



**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**

#### **Monitoring the Implementation of the International Treaty and of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

#### **Note by the Secretary**

This document presents an analysis of the relevance of the International Treaty's information systems to support the monitoring of the implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the preparation of the *Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It also analyses the relevance of the FAO's World Information Early Warning System (WIEWS) to support Contracting Parties in reporting on the implementation of the International Treaty.

This analysis is referred to in the document IT/GB-7/17/22, and responds to a request from the Governing Body at its Sixth Session. It has been jointly prepared by the Secretariat of the International Treaty, the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Plant Production and Protection Division of FAO.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
Other documents can be consulted at [http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-  
detail/en/c/888771/](http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/888771/)*



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## I. Introduction

1. At its Sixth Session, the Governing Body requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, including with regard to 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 of the implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Second GPA).<sup>1</sup>
2. The Governing Body also welcomed the preparation by the two Secretariats of an 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 International Treaty.<sup>2</sup>
3. The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session echoed the Governing Body's request and welcomed the joint preparation of such an analysis.<sup>3</sup>
4. This document presents such an analysis. It provides an overview of the existing information systems and databases containing information, publications and datasets submitted by countries and users in relation to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), their purpose, format and relevance. It also contains some suggestions on how reporting by National Focal Points could be further facilitated and made more efficient.

## II. The Information Systems

5. In response to the above mentioned requests of the Governing Body and the Commission, both Secretariats guided the preparation of an analysis of the information collected:
  - by the International Treaty through the Online Reporting System (ORS) on the national implementation of the International Treaty, pursuant to the Compliance Procedures;<sup>4</sup> and
  - by FAO's World Information Early Warning System (WIEWS) on the implementation of the Second GPA and for the preparation of the Third Report.<sup>5</sup>

### A. Purpose

6. WIEWS serves the purpose of guiding National Focal Points in the assessment of progress in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including the preparation of their country reports on the implementation of the Second GPA and of Target 2.5 under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It gathers information through 51 questions grouped around the 18 Priority Activities of the Second GPA, which serve to elaborate 63 indicators as adopted by the Commission at its Fifteenth Regular Session. One of these questions also serves to collect information to monitor progress towards the implementation of the PGRFA component of SDG Target 2.5. The online publication of the national reports on the implementation of the Second GPA and of SDG Target 2.5 is foreseen by the end of 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> IT/GB-6/15/Report, Appendix A.9

<sup>2</sup> IT/GB-6/15/Report, Resolution A.9.

<sup>3</sup> CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 94.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/>

7. The Compliance Procedures under the International Treaty have the objective to promote compliance with all the provisions of the Treaty and to address issues of non-compliance.<sup>6</sup> They include monitoring, offering advice or assistance, including legal advice or legal assistance, when needed and requested, in particular to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In order to facilitate reporting by Contracting Parties and monitoring of the implementation of the International Treaty, the Governing Body approved a voluntary Standard Reporting Format and requested the Secretary to establish the ORS to streamline the reporting process through electronic means.<sup>7</sup> The ORS gathers information through 40 questions covering mainly Articles 2 to 18, as well as other general remarks and comments. The reports are published on the website of the International Treaty.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 1: Overview information on WIEWS and the Online Reporting System on Compliance**

	<b>World Information and Early Warning System on PGRFA (WIEWS)</b>	<b>ITPGRFA Online Reporting System on Compliance</b>
<b>Public website</b>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/">http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/</a>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/">http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/</a>
<b>Input</b>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/pgrfa/">http://www.fao.org/pgrfa/</a>	<a href="http://faoitpgrfa.ort-production.linode.unep-wcmc.org/">http://faoitpgrfa.ort-production.linode.unep-wcmc.org/</a>
<b>Reporting Format documentation</b>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm294e.pdf">http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm294e.pdf</a>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/3/a-mn566e.pdf">http://www.fao.org/3/a-mn566e.pdf</a>
<b>Reporting period</b>	Monitoring of the Second GPA: First round: 1 January 2012 – 30 June 2014 Second round: 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2019 SDG Target 2.5: December 2016 and then at the end of every year	October 2016 and then every 5 years <sup>9</sup>
<b>Number and type of questions</b>	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 and including other general remarks and comments
<b>Purpose</b>	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 for the periodic assessment of the State of the World's PGRFA	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 Treaty

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-be452e.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mn566e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [insert link]

<sup>9</sup> The Governing Body is invited to consider the extension up to 1 October 2018 for the first reporting period, following the recommendation of the Compliance Committee.

## B. Formats and Reporting Periods

8. The reporting formats and further documentation for both reporting mechanisms are available online. Table 1 provides summary information about the two systems. As of 1 October 2017, 64 countries had submitted or were in the process of finalizing their submissions through WIEWS on their implementation of the Second GPA, while nineteen countries had submitted information through the ORS for the first reporting period.

9. The reporting periods for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA and for monitoring compliance with the International Treaty are different. In the case of WIEWS, the first reporting period, as agreed by the Commission, spans from 1 January 2012 to 30 June 2014. The next reporting period will span from 1 July 2014 to 31 December 2019. For monitoring the SDG indicator 2.5.1 countries report at the end of every year. The reporting period under the Compliance Procedures of the International Treaty is once every five years. The deadline for the submission of the first report was October 2016, and there is a recommendation from the Compliance Committee to extend the first reporting period to the end of October 2018 and then at least once every five years.

10. The reporting mechanism for the monitoring of the Second GPA established through WIEWS is used by 178 members of the Commission, while the International Treaty has a membership of 144 Contracting Parties.

## C. Relevance and Overlaps

11. Most of the information contained in WIEWS is of relevance to the monitoring of the implementation of the International Treaty, in particular with regard to actions taken at national level in relation to the following Articles of the International Treaty:

- Article 5, *Conservation, Exploration, Collection, Characterization, Evaluation and Documentation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;
- Article 6, *Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources*;
- Article 9, *Farmers' Rights*;
- Article 14, *Global Plan of Action*, and;
- Article 17, *The Global Information System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

12. At least 15 out of the 18 Priority Activities of the Second GPA and their respective questions are of direct relevance to the monitoring of the implementation of the International Treaty. For example, Priority Area 1, *Surveying and inventorying PGRFA*, relates to Article 5 of the International Treaty and to questions 5 and 6 of the ORS.

13. Despite the shared thematic focus, the objectives of WIEWS and ORS are different as to the type of information collected and the purpose for which it is collected. WIEWS collects quantitative information with the aim to assess the global status of PGRFA, the state of national efforts to implement the Second GPA and progress towards the achievement of SDG Target 2.5. The ORS aims to monitor compliance of Contracting Parties with the International Treaty. It allows for a binomial distribution of the replies (yes/no) and allows reporting countries to provide additional comments and remarks.

14. The countries that reported under both mechanisms inserted a reference to the WIEWS report under the relevant questions of the ORS, as complementary information to their reply. For example, two country reports out of the 19 submitted through the ORS included a reference to the country report submitted to WIEWS. Some of the replies to the questions related to international collaboration and

funding did also contain references to activities related to conservation and use of PGRFA reported under WIEWS.

15. There is an explicit mentioning of the Multilateral System in question 6.2 of WIEWS:

*"Indicate the accessions conserved ex situ under medium- or long-term conditions at the end of the reporting period, indicating the holding institute WIEWS code, accession number, taxon, name of crop, acquisition date, country of origin, biological status, genebank(s) holding safety duplications, and type of storage. Optionally, indicate latitude and longitude of collecting site, collecting/acquisition source and status under the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on PGRFA."*

16. Question 31 of the ORS refers to Article 14 of the International Treaty that directly relates to the Global Plan of Action:

*"Has your country promoted the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture?"*

17. This question can be answered with "yes" or "no", and if the reply is positive, the respondent is invited to indicate whether the implementation of the GPA was promoted through national actions or international cooperation. The question includes a box for comments. According to the reports received so far, one of the respondents listed the priority activities of the country for the implementation of the Second GPA, another one attached the country report to WIEWS and the others provided one to three paragraphs of comments.

### **III. Support to National Focal Points for the Reporting**

18. The National Focal Points for both reporting processes are not always the same, so that the information submitted by one National Focal Point might not readily be accessible to the other National Focal Point. Quick access to the information reported through the other system could facilitate the compilation of relevant references and background information and thereby streamline reporting.

19. Access could also be provided online to the number of Standard Material Transfer Agreements and PGRFA materials at country level for each respondent of the ORS, including the exchange with the Institutions that have signed Article 15 Agreements. This access could be facilitated by the Secretariat of the International Treaty through Easy-SMTA using the statistics module of the Data Store.

20. Additionally, the setting up of the Global Information System and the Digital Object Identifiers also provides a mechanism to get access to information that could be useful to reply to question 6.2 of WIEWS.

### **IV. Conclusion**

21. The short analysis in this document shows that although WIEWS and ORS are quite different and 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. It also shows that there are areas in both systems where information provided to one of them may well be also relevant to the other system.

22. Both systems share a thematic focus on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Information reported through WIEWS is more detailed, using indicators, while the ORS is oriented to get binomial replies and additional comments and remarks on actions taken or difficulties encountered in the implementation.

23. National Focal Points could be further supported in the compilation of their replies under the ORS through access to reports submitted through WIEWS and other relevant information systems. 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.