

## **NEW EPLP "GUIDE" BEING DEVELOPED**

Following closely on the success of IUCN's new *Guide to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*, the IUCN Environmental Law Centre is pleased to announce the next "Guide" in the series. Work has already commenced on the *Guide to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, which will be developed in collaboration with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). The International Treaty constitutes the first and one of the most important concrete steps in the development of the "international regime on access and benefit-sharing" required under the WSSD Plan of Implementation. It offers an easier, single-source approach to access, and an internationally overseen approach to benefit-sharing. Through this combination, it can achieve the goal that many national and regional ABS programmes are struggling for – practical implementability.

Adopted by FAO in November 2001, the Treaty has already been ratified by more than 90% of the countries necessary for entry into force, suggesting that it may well become effective early in 2004. Gerald Moore and Witold Tymowski are sharing the task of "primary authors" of the Guide, which will be available on a limited basis in a "final draft" format before the end of the year. Thereafter, a process of expert consultation and introductory workshops will refine the document, prior to final publication (in at least four languages) in 2004. Partial funding for this work has been provided by the German Ministry for International Co-operation (BMZ), as a part of the ELP's multi-year project on the achievement of international ABS objectives.

An IUCN ELP web page and portal for the IUCN/BMZ project on Access and Benefit-sharing is under construction and will be available later this summer.

For more information about the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, see <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/itpgr.htm> (available in French or Spanish from <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/default.htm>)

