



The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Paras.</i>
I. Introduction	1 - 5
II. Status of Implementation of Article 6	6 - 20
III. Information Gathering on the Implementation of Article 6	30 - 38
IV. Conclusions and Guidance Sought	39 - 42

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Second Session,

“the Governing Body requested the Secretary to prepare a comprehensive document at its next session covering the status of the implementation of Article 6, which includes information on policy and legal measures used to achieve the objectives of the Article. It invited submissions from Contracting Parties, other governments, and relevant institutions and organizations, and urged an improved process for information gathering on the sustainable use activities, including means such as surveys, conceptual frameworks, inter-session meetings and workshops.”¹

2. This document responds to the request of the Governing Body and constitutes the initial steps to obtain an overview of actual measures that support the implementation of Article 6 and particularly to identify mechanisms to obtain such information most effectively in the future.

3. Article 6 is the central article responding to the second objective of the Treaty: the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. This concept acknowledges the importance of accessible genetic diversity to develop the new crop varieties and practices for sustainable crop production in the face of continuing and acute challenges such as increasing human population and demographic changes, the accelerating impacts of global climate change, and the ongoing turmoil in world economic markets. It also recognizes that the use of plant genetic resources is the primary way to benefit from the extensive global and national investments in the conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

4. Article 6 highlights the responsibility of Contracting Parties to take appropriate policy and legal measures to promote sustainable use and, in sub-section 2, provides an indicative list of seven such measures. These are:

- a. pursuing fair agricultural policies that promote, as appropriate, the development and maintenance of diverse farming systems that enhance the sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity and other natural resources;*
- b. strengthening research which enhances and conserves biological diversity by maximizing intra- and inter-specific variation for the benefit of farmers, especially those who generate and use their own varieties and apply ecological principles in maintaining soil fertility and in combating diseases, weeds, and pests;*
- c. promoting, as appropriate, plant breeding efforts which, with the participation of farmers, particularly in developing countries, strengthen the capacity to develop varieties particularly adapted to social, economic, and ecological conditions, including in marginal areas;*
- d. broadening the genetic base of crops and increasing the range of genetic diversity available to farmers;*
- e. promoting, as appropriate, the expanded use of local and locally adapted crops, varieties, and underutilized species;*
- f. supporting, as appropriate, the wider use of diversity of varieties and species in on-farm management, conservation, and sustainable use of crops and creating strong links to plant breeding and agricultural development in order to reduce crop vulnerability and genetic erosion, and promote increased world food production compatible with sustainable development; and*
- g. reviewing, and, as appropriate, adjusting breeding strategies and regulations concerning variety release and seed distribution.*

5. Available information on the implementation of Article 6 is fragmented and incomplete. Section II of this document contains an assessment of the status of implementation of Article 6 based on information made available by countries in their submissions to the Secretariat as well as on

¹ IT/GB-2/07/Report, paragraph 72.

information provided by them to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture towards the preparation of the Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SoW-2). Information on the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture could also be drawn from various other sources which, however, could not be taken into account for the preparation of this document, because of a shortage of resources. Nevertheless, those sources are briefly categorized and described in section III for further consideration by the Governing Body, as appropriate.

II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6

6. Fourteen Contracting Parties provided information on the implementation of Article 6 to the Governing Body for its second session.² As at the time of preparation of this document, only seven Contracting Parties have provided information to the Governing Body for its third session.³ These seven reports are quite diverse in nature and level of detail. For example, Ecuador and Zambia report on general policy issues; Germany and Syria report in some detail on their public and private organisations involved in breeding and breeding research. Kenya reports on the status of legislative measures to protect genetic resources, traditional knowledge, and folklore and refers to its submissions for the SoW-2. Mali and Niger list a number of implementation projects in research, development, and capacity building along with some regulatory developments.

7. The SoW-2 is currently under preparation by FAO under the auspices of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission) considering the best data and information available, including country reports, information gathering processes and thematic studies, with the largest possible participation of countries.⁴ It addresses, *inter alia*;

- (i) state of diversity;
- (ii) state of in situ conservation;
- (iii) state of ex situ conservation;
- (iv) state of use;
- (v) state of national programmes, training, and legislation;
- (vi) state of regional and international collaboration;
- (vii) access to PGRFA, sharing of benefits arising out of their use, and farmers' rights; and
- (viii) contribution of PGRFA management to food security and sustainable development.

8. The country reports include a number of aspects of direct relevance to the implementation of Article 6, namely: information systems; PGRFA-related policies and regulations; and utilization of PGRFA. These reports also fulfil the countries' obligations under Article 17.3 of the Treaty to cooperate with the Commission in periodically assessing the state of the world's PGRFA in order to facilitate the updating of the rolling *Global Plan of Action*.

9. To date over 100 country reports have been received by FAO towards SoW-2. These country submissions provide a significant amount of information and this document will note the various means by which countries are seeking to address sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The diversity of these submissions illustrates that there are often numerous interrelating laws and policies relevant to the sustainable use of PGRFA. These include, among others, general laws and policies relating to the environment, biodiversity, and agricultural

² Document IT/GB-2/07/15: "Compilation and Analysis of Submissions by Contracting Parties and Other Relevant Organizations concerning the Implementation of Article 6."

³ IT/GB 3/09/Inf.5: "Compilation of Submissions by Contracting Parties, other Governments, and Relevant Institutions and Organizations on the Implementation of Article 6."

⁴ CGRFA-11/07/Report,

development. The number of government departments and agencies with a role in promoting sustainable use often reflects this legal and policy diversity.

10. Furthermore, in their submissions, countries identified a wide range of activities within government, academic, and scientific institutions that promote sustainable use. These activities are targeted at different stakeholders, including government, farmers, students, and businesses. Several measures have been indicated as being undertaken by countries to promote Article 6 implementation, including: policy assistance; technical and institutional capacity building; enhancing scientific research skills; development of baseline data; and promotion of incentives for all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Parties also refer to the ongoing work undertaken for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (GPA).⁵

11. For the purpose of discussion, and considering that there is a diversity of legal traditions and possible conceptual differences, certain basic terminologies are used in the context of this document to convey certain meanings, and it would be necessary to define, briefly how they are used for categorisation:

- a. *Policies* consist of ‘soft law’ measures that may not have direct legal enforceability but that are influential and can make an impact as guiding principles and plans for the actions of the executive branches of governments. These usually include published policy statements and action plans, whether originating at the departmental, ministerial, or cabinet level.
- b. *Legal measures* consist of ‘hard law’ instruments that are supported by the coercive power of law and, therefore, have direct enforceability and impact. They include primary and subsidiary legislation and, where appropriate, executive orders and equivalent measures.
- c. *Policy measures* may be based on ‘hard law’ or ‘soft law’ but all have a direct practical impact, usually because of the powers of the executive authorities that implement them or because of budgetary allocations. These include: financial measures to assist in the implementation of policies, such as subsidies and public investments towards public and private organisations or tax exemptions; and measures that influence policy processes, such as the participation of stakeholders in policy processes.

Policies

12. Policy statements and action plans reported in many country reports advocate sustainable use of PGRFA. Various components of agricultural policies exist that have a marked impact on the utilization of PGRFA, including innovation policies, seed policies, biosafety policies, and, more broadly, policies towards sustainable agriculture and eco-farming. The many types of plans and policies include:

- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, prepared under the auspices of the CBD (to date, 166 countries have submitted Plans to the CBD, e.g., Jordan in its country report, reports that its Plan calls for the establishment of green belts to combat desertification and, with respect to plant production, the establishment of specialized center for plant biodiversity),
- National action plans or strategies for PGRFA (e.g., Denmark, Ethiopia),
- National action plans for other relevant topics (e.g., Malaysia’s 3rd National Agricultural Policy (1998-2010) and National Biodiversity Policy (1998) address use of PGRFA and biodiversity, respectively, with respect to access and benefit-sharing issues and sustainable use),
- Regional action plans (e.g., the Pacific Agricultural PGR Network (PAPGREN), to which four countries are Contracting Parties of the Treaty (Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, and Samoa), emphasizes and facilitates sustainable use of PGRFA),

⁵ <http://www.globalplanofaction.org>.

- National agency action plans (e.g., that of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency for use of crop wild relatives),
- Mission statements of national institutes or agencies (e.g., that of Ethiopia's Institute of Biodiversity Conservation),
- Terms of MOUs and bilateral action plans that enhance research on, access to, and use of PGRFA (e.g., India with MOUs with several countries),
- Activities of NGOs with impacts on government units and the general public (e.g., NGOs in Malaysia with proactive projects with the national government to raise public awareness of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity).

Legal measures

(a) Biodiversity laws

13. To the extent that they have been reported in the preparation process for the SoW-2,⁶ biodiversity laws commonly focus on the protection of biodiversity in protected areas and forests and rarely deal explicitly with the genetic diversity level of biodiversity.⁷ To the extent that PGRFA are considered, this is in the context of access to genetic resources (and benefit sharing), which is usually only addressed in framework terms in primary legislation with more detailed provisions being developed in subsidiary regulations. In consequence, biodiversity laws do not generally include the sustainable use of PGRFA in their objectives, nor do they reflect the specific facilitated access procedures and terms and conditions of the Treaty.

14. Many countries have developed biosafety laws pursuant to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁸ These laws primarily aim at preventing adverse impacts on biological diversity resulting from the use or transfer of living modified organisms,⁹ but could be seen as relating to the conservation of PGRFA in the sense that living modified organisms might either endanger or enrich the genetic base of crops.

(b) Seed laws

15. Seed related laws are reported as impacting on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA in three main areas: traditional seed laws; intellectual property laws; and, plant protection or quarantine laws.

i) *Traditional seed laws* commonly regulate variety release and the certification of seed quality and identity, while also often providing for the establishment and responsibilities of oversight organisations¹⁰. These laws regulate the use of PGRFA in formal plant breeding and in the commercial seed trade and are concerned with the identification and performance of particular varieties under specified conditions. The extensive and compulsory rules for variety

⁶ http://www.fao.org/ag/AGP/agps/Pgrfa/wrlmap_e.htm

⁷ This conclusion is based on an analysis of the content of environmental laws as reported by countries to international forums or as available from key secondary sources, as discussed in section 3 of this document.

⁸ On 29 January 2000, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Protocol as a supplementary agreement to the Convention.

⁹ Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Article 1, Objective: "...[T]he objective of this Protocol is to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity..."

10 Louwaars, N.P., 2005. Seed laws: biases and bottlenecks. Grain, July, 2005 p 3 - 7
http://www.grain.org/seedling_files/seed-05-07-2.pdf

release introduced by seed laws have sometimes been considered to limit the range of varieties to farmers, in particular traditional or informally developed varieties.¹¹

ii) PGRFA as seed are often linked to *intellectual property laws* (notably plant breeder's rights, but also, increasingly, patents) intended to support commercial investments in breeding and breeding research. Intellectual property laws may, therefore, be considered an instrument in supporting research based on, and thus the use of, PGRFA. However, these laws focus on the development of commercial varieties and do not specifically create incentives for breeding with the participation of farmers or breeding directed at base broadening as specified in Article 6.2 of the Treaty. In addition to orthodox plant variety protection laws,¹² some countries report that they their plant breeder's rights legislation recognises the contribution of farmers and communities towards the creation of new varieties (Malaysia)¹³ or otherwise link mechanisms to support the use of PGRFA in their laws (e.g., India¹⁴).

iii) Almost all countries have plant quarantine laws, which are meant to avoid the importation or spread of plant diseases, pests, and invasive plant species and that are intended to support the export of seeds and planting materials by guaranteeing their health. It may be that, through this guaranteeing role, quarantine laws may play some role in promoting the utilization of a country's PGRFA abroad.

(c) *Regulations on sustainable use*

16. Very few primary or regulatory instruments explicitly refer to sustainable use with the majority concentrating largely, or exclusively, on conservation. A number of possible exceptions have been identified in the country reports, including:

- Czech Republic law on Conservation and Utilisation of PGR and Micro-organisms for Food and Agriculture (2003);
- A Bill in Mali on all aspects of PGRFA including utilization;
- Peru has a law on the utilization of natural resources (Ley 26821) and regulations on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Biological Diversity (Ley 27262 and D.S. 040-2001-AG).

Policy measures

17. Policy measures that aim at supporting sustainable utilization tend to be more diverse than the range of policies and legal measures, probably because of their less formal and more flexible nature. Regulatory frameworks, which govern the protection and efficient use of genetic resources, are being improved.

18. Three categories of policy measure can be identified, namely: measures that prepare for utilization; those that support actual utilization of genetic resources in research; and, those that support the context of actual utilization.

(a) *Measures that establish basis for utilization*

19. Various measures have been reported on that concentrate on the conservation of genetic resources in such a manner as to promote their utilization. These include investments for the

¹¹ Tripp, Robert & Niels Louwaars, 1998. Seed regulation: choices on the road to reform. Food Policy Vol.22, No.5, pp. 433-446. Tripp, R. (ed.) (1997), New Seed and Old Laws: Regulatory reform and the diversification of national seed systems. London, United Kingdom: Intermediate Technology Publications.

¹² Understood as those based on the conventions of the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV, www.upov.int).

¹³ Malaysia Protection of New Varieties Act, 2004. Article 13.1 states that an application for the registration of a new plant variety and grant of a breeder's right under section 12 shall only be made by [...] (d) a farmer or group of farmers, local community or indigenous people who have carried out the functions of a breeder.

¹⁴ India has included a gene-fund in their breeder's rights systems, which is meant to support farmers in continuing the use of the PGRFA in their fields.

characterization of genetic resources and the making of information about the materials (*ex situ* and *in situ*), including their evaluation data, publicly available.¹⁵ Public funds are very important for these activities, and the provision of such funds can be considered an important policy measure towards the implementation of Article 6. Characterisation and evaluation activities may be reflected in policies, although they are rarely included as an affirmative obligation in legal measures, but are most commonly undertaken in the context of discretionary administrative priorities and actions.

20. Similarly, strategies towards the efficient distribution of samples are important. These may include the institutional, or even individual, strategies of collection holders and may even be indirect, such as the provision of resources for the duplication and distribution of materials in the absence of any fixed distribution policy. Equally, distribution policies may be formally established in national policies on access to genetic resources or mechanisms to implement obligations under the Treaty, in which case they would more properly be considered as policies or legal measures, rather than policy measures.

(b) *Measures that support actual utilization*

21. Country reports to the SoW-2 document a wide range of measures that actively support the utilization of PGRFA. For example: public investments in breeding which lead to the introduction of more varieties in the market; explicit support to research towards broadening the genetic base of breeding programmes (either through pre-breeding and research on inter-specific crosses as reported by e.g., Malaysia, Pakistan, Uganda); the use of local materials in participatory plant breeding¹⁶ undertaken in several countries (e.g., Benin, Cuba, Cyprus, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Peru, Portugal); and genomic research in the form of public-private partnerships (e.g., Germany, The Netherlands, Norway) supports the utilization of PGRFA.

22. Supporting the emergence of a variety of local seed start-up companies may also contribute to the availability of a wider range of seeds in the market. This could be done through tax exemptions, duty free importation of seed conditioning equipment, credit facilities for companies and their customers, and capacity building in seed technology and business administration etc.¹⁷

23. Incentive measures do not always need to involve public monetary investments: moral support or stimulating scientists in public research institutes to cooperate with civil society initiatives in these fields (e.g., through adapting the reward system for scientists) also can be considered important policy measures.

24. Measures that relate to the promotion of on-farm management of genetic resources through the expanded use of landraces. In their submissions for the SoW-2, Ecuador, Germany, India, and Ireland include aspects of on-farm management. Legalisation of the production and selling of landrace seed may be complemented by non-legal measures such as the reduction of the fees for variety registration and field inspections¹⁸.

25. A final measure reported by several countries¹⁹ is the education of PGRFA specialists and breeders as a prerequisite for increasing sustainable utilization, while others, such as the Lao PDR, go further and include awareness creation among farming communities.

¹⁵ See for example the Netherlands submission to the SoW-2.

¹⁶ Almekinders, Conny & Jaap Hardon, 2006. Bringing Farmers back to Breeding. AgroSpecial. Foundation Agromisa ISBN 90-8573-070-8 and Vernooy, Ronnie, 2003. In focus: Seeds that give – participatory plant breeding Ottawa, IDRC <http://www.idrc.ca/openbooks/014-4/>.

¹⁷ In Africa, the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa is supporting several of these activities. AGRA: www.agra-alliance.org.

¹⁸ For example, Peru is running a native crop registry at INIA (Ruiz, Manuel. Las Zonas de Agrobiodiversidad y el Registro de Cultivos Nativos en el Perú: Aprendiendo de Nosotros Mismos. 2009. Genetic Resources Policy Initiative, Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental. Lima, Perú).

¹⁹ For example, Armenia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda.

(c) *Measures that provide a conducive environment for the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*

26. Various measures are reported as implemented to support various forms of sustainable agriculture that may lead to the increased utilization of a wide range of PGRFA. For example, seed policies that are translated into stimulating seed fairs (e.g., Namibia, Kenya, and Bolivia) or community seed banks (e.g., Ethiopia, India) are supported in a range of countries.

27. A limited number of countries note in their reports to SoW-2 regulatory measures that explicitly support the use of a diversity of PGRFA by farmers. For example, Finland reports the provision of subsidies for the cultivation of threatened varieties (Act 1440/2006). Germany also reports on a state level subsidy scheme for the planting of threatened varieties.²⁰ Cyprus has draft legislation that will set less strict regulations for marketing of landraces and old varieties. Azerbaijan's Law of the Azerbaijan Republic on Seed Production has been amended to stimulate seed production which promises to bring more local varieties to market.

28. Measures to promote local products (e.g., that promote initiatives like the slow-food movement) may be directed at consumers as well as other actors along the value chain. Almost half of the country submissions to the SoW-2 describe measures to promote the use of local crops and varieties and underutilized species, often in conjunction with the development of markets for products derived from such crops. These include provisions on the use of local varieties in various forms of geographic indications (*Appellation Contrôlée* or DOC) and publicly financed promotion campaigns.

29. Similarly, measures that promote eco-farming likely lead to the use of increased numbers of locally adapted varieties. Such measures may target consumers, value chains, e.g., through the provision of eco-labels to agricultural products, producers, and input suppliers.

30. Even though most information systems are important to stimulate use, none of these reports includes the development of information systems that explicitly compile policies and activities on the sustainable use of PGRFA, or on any of the measures indicated in Article 6.2 of the Treaty.

III. INFORMATION GATHERING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6

31. This section considers the various sources of information on the implementation of Article 6 that are readily available in addition to the reports submitted by national authorities and organisations. These reports are considered, both for their current value as sources of information on Article 6 implementation and for ways in which they might be more effectively harnessed. Consideration is then given to wider sources of information that, while not having contributed significantly to Section II of this document, would have to provide major inputs to any comprehensive study of the implementation of Article 6; in particular specialised organisations and databases.

32. It is relevant to note that the *National Information Sharing Mechanism (NISM) process on implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* started in 2003 provides (i) an agreed list of indicators for monitoring the implementation of all GPA priority activity areas at the country level; (ii) a questionnaire, which is based on such indicators; and (iii) a computer application, which has been developed to facilitate and simplify data recording, processing, analysis, and sharing of the information addressed by the questionnaire.

A. INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT SPECIALISED ORGANISATIONS

33. A number of organizations have mandates, and thus a range of information and experience, in the various fields of relevance to the implementation of Article 6. Not all of this information is systematically stored or made available, at least not in a form that is readily applicable to reporting on

²⁰ The programme "KULAP 2000" in Brandenburg State is mentioned in the German report to the SoW-2.

the implementation of Article 6, and, therefore, access to the information for analytical purposes can vary according to the particular institution and its practices.

34. The Governing Body could request identified organizations to submit information to the Secretariat and then issue an open invitation to submit information to broaden the range of information available. Recognising that this could become a significant task, a standardised format to be submitted on a regular basis could be developed.

B. LITERATURE AND PROJECT DATABASES

Literature databases

35. There are extensive searchable databases of scientific and 'grey' literature, for the implementation of Article 6, most notably AGRIS (FAO), CAB-Abstracts and Google Scholar.

36. CAB-Abstracts provide an excellent collection of scientific literature and is searchable, among other criteria, on the year that a paper was published. AGRIS has more data on so called 'grey sources of literature', including annual reports of organizations etc. Since some of the activities relevant to the promotion of the use of PGRFA may never reach the scientific literature, this database may be very useful. Google Scholar is quite complete, particularly because it does full text searches for the search criteria applied.

Project databases

37. Project databases also provide useful tools. The most widely known are those of CARIS (FAO), WISARD and InfoSys. These databases acquire their content from multiple sources, all of which have their specific limitations. Several other databases exist that concentrate on specific topics or organizations. The "R&D Portal" of the UK's Department for International Development is a very significant example of the latter type.

The use of standardised searches of databases

38. The literature and project databases mentioned above could be used to generate quantitative data regarding the implementation of particular components of Article 6. By creating a standard search methodology, which may be applied at several points in time, information on the number of papers and projects can be retrieved next to information on the actual content of the individual initiatives. This requires a careful design of such search methods (combination of search terms, combination of sources, screening of the output for irrelevant hits, etc.). The development of a Genetic Resources Compendium would enable the Governing Body to access up to date information whenever needed. Such a compendium would compile all published evidence on the conservation and use of PGRFA in an electronically accessible format.

39. If the Governing Body considers the use of standardised searches of either or both literature and project databases as an effective means of monitoring the promotion of the use of PGRFA, it may wish to request the Secretariat to provide a thorough analysis of the available options (databases) and to develop a standard set of search terms for each measure suggested in Article 6.2 of the Treaty.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDANCE SOUGHT

40. Most countries do implement explicit policy and legal measures for different aspects of the concept of sustainable use, through a variety of policies. Therefore, it could be concluded that the implementation of Article 6 is underway in most countries. However, there does not appear to be an integrated and coordinated approach in most countries towards the promotion of sustainable use of PGRFA. Therefore, countries may be assisted by the development of an integrated approach for better use of PGRFA and implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty.

41. Significant information is available on a wide variety of policy and legal measures that contribute to the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty. However, since most of the information is qualitative in nature, it makes it difficult to gauge how much emphasis is being put on the different measures and activities to support the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, or to evaluate the impact of such measures.

42. In order to enable the Governing Body to more confidently assess progress in this field and, on the basis of such analysis, identify gaps and opportunities for further action, the following methodologies might be considered:

- i) regular submissions by Contracting Parties based on a uniform set of questions or issues, perhaps linked to the work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, in particular the Reports on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- ii) compiling information available at specialised organisations;
- iii) the use of standardised searches of literature databases; and
- iv) the use of standardised searches of project databases.

43. In addition, the Governing Body may wish to consider the development of a toolbox to assist countries in the design of measures to promote the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture for consideration at its next session.