

Name of Issue:

**How can we make our ministries understand that PGR is a cross cutting issue?**

**Convenor:** Jens Weibull

**Participants:** Ranga Ranganathan, Clara Olivia Goedert, G Lanka, Samuel Avetisyan, Alvina Avagyan, Jons Eisele, Béla Bartha, Drazen Jelovac, Vladimir Pekic, Leena Hömmö, Wieslaw Podyme, Foto Kashta, Xhevat Shima, Luis Ayyerbe, Miriam Waldman, Arielevy, Eli Priwiezienc, Kadri Järve, Ausra Gineitaite, Lars Landbo, Agneta Börjesson, Jens Weibull

**Highlights from the discussion:**

The session began with a brief introduction by each participant on his/her interest in the subject of discussion. The comments can be summed up generally under the following categories:

- The lack of understanding/appreciation among governments/administrators that conservation of genetic resources is a cross cutting issue
- lack of long term financial and political support for PGR
- PGR conservation relatively new activity in many East European countries
- Disconnect between theory and practice in national PGR programmes

Jens Weibull began with a brief description of events in Sweden. Sweden's political commitment to a national PGR programme was formulated as a sub goal under the environmental quality goal 'A rich agricultural landscape'. Ratification of the CBD had led to the establishment of the Biodiversity Institute and provided a mandate for the conservation of genetic resources. Through initiatives taken by the institute and other concerned agencies, meetings between the different ministries involved in PGR were arranged resulting in the current broad political support for PGR issues from the many departments that were involved – Agriculture, Environment, Research, Education and Trade.

Many participants were interested in the mechanism Sweden had adopted to foster such political support. Some of them reported that while there were expressions of interest in PGR issues, they did not translate into action. Others reported that there was little political will in their countries to respect the commitments their countries had made in international for a such as CBD, WSSD and GPA. In other cases politicians asked for demonstrable or potential but tangible benefits to conservation which was of course not always easy to provide.

Measures that could be taken to enhance government commitment to PGR were discussed. They fell into three categories:

- Raising public awareness as politicians were very attuned to issues that moved their constituencies
- Raising awareness in the concerned ministries (as in the Swedish example) for a long term and sustained support (not least financial) for PFR
- Recruiting international support for national PGR programmes through follow-up mechanisms such as a 'Leipzig + 10' report to see how far governments have met their commitments to the GPA