.g. distance-learning courses, training trainers)
- UPOV seminars and symposia
- UPOV workshops
- Participation in meetings, workshops
- Press

16. The aim of the redesigned UPOV website, launch in November 2011, was to improve the availability of information on UPOV to a range of users. The UPOV website is the most widely accessible communication means for UPOV and should continue to be a core element of the communication strategy, with other methods (e.g. social media – see below) serving to increase awareness of the information on the UPOV website and to enhance the features of the website. For example, the Consultative Committee, at its eighty-fourth session, held in Geneva on October 31, 2012, approved the use of:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) 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; and
- (iii) 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.

17. At present, UPOV is not yet using social media. However, at its eighty-second session, the Consultative Committee approved the establishment of a UPOV channel on YouTube for hosting of UPOV videos. The Consultative Committee, at its eighty-third session, noted that the establishment of a UPOV channel on YouTube for hosting of UPOV videos would be arranged in conjunction with the development of a coherent image for UPOV publication and presentation materials, for consistency with the redesigned UPOV website.

18. With regard to other social media:

Facebook: the requirement for the Facebook page to be updated on a regular basis would mean that considerable resources would be required. Facebook might be considered to be suitable for a special event of widespread interest.

Twitter: on the basis of UPOV being a non-active Twitterer, maintenance requirements could be reasonable and Twitter could be a useful tool to increase awareness of topical information available on the UPOV website.

LinkedIn: at present, the features of LinkedIn do not appear to provide major benefits towards UPOV's communication strategy.

Flickr: Flickr may provide a useful service for sharing photographs and videos of UPOV events, either openly to all or to a restricted group of users. In order to use Flickr to share photographs and videos, it would be necessary to seek the permission of all relevant persons.

Wikipedia: Wikipedia has become the largest and most popular general reference work on the Internet. Therefore, ensuring the accuracy of information concerning UPOV on the Wikipedia page will be an important means of communicating information about UPOV. However, it is recognized that there will be certain content on the Wikipedia UPOV page that may be a matter of opinion and for which the Office of the Union would not be in a position to intervene, unless so instructed by the members of the Union.

Incident Management

19. At present, UPOV does not have a specific incident management communication procedure.
20. The following procedure might be considered:

Incident management procedure

In situations where, in the opinion of the Office of the Union, after consultation with the President of the Council (where time allows), an urgent response to an important issue is considered necessary within a time period that would not allow consideration at a session of the Consultative Committee and the Council, and for which UPOV has not previously taken a position, the following approach will be followed:

- (a) In cases where at least 2 weeks are available for a response, the members of the Union will be consulted by e-mail, with at least 5 days (including non-working days) for comment. The proposed status of the response will be indicated in the e-mail (e.g. whether the response would represent the position of UPOV, dependent on agreement with the proposed response). The status of the response will be indicated in the response;
- (b) In cases where less than 2 weeks are available for a response, the Office of the Union will respond, as such, after consultation with the President of the Council (where time allows). The status of the response will be indicated in the response. The Office of the Union will inform members of the Union by e-mail of the response at the earliest opportunity and will include the matter on the agenda of the subsequent session of the Consultative Committee. In such cases, as far as possible, the Office of the Union will also inform members of the Union in advance of the need to respond to an issue without consultation, with the aim of enabling members of the Union to contribute relevant views and information.

IV. WORKPLAN

21. The following workplan reflects the gap analysis in Section III "Current Situation and Gap Analysis".
22. The workplan concerns activities that are additional to the activities that are already covered in the regular work programs and activities specified in the Program and Budget for the 2012-2013 Biennium, e.g. the development of information materials. It has been developed in accordance with the Program and Budget for the 2012-2013 Biennium, which states that the "main focus and priority for the 2012-2013 biennium is support for members of the Union in the operation of their plant variety protection systems" (see document C/45/4 Rev.2 "Program and Budget for the 2012-2013 Biennium"). In recognition of the limited resources available, the workplan has also been prioritized according to the level of resource needed for delivery and the topicality of the issues.

Communication materials

Stakeholder-focused features on UPOV website

23. In order to facilitate use of the UPOV system and to improve the level of understanding of the UPOV system, stakeholder-focused features, based on existing information, will be introduced on the UPOV website as follows:
 - Breeders (priority)
 - Seed producers / plant propagators (priority)
 - Farmers (priority)
 - Processors, wholesalers and retailers
 - Policy-makers
 - General public

General Information

24. The following materials will be developed in order to improve the understanding of the UPOV system by a broad range of stakeholders:

- (a) Answers to frequently-asked questions about the UPOV system;
- (b) A brief, illustrative explanation of the benefits of the UPOV system aimed at an audience with no previous knowledge of plant breeding or plant variety protection and/or illustrative examples of the benefits of plant variety protection (e.g. case studies such as the Ashiro Rindo video, animated stories);

The development of this explanation would be a part of UPOV's involvement in EXPO 2015

- (c) An update of the Impact Study

A plan for updating the Impact Study will be presented in 2014.

Communication methods

25. The following methods of communication will continue to be used:

- UPOV website
- UPOV sessions
- UPOV activities (hosted by governments)
- UPOV training courses (e.g. distance-learning courses, training trainers)
- UPOV seminars and symposia
- UPOV workshops
- Participation in meetings, workshops,
- Press

26. However, particular consideration will be given to the increased use of electronic workshops to increase the outreach of the Office of the Union and other speakers. Examples of new types of e-workshops would include workshops for discussion groups on selected themes.

27. All such workshops will be reported to the Consultative Committee and the Council and, as appropriate, authorization by the Council of the events will be sought in advance.

28. Social media will be used as follows:

YouTube: a UPOV channel on YouTube for hosting of UPOV videos will be arranged in conjunction with the development of a coherent image for UPOV publication and presentation materials;

Twitter: the use of Twitter to increase awareness of topical information available on the UPOV website will be investigated and pursued, if feasible within existing resources. In that regard, it is normally expected that "tweets" are sent on a frequent basis, which would be an unrealistic burden for the Office of the Union. However, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has agreed that UPOV can use the WIPO account to "tweet" information as required;

Facebook: no plans for use at present;

LinkedIn: no plans for use at present;

Flickr: no plans for use at present;

Wikipedia: the accuracy of information concerning UPOV on the Wikipedia page will be monitored and corrections proposed as resources allow. A report of editorial changes proposed by the Office of the Union will be reported to the Consultative Committee.

V. MEASURING RESULTS

29. In recognition of the limited resources that will be used in the communication strategy workplan, only minimal resources will be used in monitoring the results. As far as technically possible and within available resources, results will be measured as follows:

- Visits to UPOV website
- Visits to stakeholder-focused features on UPOV website
- Participation in workshops

[End of annex and of document]