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# COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

## Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda

### Sixteenth Regular Session

Rome, 30 January - 3 February 2017

## COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its Fifteenth Regular Session, in January 2015, requested its Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Treaty) to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies. It recalled that, at its Fourteenth Regular Session, there had been no consensus among its Members on the transfer of tasks or activities from the Commission to the Treaty and agreed to keep the matter under review. The Commission took note of the Governing Body's Resolution 4/2013 and echoed the Governing Body's request for additional information, particularly in respect of financial and administrative implications, that is necessary for an informed discussion on the transfer of tasks and activities.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Governing Body, at its Sixth Session, in October 2015, considered its cooperation with the Commission<sup>2</sup> as well as 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 Treaty.<sup>3</sup> The Governing Body took also note of information provided by the Commission Secretariat.<sup>4</sup> The Governing Body adopted Resolution 9/2015 as contained in *Appendix I* to this document.

3. This document, prepared jointly by the Secretaries of the Treaty and the Commission provides, in response to the Commission's request, additional information, particularly in respect of financial and administrative implications, that is necessary for an informed discussion on the transfer of tasks and activities from the Commission to the Governing Body of the Treaty. In addition, it contains information on the Commission's cooperation with the Treaty and presents conclusions and proposals contained in the Governing Body Resolution 9/2015, for consideration by the Commission.

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

4. 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*<sup>5</sup>, presented to the Commission at its Fourteenth Regular Session, provides, in section III, information on the legal implications of a transfer of specific activities from the Commission to the Treaty. If a task or activity is formally transferred from the Commission to the Governing Body of the Treaty, this could have financial implications. In this case, the FAO Conference would need to consider whether to adjust FAO's contribution to the Treaty's Core Administrative Budget to cover some or all of the associated costs of activities transferred to the Treaty. Table 1 below provides a summary overview of the possible financial and administrative implications of transferring key activities.

## III. COOPERATION IN 2014-2016

5. *Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS)*: The Secretariat of the International Treaty participated, as an observer, in the meetings of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS Expert Team), held in July and November 2014 and in September 2016.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 80.

<sup>2</sup> IT/GB-6/15/18.

<sup>3</sup> IT/GB-6/15/Inf.9.

<sup>4</sup> IT/GB-6/15/Inf.8.

<sup>5</sup> CGRFA-14/13/23.

<sup>6</sup> CGRFA-16/17/6; CGRFA-15/15/Inf.11; CGRFA-15/15/Inf.12.

**Table 1: Financial/ administrative implications of transferring key tasks/ activities from the Commission to the Treaty**

Activity/Task	Financial/Administrative implications
The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SoW PGR)	A provisional budget for the preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> is given in the document, <i>Status of preparation of the Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> <sup>7</sup> . While the Commission Secretariat oversees the preparation of the report, technical officers of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division are in charge of actually coordinating the preparation of the report. While the budgetary implications on the Commission Secretariat would therefore be minimal, the transfer of the SoW PGR to the Treaty would lead to additional costs for the Governing Body of the Treaty.
Updating and monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action	A budget for the process leading to the preparation of an updated Global Plan of Action was provided to the Commission on the occasion of the preparation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the document, <i>Updating the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> <sup>8</sup> . While the Commission Secretariat oversees the updating of the Global Plan of Action, technical officers of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division are in charge of actually coordinating the monitoring of the Global Plan of Action. While the budgetary implications for the Commission Secretariat would therefore be minimal, the transfer of the process of review of the Second Global Plan of Action following the Third SOW PGR, to the Treaty would lead to additional costs for the Governing Body of the Treaty.
The operation of the World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS)	The costs of upgrading, maintaining and moderating WIEWS in 2016-2023 are included in the document <i>Status of preparation of the Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> <sup>9</sup> . The Commission Secretariat relies with regard to the operation of WIEWS entirely on the relevant technical services of FAO. While the budgetary implications on the Commission Secretariat would therefore be minimal, the transfer of the activity to the Treaty would lead to additional costs for the Governing Body of the Treaty.

6. *Global Information Systems*: In the context of Article 17 of the Treaty, the Secretariat of the Treaty has collaborated with FAO on the design of the Notification and Discovery Facility to increase access to the material available in the Multilateral System and to its associated non-confidential information. This Facility will create connections to useful data in online inventories and portals like WIEWS, the information system used by FAO for the preparation of periodic, country-driven global assessments of the status of conservation and use of PGRFA. WIEWS also monitors, on the basis of country reports, the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), adopted in 2011. The collaboration also included FAO's participation in the Task Force on Permanent Global and Unique Identifiers for PGRFA.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the Treaty Secretariat and FAO jointly promoted at national level the use of the set of analysis tools developed in the context of the Programme to Strengthening National Plant Genetic

<sup>7</sup> CGRFA-15/15/16, *Appendix II*.

<sup>8</sup> CGRFA-12/09/8.

<sup>9</sup> CGRFA-15/15/16

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/summary-report-task-force-permanent-global-and-unique-identifiers-pgrfa-context-global-infor>

Resources Capacities.<sup>11</sup> The Treaty Secretariat has already published the first version of the descriptors for the registration of PGRFA material in the Global Information system and the publication of the first prototype of the Web-based platform of the Global Information System is foreseen in 2017. The Treaty Secretariat is also receiving the first country reports on compliance with information on the status of the implementation of the Treaty at national level and with information on the development of measures programmes and projects at national level.

7. *Global targets and indicators:* The Secretariats of the 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 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 Treaty and the Commission, to use as data source for the indicator on the one hand the number of SMTAs, as communicated to the Governing Body of the Treaty and, on the other hand, the number of permits or their equivalents made available to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearinghouse established under the Nagoya Protocol. The Secretariat of the Treaty provided baseline information on the number of SMTAs reported so far to the CBD Secretariat.

8. *Sustainable use:* The Secretariat of the Commission participated in the Third meeting of the Ad hoc Technical Committee on Sustainable Use (ACSU-3) and in the Global Consultation on Farmers’ Rights, facilitated by the Treaty Secretariat.

9. *Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW):* The Governing Body of the Treaty is in the process of developing a Multi-Year Programme of Work. A first draft has taken into consideration relevant activities and work programmed in the Commission’s MYPOW.

#### IV. FUTURE AREAS OF COLLABORATION

10. The Governing Body, at its last session, requested its 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, and 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*, and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including further work on
  - the development of draft technical guidelines on *National Level Conservation and Use of Farmers’ Varieties/Landraces* and on *National Level Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives*; and
  - global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

11. The Governing Body also welcomed 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 current biennium or in the beginning of the next biennium, subject to the availability of the necessary extra-budgetary funds. In addition, the Governing Body welcomed the proposal to analyse the relevance of the 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 Treaty in reporting on the implementation of the Treaty.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/initiatives/capfitogen/en/>

<sup>12</sup> IT/GB-6/15/Report, Appendix A.9.

12. The proposed global workshop on access and benefit-sharing received support from the Commission's Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS Expert Team) which, at its Third Session, recommended that the Commission and the Treaty Secretariats convene such workshop as soon as practicable after the Sixteenth Regular Session of the Commission.<sup>13</sup> The workshop could help raising awareness of Commission Members and observers as well as other stakeholders and communities of practice of the issue of access and benefit-sharing and its relevance to the conservation and use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. It could also provide a forum for participants, including the Bureaus of the Commission's Working Groups and its ABS Expert Team, to exchange information, experiences and views.

13. The proposed restructuring of FAO will unite the Secretariats of the Commission and the Treaty in one new department<sup>14</sup>. The new department will bring together support for the three Rio Conventions (Convention for Biological Diversity, Climate Change Convention, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification) and will facilitate cross-departmental work on environmental and sustainability issues, including biodiversity and ecosystem services. This will enhance the synergies between the two bodies.

## V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

14. The Commission may wish to:

- Keep the transfer of activities to the Treaty under review and request its Secretary to regularly report any relevant developments in the cooperation with the Governing Body;
- Request 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, and in particular with regard to:
  - 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;
  - the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including further work on
    - the development of draft technical guidelines on *National Level Conservation and Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces* and on *National Level Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives*; and
    - global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
  - Access and benefit-sharing;
  - the Global Information System of the International Treaty and the World Information and Early Warning System; and
  - Global targets and indicators.
- Welcome the joint preparation by the two Secretariats of an analysis of the relevance of the 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 Treaty in reporting on the implementation of the Treaty; and
- Welcome 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 current or in the beginning of the next biennium, subject to the availability of the necessary extra-budgetary funds.

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<sup>13</sup> CGRFA-16/17/6, paragraph 39.

<sup>14</sup> JM 2016.2/2 paragraph 22.

**APPENDIX I****GOVERNING BODY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****RESOLUTION 9/2015****COOPERATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE THE GOVERNING BODY****THE GOVERNING BODY,**

**Recalling** that the Governing Body has encouraged a close cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission);

1. **Takes note** of the additional information provided by the Secretary and the Secretary of the Commission at this Session related to financial and administrative implications on the transfer of tasks and activities between the Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty;
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. **Notes** that the Conference 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, including the current process to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and the on-going cooperation to support the harmonious implementation of the Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, at various levels;
4. **Welcomes** 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;
5. **Welcomes** the proposed study to be prepared jointly by the two Secretariats analysing the relevance of the 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 Treaty;
6. **Requests** 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, and 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*, and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and
  - the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including further work on the development of Draft

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Technical Guidelines on National Level Conservation and Use of Landraces and on National Level Conservation of Crop Wild Relatives which the Commission's Working Group and the Commission will consider at their next sessions, and on the Global network(s) on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.