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



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

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**SIXTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC
RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

22 – 23 FEBRUARY 2022

**DRAFT NOTE ON JOINT PROGRAMME ON BIODIVERSITY IN
AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC
RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its last meeting in October 2021, the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA (ACSU or Committee) “took note of the experiences that were shared, especially the approaches that are supportive to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty” and “highlighted that there is currently a “window of opportunity” for developing and implementing a Joint Programme, taking into account the urgency, momentum, and importance of cross sectoral cooperation for addressing the climate crisis, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (when adopted), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).¹
2. This document briefly recalls the guidance provided by the Committee on the possible Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture and provides an update on the follow-up activities and recent related developments since its last meeting.

II. GUIDANCE PROVIDED BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS LAST MEETING

3. The Committee considered the outcomes of the informal meeting of experts, which was organized in Bari, Italy, in May 2018, as a basis for the Joint Programme, and identified Thematic area 3 (“A food-system approach to food and nutrition security and ensuring resilience to climate change”) as the most relevant to link the Joint Programme to the current challenges and context, but emphasised the importance of framing this topic within the context of food systems transformation. It considered all objectives for a Joint Programme identified at the informal meeting in Bari and emphasised that Objective 5 (“Boost sustainable use activities on the ground through an integrated approach to in-situ, on farm and ex-situ strategies”) was central.
4. The Committee further advised the Secretary to identify a number of initial potential partners that were most relevant for the selected thematic area of the envisaged Joint Programme, initiate informal contacts with these potential partners and prepare a draft concept note for its further consideration, before the Ninth Session of the Governing Body. The concept note should provide the

¹ [IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Report](#), para. 12.

basis for engaging potential partners and include, among other elements, the objectives, scope, mission, vision and the possible structure of the Joint Programme. The note should also address capacity development, especially to support developing countries in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, and the consideration to tailor the Joint Programme to diverse needs of different regions, e.g. by involving stakeholders that are operating in different regions and at different levels.²

III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THE JOINT PROGRAMME

5. The Secretary identified a number of initial potential partners for the Joint Programme. A first meeting was held on 14th February 2022, to informally explore, with the identified potential partners,³ their possible role in, and contributions to, the envisaged Joint Programme.

6. At the same meeting, a draft list of areas of collaboration and possible goals were discussed. The representatives of the identified potential partner organizations have expressed interest in the envisaged Joint Programme, emphasizing that the links to their own mandates and strategic goals were evident. Each organization identified initial links to its own ongoing and planned activities and provided valuable inputs to make the draft concept of the Joint Programme more focused and incisive. All initial partners agreed on the need to continue the exchange within the coming months to make progress in view of the upcoming Ninth session of the Governing Body.

7. The ideas and suggestions received from the potential partners are incorporated in the draft concept note of the envisaged Joint Programme (*Appendix*). Once the general framework and scope of activities are better defined, other potential partners and interested stakeholders will be invited to take part in the process. The draft Joint Programme and the possible next steps will then be presented to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body.

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

8. The Committee is invited to take note of the updates in this document and provide its advice about the possibility of a future Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA, especially regarding the initial content of the envisaged Joint Programme (*Appendix*), and any other aspects of the process that may assist the Governing Body in its consideration of the matter, at its Ninth Session.

² [IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Report](#), para. 14.

³ Initial list of potential partners: UNDP, UNESCO, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), CGIAR- Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT, and CIHEAM-Bari. To facilitate the process, the Secretariat considered the institutions/organizations with existing collaboration and/or Memoranda of Cooperation with FAO/International Treaty.

JOINT PROGRAMME ON BIODIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Draft Concept Note

A. Rationale

The world's population continues to grow, and the increasing demand for food is placing unprecedented pressure on natural resources. It is estimated that by 2050, a global population of 9.7 billion people will demand 70% more food than what is consumed today.⁴ The benefits of a more diverse diet are widely recognized. Diversity of diet, founded on diverse farming systems and growing nutrient-dense foods, delivers better nutrition and greater health, with additional benefits for human productivity and livelihoods.

However, biodiversity for food and agriculture is declining globally, which threatens future agricultural production, food security and overall ecological integrity. In the last century, parts of the world's food crop diversity disappeared forever reducing coping strategies and resources needed to grow crops that are more resilient, more productive and nutritious. The loss of diversity depletes the very resources that are the foundation of our ability to adapt to ongoing global environmental changes. In addition, most of current food production systems have had, and continues to have, adverse ecological and environmental impacts.

It was in this context that the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was convened to address the issue of improving food production systems and consumption to take into account the environmental and socio-economic perspectives. The international community called for bold new actions to transform the world's food system and deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies, to some degree on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems.

Given the inherent interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change and nutrition, plant genetic resources for food and agriculture are essential to enhancing food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, improving rural livelihoods, supporting the maintenance of biodiversity and meeting the challenges of adapting to climate change. Consequently, the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources are crucial to making our food systems more sustainable.

B. A food-system approach to food and nutrition security and ensuring resilience to climate change and other emerging challenges

In order to address the interconnected challenges of biodiversity loss, food and nutrition security and climate change, food production requires sustainable food systems that are based on diversified, innovative and dynamic and resilient agricultural systems.⁵

In this context, the proposed Joint Programme is expected to respond to the call for a transformation of contemporary food systems to be more sustainable, equitable and resilient, as well as contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework once adopted. Therefore, the Joint Programme will work towards agricultural and food production that is nutrition-sensitive, while promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

⁴ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO (2018). The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition. FAO, Rome.

⁵ FAO (2019). The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, J. Bélanger & D. Pilling (eds.). FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments. Rome. 572 pp. (<http://www.fao.org/3/CA3129EN/CA3129EN.pdf>)

C. Goal

The Joint Programme will aim to strengthen the capacities of different actors to study, disseminate and exchange information, raise awareness, conserve, use and manage biodiversity for food and agriculture, and more importantly, promote healthy diets and sustainable food systems, while strengthening agricultural systems' resiliencies to climate change and other emerging challenges.

D. Objectives

- To boost conservation activities of crop diversity, crop wild relatives and wild edible species on the ground through an integrated approach to in-situ, on-farm and ex-situ conservation strategies, including ecosystem approaches.
- To foster sustainable use of crop diversity to support the transition towards sustainable and resilient food systems that ensure food security, health and nutrition as well as sustainable production and consumption, and resiliencies to climate change and other emerging challenges.

E. Strategy and Approach

The Joint Programme will be a collaboration between and among relevant international organisations, governments and stakeholders committed to working together with the shared aspiration and goal to transform our food systems and improve livelihoods in a sustainable, inclusive and gender sensitive manner. This will be achieved by promoting multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships, to tap into the wealth and diversity of knowledge, information, competencies and expertise among them. Joint actions/activities can be promoted in three distinct levels of intervention:

1. Global Level – advocacy, awareness raising, promotion of south-south cooperation/north-south cooperation for sustainable use of PGRFA
2. National – advocacy and promoting enabling policy environment
3. Local – capacity development and community empowerment

F. Areas of Collaboration

Elements of Possible Joint/Collaborative Activities

- Awareness raising on the importance of sustainable food systems
- Aligning policies and metrics to support nutrition sensitive production and consumption where PGRFA is an integral factor.
- Strengthen rural–urban linkages – including physical, economic, socio-cultural, and political connections – linking in particular to farmers who manage and sustainably use PGRFA.
- Capacity development and empowerment of farming and local communities between and among the actors and social agents, to establish, enhance resilient local food systems for healthy and sustainable diets.
- Knowledge management – documentation and dissemination of good practices and sustainable approaches.

G. Initial Potential Partners

- UNDP
- UNESCO
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)
- CGIAR- Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT
- Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-Bari)