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



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

Item 4.2 of the Provisional Agenda

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

THIRD MEETING OF THE COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Rome, Italy, 31 January – 1 February 2019

REVIEW OF THE STANDARD REPORTING FORMAT

Executive Summary

At its Seventh Session, the Governing Body requested the Compliance Committee to review the Standard Reporting Format. This document provides an analysis of comments and suggestions received from Contracting Parties on the use of the format during the first reporting period and presents several options for the consideration of the Committee.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Body at its Fifth Session approved the Standard Reporting Format, which is being used by Contracting Parties to elaborate their national reports on measures taken to implement their obligations under the International Treaty, in accordance with Section V of the *Compliance Procedures*.
2. At its Seventh Session, by Resolution 8/2017 on Compliance, the Governing Body:
Request[ed] the Compliance Committee to review the Standard Reporting Format, considering harmonization with the reporting to FAO in the context of the Second Global Plan of Action for PGRFA, and make recommendations for its improvement, based on suggestions from Contracting Parties and experiences in its use.
3. At the same Session, the Governing Body considered a document prepared by the Secretariat comparing the reporting format of the International Treaty and the one used for the monitoring of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Second GPA).¹ The analysis of the reports showed that the reporting formats are quite different and that they have been created for varying purposes. Both formats request different types of information at different scales and levels of detail, and they are used to collect information at different frequencies. It also showed that there are questions in both formats that may well be also relevant to the other system if the information is provided and it is sufficiently detailed. Some key information of the comparison is reproduced with some relevant updates in Section II below.
4. At the Seventh Session, the Governing Body also extended the reporting period until October 2018, which has facilitated the submission of additional reports. The Reporting Format, and hence the national reports, contains question 37 requesting for comments and suggestions on the reporting format.² An analysis of the responses is provided in Section III.
5. During 2018, with support from the Government of Germany, the Secretariat organized three regional capacity-building workshops on Compliance in Africa, Latin America and in Asia.³ These workshops also helped to collect comments on the reporting process, which has been taken into account in the preparation of options for the review of the Reporting Format, contained in Section IV.
6. In the course of the current biennium, the Secretariat has sent various requests for information to Contracting Parties related to international cooperation and the provision of financial resources for the implementation of the International Treaty. That type of information is relevant for the work of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization in undertaking the review of the Funding Strategy. Similar information could be needed in the future, at regular intervals, for the monitoring of the Funding Strategy, and the Committee could consider such needs in the review of the Standard Reporting Format.⁴

II. OVERVIEW OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO FAO

7. This Section contains information on the reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA and the Standard Reporting Format pursuant to the Compliance Rules of the International Treaty.
8. The purpose of the reporting format for the Second GPA is to guide National Focal Points in the assessment of progress in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including the preparation of the country reports they send to FAO. The GPA format gathers information through 51 questions grouped around the 18 Priority Activities, which serve to elaborate 63 indicators, as adopted by the FAO Commission

¹ 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*, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bs798e.pdf>

² Question 37. "Have you encountered any difficulties in completing this reporting format? If your answer is 'yes', please provide details on such difficulties. If you have suggestions for improvement of this reporting format, please share them"

³ See document IT/GB8/CC-3/19/Inf.3, *Update by the Secretary on capacity-building activities related to compliance*

⁴ Notifications GB8-07 and Notification GB8-15 which is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2554EN/ca2554en.pdf> Notification GB8-15 refers to the following questionnaire on the allocations of funds: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/plant-treaty/funding/National_Funding_template_En.docx

on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. FAO publishes the national reports on the implementation of the Second GPA and of SDG Target 2.5 online.

9. The objective of the Compliance Procedures under the International Treaty is to promote compliance with all the provisions of the International Treaty and to address issues of non-compliance. For this purpose, its Standard Reporting Format gathers information through 40 questions covering mainly Articles 2 to 18 of the Treaty, as well as request for other general remarks and comments. The reports are also published on the website of the International Treaty.⁵

10. The table below matches information on the reporting formats for the monitoring of the GPA and the implementation of the International Treaty in a synthetic and comparative way. It is to be noted that the information provided by countries is now publicly available on both websites. This availability enables respondents to have easy access to baseline information for updating and reuse.

Table. Basic information on the reporting formats for the monitoring of the GPA and the implementation of the International Treaty

	Reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for PGRFA	Standard Reporting Format pursuant to the Compliance Rules of the International Treaty
Reporting Format	http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm294e.pdf 40 pages	http://www.fao.org/3/a-mn566e.pdf 18 pages
Reporting period	The monitoring of the second GPA is ended and the third report will soon commence	First cycle up to October 2018. Second cycle up to 2023.
Number and type of questions	Second GPA: 51 questions covering the 63 indicators for monitoring the implementation of the 18 Priority Activities of the Second GPA, taking into consideration the availability and accessibility of data.	40 questions covering mainly Articles 2 to 18 of the Treaty and including other general remarks and comments
Purpose	The Reporting Format serves the purpose of guiding National Focal Points in the assessment of progress in the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), including the preparation of their country reports	Pursuant to Section V of the Compliance Procedures, each Contracting Party is to submit to the Compliance Committee, through the Secretary, a report on the measures it has taken to implement its obligations under the International Treaty
Public website	http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/	http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/
Input	http://www.fao.org/pgrfa/	http://faoitpgrfa.org-production.linode.unep-wcmc.org/
Type of inputs	Quantitative analysis with detailed figures and statistics	Mainly binomial replies with “yes/no” options, plus comments

11. During the three regional capacity building workshops held in 2018, the Secretariat facilitated and supported the integration of presentations on the monitoring of the GPA. Such training was undertaken in close collaboration with the officers of the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO (AGP). The

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/>

training provided was widely welcomed by the participants as they could discuss the differences and the common issues that are reflected in various ways in both reporting processes.

12. Subject to the availability of financial resources, the Secretariat and AGP could further explore the organization, or the support, of joint regional or national workshops for the second reporting cycle of the International Treaty and the third reporting cycle of the GPA, particularly during the period 2020-2023.

III. ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED

13. The Secretariat provides, in this section, a succinct analysis of the replies, comments and suggestions received through the national reports on the implementation of the International Treaty.

- Most of the Contracting Parties that provided comments through question 37 declare that the major difficulties or concerns related to the collection of some data and not to the Reporting Format itself. For example, one Contracting Party indicates that the reporting of SMTA figures appears redundant as such data should already be held by the Governing Body through Easy-SMTA and its Data Store.⁶
- Several Contracting Parties indicate that the report contains some repetitive or similar questions or questions that could be shortened or better formulated. In particular, they highlight that the wording of some questions can be clarified with definitions where a specific meaning is intended or by offering several options. For example, one Contracting Party indicates that the use of the word “promoted” in Question 31 is ambiguous. Similarly, the same Contracting Party indicates that Question 19 related to the implementation of Farmers’ Rights⁷ could be interpreted around broader issues of land rights or other issues, depending on the national context.
- Two Contracting Parties indicate that it is convenient to distinguish between developed and developing country Contracting Parties in some questions (separation according to country background), for example, in Question 35 related to financial resources.⁸
- One Contracting Party notes that, for the reporting on international cooperation and official development assistance (ODA) projects, the questions in the Reporting Format are either formulated too narrowly (i.e. “has your country cooperated with other Contracting Parties?”) or too detailed (i.e. questions are raised Article by Article). The same Contracting Party suggests that the Reporting Format could use a formulation like “*the questions related to international cooperation using more international cooperation and ODA perspective*”, but no other details are provided.
- Some respondents indicate that a high number of questions are of legal nature while the report is usually drafted by officers with a technical background and in charge of the conservation and management of genetic resources. It is to be noted that five respondents did not respond to Question 26 regarding the enforcement of arbitral decisions related to a dispute arising from an SMTA in their countries, and indicate that the question is not clear or that they do not know the answer.
- Some respondents indicate that it would be easier to reply if, for some questions, the Reporting Format would offer an initial set of options to choose.
- Several countries report that they have a joint genebank and that the provision of individual figures at the country level is a little bit difficult or it could be repetitive. Two more countries indicate that they do not have a national genebank and that some of the questions are not relevant to them. In this

⁶ The observation is made in relation to the comments under question 24: Has the SMTA been used voluntarily in your country to provide access to non-Annex I PGRFA? yes/no. If your answer is 'yes', please indicate the number of such SMTAs entered into.

⁷ Question 29 reads: “Subject to national law, as appropriate, have any measures been taken to protect and promote Farmers’ Rights in your country?”

⁸ Question 35 reads: “Has your country provided and/or received financial resources for the implementation of the Treaty through bilateral, regional or multilateral channels? If your answer is 'yes', where possible, please provide details of such channels and the amount of the financial resources involved.”

context, several respondents suggest inserting additional options like “Not applicable”, “Partially” and “No information available” for some questions.

- One Country notes that Question 31, “*Has your country provided for and/or benefitted from capacity building measures in respect of Annex I PGRFA?*”, could be split or include “both”, in addition to the “yes/no” options.
- Two Contracting Parties indicate that for some questions there is no possibility to explain why the implementation of a certain article has not been possible. One of them provides the example under Question 29, related to the facilitated access to technologies for the conservation, characterization, evaluation and use of *Annex I PGRFA*, where the respondent is allowed to comment only if the access has been facilitated, but cannot modulate or explain the negative answer.

14. There are other suggestions not related to the Reporting Format that could be useful to consider for the design of the future reporting processes:

- One Contracting Party indicates that it is not clear “*how the data will be used, what sort of analysis will be conducted and how the data will be collated*”. During the regional workshops, the participants were given a copy of the summary report prepared for the Second meeting of the Compliance Committee, and directed to the webpage of the Treaty where the reports already received are being published. They also received information on other possible uses of the information by other committees or reporting processes under the International Treaty.
- Another Contracting Party suggests the Governing Body and the Secretariat send “*repeated reminders to the Contracting Parties before the deadline as this would be highly effective in ensuring maximum participation by Contracting Parties in reporting*”. The Secretariat noted these same suggestions during the three regional capacity building workshops organized in 2018. In this context, some participants indicated that the request should be widely circulated to several officers and organizations in the country and not only to the national focal point.
- Several Contracting Parties commend that during the first reporting period, the Contracting Parties have been allowed to send their reports by email, as in some cases the Internet connection still represents a challenge. These Contracting Parties suggest keeping this option during the second reporting cycle.

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

15. The Compliance Committee is invited to consider the elements above in their review of the Standard Reporting Format and provide guidance, including to the Secretary, on the review process.

16. The Committee is also invited to review the elements of a draft Resolution on Compliance related to the Standard Reporting Format, as provided below, for the consideration of the Governing Body at its Eighth Session, and to include the finalized draft elements in its report to the Governing Body.

V. ELEMENTS OF A DRAFT RESOLUTION ON COMPLIANCE REGARDING THE REPORTING FORMAT AND THE REPORTING PROCESS

17. On the basis of the Report of the Compliance Committee, the Governing Body:

- a) *Approves* the reviewed Standard Reporting Format, as given in *Annex [1]*, and *requests* the Secretary to update the Online Reporting System accordingly and to continue assisting Contracting Parties during the second reporting cycle.
- b) *Requests* the Secretary to send regular reminders to Contracting Parties on the submission of the second report before 1 October 2023.
- c) *Invites* the Secretary, subject to the availability of financial and human resources, to consider the organization of joint capacity building workshops for the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the International Treaty and, to the extent feasible, in collaboration with the FAO units tasked with the monitoring of Third Global Plan of Action on PGRFA.