



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture**

Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda

TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023

Implementation Report of the Work Programme for the 2022–2023 Biennium

Executive Summary

This document provides a summary report of implementation of the Work Programme for the 2022–2023 biennium (WP 2022–2023), as adopted by the Governing Body in Resolution 17/2022. It highlights major activities undertaken and key outputs produced by the Secretary and the Secretariat during the current biennium, in support of implementation of the WP 2022–2023.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to take note of this report and provide any advice and recommendations relevant to improving future programming and implementation of the work programme, as necessary.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As requested in Resolution 17/2022, *Work Programme and Budget 2022-2023*, this document provides a summary report of the implementation of the Work Programme for the 2022–2023 biennium (WP 2022–2023), as adopted by the Governing Body at its Ninth Session, including the Addendum.¹ It provides a succinct account of the work undertaken, as the detailed outcomes and results achieved during the current biennium – in particular since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body – have been presented or reported in other documents submitted to the Governing Body at its Tenth Session, for consideration under the relevant agenda items. The report therefore focuses on and presents the highlights of key results and outputs achieved by the Secretary and Secretariat, in support of implementation of the WP 2022–2023.
2. The detailed outcomes of the policy and technical processes, as well as relevant information regarding the implementation of programmes of work and operations of the key systems, are presented respectively in the relevant documents submitted to the present session. The Report of the Secretary (IT/GB-10/23/6) also provides supplementary information regarding major activities undertaken by the Secretary.
3. A financial report related to implementation of the WP 2022–2023 is presented in the document, IT/GB-10/23/18.2, *Financial and Progress Report of the Work Programme and Budget for the 2022–2023 biennium*, and is to be read in conjunction with this report. Together, these documents will serve as a useful reference for the Governing Body in considering and deciding the Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 biennium.
4. With a view to highlight and showcase the impacts achieved through the results delivered, the Secretary plans to prepare and publish a special report on the implementation of the International Treaty, starting in 2024. This will be in addition to the Implementation Report of the Work Programme submitted to the Governing Body Session.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2022–2023

5. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the work of the Governing Body to some extent during 2022, and the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, postponed from December 2021, eventually took place in September 2022, in New Delhi, India.
6. Meanwhile, based on the recommendation by the Bureau of the Ninth Session, the Governing Body at its Ninth Session agreed that its Tenth Session would be held in the last quarter of 2023, at FAO headquarters in Rome, in order to realign the cycle of the Governing Body Session with that of the FAO financial period. Consequently, the Governing Body Session will have taken place twice during the current biennium.
7. Despite the exceptional circumstances, where two Governing Body Sessions were organized during a single biennium, the Secretariat has continued to provide support to the Governing Body in implementing the WP 2022–2023 to achieve the expected outcomes, including assisting the relevant policy processes. As mandated by the Governing Body, the Secretariat has also maintained the smooth and effective operation of the International Treaty's main systems, providing capacity-building support to Contracting Parties and other stakeholders, in cooperation and collaboration with relevant partners, to advance implementation and achieve the objectives of the International Treaty.
8. Furthermore, as a major development for the global biodiversity community since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) in December 2022 has increased attention on the work of the International Treaty and its achievements to date, in particular, in relation to access and benefit-sharing and sustainable use.
9. As agreed by the Bureau of the Tenth Session, the intersessional subsidiary bodies have been considering the possible implications of the outcomes of the GBF for the work of the International Treaty, in their respective areas of work, with a view to making relevant observations and recommendations for consideration by the Governing Body at its Tenth Session.

¹ [Resolution 17/2022 - Work Programme and Budget 2022–2023 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/resolutions/17/2022-work-programme-and-budget-2022-2023)

10. As a critical enabling element to support implementation of the WP 2022–2023, in response to Resolution 17/2022, extra-budgetary funds have been provided during this biennium. The generous contributions were received from Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust), which have all contributed to the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes, or through different funding modalities and arrangements. Whether dedicated to a specific theme and work area or provided with flexibility, all extra-budgetary funds have offered critical support to the achievement of expected outcomes of the Work Programme. In addition, Germany and Italy provided funds to support the participation of developing countries at the Ninth and Tenth Sessions of the Governing Body. The funds have enabled the Governing Body to make effective decisions to advance implementation of the International Treaty, for which the comprehensive participation of Contracting Parties is essential.

Membership

11. During the current biennium, the Secretary has continued the efforts to increase membership of the International Treaty by interacting with non-Contracting Parties and encouraging them to join.

12. The International Treaty entered into force for the Dominican Republic and the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2022, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 150. In addition, the National Congress of Colombia approved a law for the ratification of the International Treaty in December 2022, and this is pending the final stage consideration by the Constitutional Court, to be followed by the deposit of the instrument of ratification with the Director-General.

13. The Secretary has also made significant progress with other countries, providing relevant information to government authorities and maintaining contact through follow-up, including in collaboration with FAO Offices and other partners. Such countries include Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Liechtenstein, Somalia and South Africa, as well as those in the South West Pacific Region and the Caribbean Region.

Compliance

14. The Compliance Committee held its fifth meeting in March 2023 at FAO headquarters in Rome. The Secretary provided support and the necessary documentation to facilitate the work of the Committee, and assisted the finalization of its report to the Governing Body. The report of the Compliance Committee to the Governing Body is contained in the document, IT/GB-10/23/14, *Report of the Compliance Committee*.

15. In order to assist Contracting Parties with their reporting obligations under the Compliance Procedure, the Secretariat held a series of regional webinars in 2022. The aim was to strengthen the national reporting capacity, and the webinars attracted more than 120 participants from all FAO regions. The Secretariat also updated the relevant pages of the International Treaty website and added a comprehensive ‘Frequently asked questions’ section. This section explains the compliance work and national reporting mechanism in a user-friendly manner and in easy-to-understand language. A dedicated help-desk on compliance has been fully established to assist in the reporting process. As a result, additional support is now more readily and comprehensively available for the national reporting mechanism.²

16. During the biennium, the Secretary issued notifications and letters, to remind Contracting Parties about the national reporting mechanism, relevant deadlines and available support. Through these efforts, the capacity of Contracting Parties to prepare and submit their national reports has been enhanced. As of 28 March 2023, the Secretariat had received and analysed 91 national reports, including 12 from Contracting Parties reporting for the first time.

Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing

17. In May 2022, the Secretariat launched a revised comprehensive website section on the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (Multilateral System) in the six FAO official languages. The new section contains the revised frequently asked questions that reflect the guidance provided so far by the

² www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/faqs/en/

Governing Body, as well as extensive background information on the Multilateral System, including a comprehensive overview, data and statistics, support to users, and information on policy processes.³

18. The Secretariat continued to update the Data Store on the Multilateral System. As of June 2023, the Data Store had recorded 100 210 Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTAs) – marking an increase of 10 percent from the record as of the Ninth Session in 2022 (90 690 SMTAs), and of 33 percent compared with the record as of the Eighth Session in 2019 (57 368 SMTAs). These SMTAs were reported by providers located in 60 countries, distributing more than 6.6 million materials to recipients in 185 countries.

19. Users of the Multilateral System continued to receive assistance through the help-desk, e-mails and videoconferences, online training sessions, and in workshops that were partly organized with other FAO units and external partners. The Secretariat also provided support and practical assistance to the relevant partners of the Benefit-sharing Fund for the inclusion of the germplasm arising from their projects in the Multilateral System. Further information on these efforts is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/9.1, *Report on the Implementation and Operations of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing*.

20. In 2022, the Secretariat finalized and published the Educational Module on the Multilateral System.⁴ In 2023, following a request by the Governing Body at its Ninth Session, the Secretariat converted the Educational Module into an online training course.

21. Collaboration with the CGIAR Centers and other institutions that concluded agreements with the Governing Body under Article 15 of the International Treaty, as well as with other organizations that make material available in the Multilateral System, has continued in accordance with the guidance provided by the Governing Body. Information on the materials held and distributed by the CGIAR Centers and other Article 15 institutions is available in the reports submitted to this session. The summary of the CGIAR report is referenced in the document, IT/GB-10/23/9.1.

22. The Secretariat collaborated with partners to undertake analyses and research projects on the Multilateral System. These included the study, *The Plants That Feed the World: Baseline Data and Metrics to Inform Strategies for the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, jointly developed by the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the Crop Trust and the Secretariat of the International Treaty, as well as the thematic background study on germplasm exchange for the *Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

23. Following the reestablishment of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System (Working Group), the Secretary prepared and serviced the Working Group's tenth meeting. The Secretariat also supported an informal meeting organized by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group and hosted by the Government of Switzerland, and supported a series of informal consultations of the Co-Chairs with all regions and stakeholder groups.

Global Information System

24. The Global Information System (GLIS) Portal has been consolidated as a key entry point for users of the Multilateral System looking for material that is available in genebanks and breeding collections. As of 20 May 2023, the GLIS Portal had provided information on or links to more than 1 million accessions available in the Multilateral System. The total number of materials documented through the portal had reached 1 462 848. The number of Digital Object Identifiers recorded in the GLIS Portal grew 24 percent from March 2021 to mid-March 2023.

25. Following a request from the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretariat continued to develop the homepage of the GLIS Portal and populate the GLIS Link Directory with information and knowledge services provided by third-party organizations and projects. The Link Directory now offers access to more than 1 600 new resources classified in the categories reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on the GLIS, including the Toolbox for Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA.

³ www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/the-multilateral-system/landingmls/en/

⁴ FAO. 2021. The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing – Module IV. Rome. www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb7984en

26. The Secretary published the review version of the globally agreed List of Descriptors for Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) conserved *in situ* (CWRI v.1) in 2022, translated into different languages,⁵ which are available on the GLIS Portal.⁶ In 2023, the Secretary also released a new tool to facilitate the documentation and global exchange of information on crop wild relatives' genetic resources conserved *in situ*.⁷

27. The Secretariat tested descriptors in collaboration with national documentation teams in selected countries, which helped to identify gaps and needs for the documentation of CWR. The Secretariat has continued to partner with research and academic institutions and genebanks for the development of key characterization and evaluation descriptors. Since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, three new booklets have been published.⁸ In the context of the International Year of Millets, the Secretariat is developing two descriptor lists, in collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, for foxtail millet and fonio.

28. Following the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Secretary has continued to develop and cultivate relevant technical partnerships. In 2022, a memorandum of understanding was concluded with the DivSeek International Network, and in 2023 a letter of intent was signed with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Further information on the implementation of GLIS is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/11, *Report on the Implementation of the Global Information System*.

Funding Strategy

29. The Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (the Funding Committee) has held three meetings since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body. The Sixth meeting was held in January 2023 (virtual mode), the Seventh meeting in May 2023 (in-person), and the Eighth meeting in September 2023 (virtual mode). The Secretary serviced all meetings and prepared the relevant documentation to facilitate the work of the Committee. The report of the Funding Committee to the Governing Body is contained in the document, IT/GB-10/23/10, *Report of the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization*.

30. The Secretary supported the Funding Committee in fulfilling its role in advancing the realization and monitoring of the Funding Strategy. This included: preparing a report on the integration of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) in national plans, budgets and priorities and producing a report;⁹ preparing a draft methodology for measuring Non-Monetary Benefit-sharing for the Funding Committee's consideration; undertaking an analysis of key developments since the adoption of the Funding Strategy impacting its implementation in support of the process to review and update the Operational Plan of the Funding Strategy;¹⁰ undertaking consultations with the food processing industry and others for developing the International Treaty's value proposition to take forward implementation of the Food Processing Industry Engagement Strategy's inception phase; and supporting the Committee in finalizing the approval of projects to be funded under the Fifth cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

31. The Secretary has continued to engage with a range of donors to mobilize funds for the International Treaty's funding mechanisms, notably the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk, in collaboration with the Crop Trust for the latter, to provide critical financial resources to support those who conserve and sustainably use important crops for food security around the world.

⁵ www.fao.org/3/cb3256en/cb3256en.pdf

⁶ <https://glis.fao.org/glis>

⁷ www.fao.org/plant-treaty/news/news-detail/en/c/1635750/

⁸ One is on key descriptors for forage legumes (www.fao.org/3/cc4598en/cc4598en.pdf), another is on those for pili nut (*Canarium ovatum* Engl.) (www.fao.org/3/cc3704en/cc3704en.pdf), and a third is on key descriptors for fodder trees (www.fao.org/3/cc6601en/cc6601en.pdf).

⁹ *Integration of PGRFA in National Development Plans, Budgets and Priorities for Donor Support and External Funding*. www.fao.org/3/cc5724en/cc5724en.pdf

¹⁰ Review and update: Operational Plan for the Funding Strategy 2020-2025, Section II, www.fao.org/3/cc5761en/cc5761en.pdf

Benefit-sharing Fund

32. Between September and December 2022, a total of 173 eligible pre-proposals received for the Fifth cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF-5)¹¹ were screened by the Secretariat and the Independent Panel of Experts (the Panel).¹² The Secretariat prepared the methodology for the (i) screening of pre-proposals; (ii) guidelines for development of the full project proposals; and (iii) the assessment, scoring and ranking of the full proposals; it also organized the overall work of the Panel throughout September 2022–April 2023 through a series of webinars. In addition, the Secretariat organized regional help-desk webinars involving more than 100 participants from a number of institutions to assist the full project development phase of the BSF-5 programme.

33. The Final Report of the Panel of Experts – Fifth Call for Proposals¹³ was submitted to the Funding Committee, which approved a list of 28 new projects for funding in the BSF-5 at its Seventh meeting.¹⁴ A detailed overview of the BSF-5 programme, process and approved portfolio is available in the document, IT/GB-10/23/10/Inf.1, *Benefit-sharing Fund: 2022-2023 Report*.

34. During the current biennium, the fourth project cycle was also fully operative; by mid-2023, 35 percent of projects had concluded their activities. The highlights and main results of BSF-4 implementation are available in the document, IT/GB-10/23/10/Inf.1.

35. At the request of the Government of Italy, the Secretariat organized a field mission to Zimbabwe in March 2023, with participants from the Italian Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forestry Policies, Italian research institutions and civil society organizations.¹⁵ The mission focused on the project implemented in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe by Community Technology Development Trust.¹⁶ It also provided an opportunity to celebrate the International Year of Millets 2023, by showcasing the project's work on the conservation and sustainable use of a diversity of millets.^{17, 18}

Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA - Articles 5 and 6

36. The Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ACSU) met twice in 2023, in March (seventh meeting) and July (eighth meeting), both times in virtual mode. The Secretary serviced the meetings and prepared the relevant documentation to facilitate the work of ACSU. The Report of ACSU to the Governing Body is presented in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.2, *Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use*.

37. The Secretary continued to advocate the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, as set out in Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, both within and outside FAO, co-organizing and/or participating in relevant meetings, workshops and events for awareness-raising.

38. The Secretariat continued to populate the Toolbox for Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA (Toolbox) with relevant technical and policy resources and improve its usability, relevance and effectiveness, as an online database of valuable information for the management and sustainable use of PGRFA. The new prototype of the Toolbox, together with its communication and visibility plan, have been implemented. The Toolbox is now accessible in the GLIS Portal, along with other valuable information resources on PGRFA.¹⁹

¹¹ More information on the Fifth Call for Proposals and related documents is available at www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/fifth-cycle/en/

¹² The composition of the Independent Panel of Experts for the Fifth Call for Proposals is available at www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/panel-of-experts-bsf-5/en/

¹³ IT/GB-10/SFC-7/23/Inf.3: Final Report of the Panel of Experts: Fifth Call for Proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund is available at www.fao.org/3/cc5745en/cc5745en.pdf

¹⁴ The list containing summary information on the BSF-5 portfolio of projects is available at www.fao.org/3/cc6021en/cc6021en.pdf

¹⁵ A press release on the celebration of the International Year of Millets in Masvingo is available at www.fao.org/plant-treaty/news/news-detail/en/c/1635442/

¹⁶ More information on the project “Policies and Practices to Facilitate the Implementation of Developed Strategies Actions for Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Use for the Improvement of Food and Nutrition under Changing Climatic Conditions” is available at www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/projects-funded/bsf-details/en/c/359522/?iso3=ZWE

¹⁷ More information on the project “Policies and Practices to Facilitate the Implementation of Developed Strategies Actions for Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Use for the Improvement of Food and Nutrition under Changing Climatic Conditions” is available at www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/projects-funded/bsf-details/en/c/359522/?iso3=ZWE

¹⁸ BSF and International Year of Millets: Story of Patrick Mutepeya, Zimbabwe is available at www.fao.org/millets-2023/my-story/detail/patrick-mutepeya/en

¹⁹ Available at <https://glis.fao.org/glis>

Further information on implementation of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12, *Report on the Implementation on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA*.

Farmers' Rights – Article 9

39. The Secretary continued to communicate the importance of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty, both within and outside FAO, as an effective means to advance the realization of Farmers' Rights. The Secretary co-organized and/or participated in meetings, workshops and events to promote the understanding of Farmers' Rights, as well as the use and dissemination of the Inventory and the Options for Encouraging, Guiding and Promoting the Realization of Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty.

40. Following a request at the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretariat has published the Options on the website of the International Treaty and made them available in different languages.²⁰ The Secretariat has also updated the Farmers' Rights section on the website, populating the Inventory with the submissions received and providing information on some of the main questions regarding Farmers' Rights, and has made available leaflets on Farmers' Rights. Further information on the implementation of Farmers' Rights is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/13, *Report on the Implementation of Farmers' Rights*.

41. In response to a request of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary organized a Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights, hosted by the Government of India, from 12 to 15 September 2023, in New Delhi. The Secretariat prepared relevant background documentation, such as an annotated outline of the assessment of the state of implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty.²¹ The symposium aimed to provide a forum to share knowledge and experiences regarding innovative approaches, effective policies, best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty. It was designed to contribute to a better understanding by Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders of the challenges and opportunities involved in the effective implementation of Farmers' Rights, and to gather insights and ideas for future work to promote the implementation of Farmers' Rights, as provided in the International Treaty. The report of the Symposium is presented in the document, IT/GB-10/23/13/Inf.1, *Report from the Global Symposium on the implementation of Farmers' Rights*.

Digital Sequence Information/Genetic Sequence Data

42. As requested by the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary continued to follow developments on Digital Sequence Information/Genetic Sequence Data (DSI/GSD) in relevant international fora, with a focus on the CBD COP 15. COP 15 approved the GBF, which refers to digital sequence information (DSI) in the targets and goals related to access and benefit-sharing, and also approved a separate decision on DSI.

43. Following the conclusion of COP 15, the Secretary presented the Bureau of the Tenth Session with an analysis of those outcomes, and the interfaces with the consequent CBD processes, such as those on benefit-sharing for DSI, resource mobilization, and capacity development for the Nagoya Protocol.

44. Based on guidance of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary undertook a number of other activities, which included preparing the discussion of DSI in the Scientific Advisory Committee on the GLIS; issuing a notification inviting submissions on DSI capacity needs and initiatives; providing analysis for the consideration of DSI by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Enhancement of the Multilateral System; and facilitating the discussion of DSI in the Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights. The relevant information compiled by the Secretary is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/17.2, *Consideration of "Digital Sequence Information/Genomic Sequence Data" on PGRFA for the Objectives of the International Treaty*.

Capacity Building

45. As noted above, the Secretariat continued to produce and update knowledge products, and training and information materials, and disseminated them widely to the International Treaty community, in several languages and formats, to assist Contracting Parties and other stakeholders in their implementation of the

²⁰ Available at www.fao.org/3/cc4085en/cc4085en.pdf

²¹ Provided in IT/GB-10/23/13, Report on the Implementation of Farmers' Rights

International Treaty. The help-desk function has also provided valuable assistance to users of the International Treaty systems in many areas.

46. In 2022, the Secretariat organized five regional webinars on the BSF, Farmers' Rights, and the Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA, to assist Contracting Parties and other stakeholders in preparing for the Ninth Session of the Governing Body. In preparation for the Tenth Session, the Secretariat will continue to support the organization of regional preparatory meetings to facilitate effective deliberations by the Governing Body at its sessions.

47. The Secretariat jointly organized or participated in capacity development workshops on implementation of the Multilateral System, as well as its harmonious implementation with the CBD and its Nagoya Protocol. Detailed information regarding capacity-building activities conducted by the Secretariat can be found in relevant implementation reports on different themes submitted to the present session.

48. Furthermore, as requested in Resolution 10/2022, *Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty 2023-2030*,²² the Secretary finalized the draft Capacity Development Strategy, under the guidance of the Bureau, ensuring that the topics in the draft Strategy are in line with the International Treaty and the relevant resolutions of the Governing Body and promoting coherence in planning and delivering capacity development.

49. The Secretary also developed the outline of an Action Plan for the implementation of the Capacity Development Strategy, under the guidance of the Bureau, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, gathering feedback from Contracting Parties and other stakeholders through an online survey. The relevant information is provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/6.1, *Draft Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty 2023-2030*.

Communication

50. The Secretary continued to implement the Communication Strategy for the International Treaty adopted by the Governing Body. In 2023, the Secretariat invested efforts in refreshing messaging and developing new communication products, including targeted material for specific events.

51. Ongoing communication activities include regular updating of the International Treaty website, adding new and updated materials of interest to Contracting Parties and other stakeholders. Following the recommendations for increased visibility of the impacts of the BSF and other projects, the Secretariat has made a concerted effort to gather updated visual material from the field. The Secretariat has also made more web content available in all six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian).

52. The International Treaty's social media accounts are increasingly important channels for communication and require regular posting and maintenance. They include X, formerly Twitter (@Planttreaty, with more than 4 700 followers), LinkedIn (with more than 6 000 connections), and Facebook (with more than 1 000 followers). Further information is provided in document IT/GB-10/23/6/Inf.1, Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy of the International Treaty.

Global Agendas

53. To contribute to the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework, the Secretary made a submission in response to the CBD Notification 2023-003 related to Decision 15/9, with updates on relevant decisions of the Governing Body on the matter, as well as other activities, recent developments and ongoing processes under the International Treaty.

54. Following the advice of the Bureau, the Secretary prepared documentation for the Tenth Session to reflect the role of plant genetic resources within the various relevant goals and targets of the GBF, in particular Goals C and B. Relevant information regarding the relevance and foreseen contribution of the International Treaty to the implementation and achievement of the GBF is contained in a number of documents submitted to this session.

²² [Resolution 10/2022 - Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty 2023–2030 \(fao.org\)](#)

55. With regard to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Secretary continued to advocate the importance of the access and benefit-sharing mechanism of the International Treaty to facilitate and enable the effective conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, in particular through the United Nations annual progress report, regarding the achievement of Target 15.6, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the CBD. The Secretariat continued to maintain and compile relevant data and information, such as the number of SMTAs and countries adopting frameworks to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, by using national reports received under the Compliance Procedures.

56. On the occasion of the International Year of Millets 2023, the Secretariat of the International Treaty, in collaboration with the Crop Trust and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), organized the international panel “Unlocking the Power of Diversity: the role of sorghum and millets genetic resources in sustainable agriculture”, to highlight the importance of the genetic diversity of sorghum and millets for food security and nutrition.²³ Nearly 200 experts from around the world participated in the online event to discuss the crucial role that sorghum and millet genetic resources can play in promoting global food security and sustainable agriculture.

57. The programme featured 12 of the world’s leading experts from various sectors. The panel reflected on recent advances and current challenges in the conservation, sharing and use of the diversity of these important, but often neglected crops. The experts provided a global overview of the status of the production of sorghum and millets and focused, in particular, on current practices by various stakeholders. The panel also helped to identify current barriers to the effective and efficient use of the diversity of these crops and opportunities that may be realized through joint efforts.

III. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

58. As has been the case over the years, a large part of the work described above, including the intergovernmental policy processes, has been made possible and conducted as a result of extra-budgetary financial resources provided by a few donors, including through flexible voluntary contributions. These extra-budgetary funds have provided critical resources to support and enhance implementation of the Work Programme 2022–2023, and have become indispensable if the Governing Body is to achieve the expected outcomes of its Core Work Programme and further advance implementation of the International Treaty.

It should, however, be recalled that moneys contributed to the Special Funds for Agreed Purposes, either on a multi-donor basis or as individual accounts, are not fungible with the Core Administrative Budget. The funds in the Core Administrative Budget are contributed by Contracting Parties, with a commitment to implement the collectively agreed biennial Core Work Programme, whereas individual donors provide special funds for specific activities agreed between them and the Secretary, outside the Core Work Programme to support the Work Programme and the overall implementation of the International Treaty.

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

59. The Governing Body is invited, inter alia, to:

- Acknowledge and express appreciation to the donors that provided extra-budgetary financial contributions to the Special Funds for Agreed Purposes and the Special Fund to Support the Participation of Developing Country Contracting Parties, to support implementation of the Work Programme and achievement of the expected outcomes;
- Provide any advice and recommendations relevant to improving future programming and implementation of the work programme.

²³ [Unlocking the Power of Millets & Sorghum |International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture|FAO](#)