



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



The International Treaty
**ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

Item 17.3 of the Provisional Agenda

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Kigali, Rwanda, 30 October – 3 November 2017

Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Executive Summary

This document, prepared jointly by the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), provides a brief update on relevant institutional matters and reports on collaboration between the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission. .

A detailed analysis of the relevance of the International Treaty's information systems to support the monitoring of the implementation of the Second GPA and the preparation of the Third Report, and the relevance of WIEWS to support Contracting Parties in reporting on the implementation of the Treaty is provided in the document, IT/GB-7/17/Inf.17, *Monitoring the Implementation of the International Treaty and of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this report and provide further guidance regarding cooperation with the Commission, taking into account the elements for a possible Resolution provided in *Appendix 1* to this document.

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Other documents can be consulted at [http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Body at its Sixth Session, encouraged close cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission). The Governing Body considered additional information provided by the Secretaries of the Treaty and of the Commission on financial and administrative implications related to the transfer of activities or tasks from the Commission to the Treaty¹ and, in adopting Resolution 9/2015, agreed to keep the matter of the functional division of tasks and activities between the Governing Body and the Commission under review and requested the Secretary to regularly report any relevant developments in the cooperation with the Commission.
2. The Governing Body also considered and welcomed proposed joint activities of the Commission and the Governing Body, in particular in the areas of access and benefit-sharing, and implementation monitoring. It requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies.
3. The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session, welcomed the proposed joint activities and requested its Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Treaty to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies. It also decided to keep the transfer of activities to the Treaty under review.²
4. The document, IT/GB-7/17/Inf.23, *Report from the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, provides additional relevant information on the importance of on-going work of the Commission to the work of the Governing Body.
5. This document, prepared jointly by the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission, provides a brief update on relevant institutional matters and reports on cooperation between the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSFERRING ACTIVITIES FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

6. The Governing Body and the Commission agreed to keep the transfer of activities from the Commission to the Governing Body under review.³
7. The document, *Transfer of activities or tasks from the Commission to the Governing body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: legal, administrative and financial implications*,⁴ presented to the Governing Body at its Fifth Session, provides, in section III, information on the legal implications of a transfer of specific activities from the Commission to the International Treaty.
8. If a task or activity is formally transferred from the Commission to the Governing Body of the International Treaty, this could have financial implications. In this case, the FAO Conference would need to consider whether to adjust FAO's contribution to the International Treaty's Core Administrative Budget to cover some or all of the associated costs of activities/tasks transferred to the International Treaty. Additional information on financial and administrative implications related to the

¹ IT/GB-6/Inf.08.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 93-94.

³ Resolution 9/2015; CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 93.

⁴ IT/GB-5/13/12.

transfer of activities or tasks from the Commission to the Governing Body was provided to the Governing Body, at its last session.⁵

III. COOPERATION WITH THE COMMISSION

9. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, "request[ed] the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies"⁶, in particular with regard to access and benefit-sharing, the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report), and the monitoring and implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Second GPA). The Governing Body also "note[d] that the Conference [had] welcomed, at its Thirty-ninth Session, *Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (ABS Elements) and that the Commission will continue elaborating subsector-specific ABS Elements, bearing in mind the on-going activities or processes under the Treaty."⁷

10. Following changes in the organizational structure of FAO enacted in the first quarter of 2017, both the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission form both part of the new FAO Department of Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water. The department's mandate covers the three Rio Conventions (Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) and facilitates cross-departmental work on environmental and sustainability issues, including biodiversity and ecosystem services, which are key subjects for both the International Treaty and the Commission.

11. The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session, "welcomed the establishment of the new FAO Department on Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water and noted that this will strengthen collaboration, and allow for greater integration and coherence, between the Treaty and the Commission. It requested the Secretary to continue strengthening such collaboration to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies",⁸ in particular with regard to the preparation of the Third Report, the monitoring and implementation of the Second GPA, access and benefit-sharing, the Global Information System of the International Treaty and the World Information Early Warning System (WIEWS), and global targets and indicators.⁹

A. Access and Benefit-sharing

12. The Secretariat of the International Treaty participated, as an observer, in the third session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing, which was held from 13 to 15 September 2016 in Rome, Italy. The Secretariat of the Commission participated, as an observer, in the sixth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System, held from 13 to 17 March 2017 in Rome, Italy.¹⁰

13. The Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission jointly contributed to the side-event Genetic diversity for a world with no hunger: International cooperation through FAO held

⁵ IT/GB-6/15/Inf.09.

⁶ Resolution 9/2015, para.6.

⁷ Resolution 9/2015, para. 3.

⁸ CGRFA-16/17/Report, para. 95.

⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, para. 93.

¹⁰ See the document, IT/GB-7/17/7, *Report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System*.

on the occasion of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which took place from 4 to 17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico.

14. At the occasion of the Sixteenth Regular Session of the Commission, the Secretariat of the International Treaty organized the side-event, *Preparing for the Seventh Session of the Governing Body: 2017 Outlook*, with the participation of the Co-chairs of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System.

15. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, "welcome[d] the proposal of a global workshop jointly organized by the two Secretariats on Access and Benefit-sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, to be held during the next biennium, subject to the availability of the necessary extra-budgetary funds".¹¹ The Commission, at its sixteenth regular session, "requested the Secretariat to convene, as soon as practicable after the Sixteenth Regular Session of the Commission, and in collaboration with the Secretariats of the [International] Treaty and the [Convention on Biological Diversity], an international workshop to assist countries to identify and raise awareness of distinctive features and specific practices of subsectors of [genetic resources for food and agriculture] in the context of the ABS Elements."¹² The International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will be held from 10 to 12 January 2018 in Rome, Italy, at FAO Headquarters. It will be organized by the Commission in collaboration with the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

B. Global Information System

16. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, welcomed the proposal of a study to be prepared jointly by the two Secretariats analysing the relevance of the International Treaty's information systems to support the monitoring of the implementation of the Second GPA and the preparation of the Third Report, and the relevance of WIEWS to support the Parties of the Governing Body in reporting on the implementation of the International Treaty.¹³ The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session echoed the Governing Body's request and welcomed the joint preparation of such an analysis.¹⁴

17. In response to the request, the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission guided the preparation of an analysis of the information collected:

- by the Governing Body on the implementation of the International Treaty; and
- by FAO's WIEWS on the implementation of the Second GPA and for the preparation of the Third Report.

18. The reporting format of the International Treaty was developed pursuant to Section 5.4 of the Compliance Procedures to facilitate the submission by each Contracting Party of a report on the measures it has taken to implement its obligations under the Treaty. The WIEWS Reporting System is based on 63 indicators, as agreed by the Commission in 2013. The indicators aim to reflect activities undertaken by countries to implement the Second GPA as well as the status of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

19. The analysis aims to assess:

- the relevance of information collected by WIEWS for Contracting Party reporting under Section 5 of the Compliance Procedures and for reporting by Contracting Parties and

¹¹ Resolution 9/2015, para. 4.

¹² CGRFA-16/17/Report, para. 25(v).

¹³ IT/GB-6/15/Report, Resolution A.9.

¹⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 94.

stakeholders on the implementation of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives¹⁵;

- the relevance of information collected by the Online Reporting System¹⁶ of the International Treaty for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA and for preparing the Third Report.

20. A more detailed analysis is contained in the document, IT/GB-7/17/Inf.17, *Monitoring the Implementation of the International Treaty and of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

21. The analysis concludes that although WIEWS and the Online Reporting System are quite different in that they have been created for different purposes, offer different types of information at different scales and in varying levels of detail and collect information at different frequencies, there are areas in both systems where information provided to one may well be also relevant to the other system. It might therefore be worthwhile to explore technical options that allow users of one system to either refer to or use information previously submitted to the other system.

C. Programme of Work on Sustainable Use

22. At its Sixth Session the Governing Body endorsed the revised Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives (Resolution 4/2015, Annex 1). One of the goals of the Programme of Work is to implement the Priority Activities of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), regarding the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

23. The Secretariat of the Commission participated in the third meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee on Sustainable Use (the Committee), held from 24 to 25 October 2016 in Vienna, Austria. The Committee was briefed on the efforts made by FAO¹⁷ and the Commission with regard to the implementation of the Second GPA.

24. The Secretariat of the Commission also participated in the Global Consultation on Farmers' Rights, held from 27 to 30 September 2016 in Bali, Indonesia, which was organized by the Governments of Indonesia and Norway and facilitated by the Secretariat of the International Treaty.¹⁸ In addition, the Secretariat of the International Treaty co-organized, together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norway, and the Indonesian Center for Agricultural Biotechnology and Genetic Resources Research and Development (ICABIOGRAD) the side-event The multiple benefits of realising Farmers' Rights, during the last session of the Commission.

D. Global Targets and Indicators

25. The Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission actively cooperated in the development of targets and indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, in particular Target 15.6.1 which deals with access and benefit-sharing. The indicator chosen refers to the “number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and

¹⁵ IT/GB-5/13/Report, Resolution 7/2013.

¹⁶ <http://faoitpgrfa.ort-production.linode.unep-wcmc.org/>

¹⁷ IT/ACSU-3/Inf.5.

¹⁸ The summary of presentations and discussions are provided in the document, IT/GB-7/17/Inf. 10, *Proceedings of the Global Consultation on Farmers' Rights*. In document IT/GB-7/17/Circ. 1, *Submission from Norway and Indonesia containing the Co-Chairs proposal from the Global Consultation on Farmers' Rights*, the Co-Chairs present a summary of recommendations reflecting their interpretation of the discussions held at the Global Consultation.

policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits". There have been consultations between the CBD, the custodian agency of the indicator, and the FAO, led by the International Treaty and the Commission, on Target 15.6.1.

26. The document IT/GB-7/17/6, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Role of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, contains more information about the monitoring of this SDG Target.

E. National Level Conservation and Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landrace and on National Level Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants

27. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, including with regard to further work on the Commission's draft technical guidelines on the conservation of crop wild relatives and on the draft technical guidelines on the conservation and use of landraces .

28. Upon wide consultations, the Commission, at its last session, endorsed the Voluntary guidelines for national level conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants and requested FAO to publish them.¹⁹ The Voluntary guidelines are provided as IT/GB-7/17/inf.22. The Commission referred the revised draft Voluntary guidelines on national level conservation and use of farmers' varieties/landraces to the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for further review.²⁰

F. Global Networking on *In Situ* Conservation and On-Farm Management of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

29. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, also requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, including on global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.²¹

30. The International Treaty Secretariat participated in and contributed to an informal multi-stakeholder dialogue organized by FAO on this subject.²² The Commission, at its last session, reviewed a concept note on Global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture²³ and referred it to its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for further consultations.²⁴

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

31. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this report and provide further guidance on the continuing close cooperation with the Commission, taking into account the elements for a possible Resolution provided in the *Appendix* to this document.

¹⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 62.

²⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 63.

²¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 64.

²² CGRFA/WG- PGR-8/16/Inf.2.

²³ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.20.

²⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.20.

*Appendix***DRAFT RESOLUTION **/2017****COOPERATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****THE GOVERNING BODY,**

Recalling Resolutions 4/2013 and 9/2015 on Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) and, in particular, its request for a close cooperation between the Commission and the Governing Body;

1. **Welcomes** the establishment of the new FAO Department on Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water and notes that this will strengthen collaboration between the International Treaty and the Commission and allow for greater coordination and coherence, between the International Treaty and the Commission.
2. **Agrees** to keep the matter of the functional division of tasks and activities between the Governing Body and the Commission under review and **requests** the Secretary to regularly report any relevant developments in the cooperation with the Commission;
3. **Welcomes** the Voluntary guidelines for national level conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants and invites Contracting Parties to implement them, as appropriate;
4. **Welcomes** the invitation of the Commission to the Governing Body, to continue, in its continued governance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture according to Article 3 of the International Treaty, to closely coordinate with the Commission, in order to address in a complementary way the distinctive features and specific uses of PGRFA, bearing in mind the ongoing activities and processes under the International Treaty, including the current process of enhancing the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and the ongoing cooperation supporting the harmonious implementation of the International Treaty, the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol;
5. **Welcomes** the invitation of the Commission to the Governing Body to exchange information with the Commission at regular intervals on the process of enhancing the Multilateral System with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and **requests** the Secretary to prepare, with guidance of the Bureau, a report to be made available to the seventeenth regular session of the Commission;
6. **Requests** the Secretary to collaborate with the Secretary of the Commission, who will convene an international workshop to assist countries to identify and raise awareness of distinctive features and specific practices of subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture in the context of the Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as well as with the Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
7. **Takes note** of the analysis of the information collected by the Governing Body on the implementation of the International Treaty and by FAO's WIEWS on the implementation of the Second GPA and for the preparation of the Third Report and **requests** the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission to explore technical options that allow users of one system to either refer to or use information previously submitted to the other system;
8. **Requests** the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, and in particular with regard to:

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- (a) the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
 - (b) the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including further work on draft technical guidelines on farmers' varieties/landraces and global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA;
 - (c) access and benefit-sharing;
 - (d) the Global Information System of the International Treaty and the WIEWS; and,
 - (e) global targets and indicators.