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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 4.4 of the Provisional Agenda

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Twelfth Session

Rome, 10–12 December 2024

REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR NORTH AMERICA: REVIEW OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

COMMISSION ON
GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE



International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

**REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR NORTH AMERICA:
REVIEW OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION
FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

MEETING REPORT

VIRTUAL MEETING

4 OCTOBER 2024

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONSULTATION

1. The Regional Consultation for North America: Review of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was held virtually on 4 October 2024. The workshop was co-organized by the Plant Production and Protection Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) and the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty). The list of participants is given in *Appendix III* to this report.
2. The consultation was divided into three sessions. Session 1 included welcoming remarks to open the regional consultation as well as presentations to set the scene for the consultation. Session 2 provided an overview of the key findings from the Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOW3). Session 3 focused on discussions on the revised *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The full agenda of the regional consultation is provided in *Appendix I* to this report

II. WELCOMING REMARKS AND OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

3. Mr Dan Leskien, Senior Liaison Officer, Secretariat of the Commission, welcomed participants and thanked the Treaty for its collaboration in co-organizing the event. He stressed that the outcomes of the regional workshops would be brought to the attention of the Twelfth session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources that will be held in December 2024 and the Twentieth Regular Session of the Commission in March 2025.
4. Mr Kent Nnadozie, Secretary of the Treaty, reiterated the importance of collaborating with the Commission. He expressed his hope that the support provided will enable Contracting Parties to actively participate in the process of updating the Second GPA noting that it is particularly relevant for the Treaty's work on conservation and sustainable use under Articles 5 and 6 of the Treaty.

III. SETTING THE SCENE: INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

5. Mr Chikelu Mba, Deputy Director, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO, provided an introduction to the objectives of the consultation. Mr Stefano Diulgheroff, Information Management Officer, FAO, gave a presentation on the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Second GPA),¹ and provided the context of the rolling GPA and the periodic assessments of its implementation. Mr Diulgheroff also introduced the draft *Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (SOW3).² Mr Leskien presented possible options for revising the Second GPA.

IV. IN SITU CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PGRFA

6. Ms Arshiya Noorani, Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO, presented the key findings of the SOW3 for *in situ* conservation and management of PGRFA at both the global and regional levels, including gaps and needs.

V. EX SITU CONSERVATION OF PGRFA

7. Ms Bonnie Furman, Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO, presented the key findings of the SOW3 for *ex situ* conservation of PGRFA at the global level, including gaps and needs.

¹ FAO. 2012. *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic resources for Food and Agriculture*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i2624e>

² CGRFA/WG-PGR-12/24/3/Inf.1.

VI. SUSTAINABLE USE OF PGRFA

8. Mr Mba presented the key findings of the SOW3 for sustainable use of PGRFA at both the global and regional levels, including gaps and needs.

VII. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

9. Mr Diulgheroff presented the key findings of the SOW3 for building institutional and human capacities at the global level, including gaps and needs.

VIII. STRUCTURE OF THE REVISED SECOND GPA

10. Mr Diulgheroff led a discussion on the format and structure of a revised Second GPA, providing three potential options. These included: (1) a lightly revised version to reflect new policy developments/guidelines and technical developments since the publication of the Second GPA; (2) a condensed version in which PAs would be shortened to approximately one to two pages per PAs and would include technical and policy updates and minor rearrangements of PAs; and (3) a focused action plan for action for governments. Options 2 and 3 would be complemented by standalone guidelines for their implementation

11. Due to the virtual nature of the consultation and to the time difference, the participants discussed different aspects of the Second GPA based on the global gaps and needs identified in the SOW3 (provided in *Appendix II*). The feedback from participants is provided in *Appendix III* on the review of the Second GPA. Overall, participants noted that the Second GPA was fit for purpose, with all PAs still being relevant and that only minor changes were needed. They noted the advantage of consistency of future reporting to facilitate comparisons of country reports over time, and comparisons with future reports on the State of the World's PGRFA.

IX. CLOSING

12. Mr Diulgheroff reiterated the importance of convening such a workshop. He thanked all the speakers and participants for their enthusiasm and active engagement and expressed his gratitude to the Commission and Treaty Secretariats for having co-organized the event.

APPENDIX I

**AGENDA OF THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR NORTH AMERICA: REVIEW OF
THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

AGENDA

4 October 2024	
SESSION 1	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
<i>9:30 – 9:45</i>	Welcome and opening remarks
<i>9:45 – 9:55</i>	Introduction to objectives of the consultation Mr Chikelu Mba, Deputy Director, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
<i>9:55 – 10:05</i>	The Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Preparation of the draft <i>Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i> Mr Stefano Diulgheroff, Information Management Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
<i>10:05 – 10:15</i>	Revising the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Possible options Mr Dan Leskien, Senior Liaison Officer, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
SESSION 2	PRIORITY ACTIVITIES OF THE SECOND GPA AND KEY FINDINGS OF THE THIRD REPORT
<i>10:15 – 10:25</i>	<i>In situ</i> Conservation and Management of PGRFA Ms Arshiya Noorani, Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
<i>10:25 – 10:35</i>	<i>Ex Situ</i> Conservation of PGRFA Ms Bonnie Furman, Agricultural Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
<i>10:35 – 10:45</i>	Sustainable Use of PGRFA Mr Chikelu Mba, Deputy Director, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
<i>10:45 – 10:55</i>	Building Institutional and Human Capacities Mr Stefano Diulgheroff, Information Management Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO
SESSION 3	The Revised Second GPA
<i>10:55 – 11:45</i>	Q & A
<i>11:45 – 13:30</i>	Discussion and summary
<i>13:00 – 14:30</i>	Lunch break
<i>14:30 – 16:30</i>	Discussion and summary (ctd)

APPENDIX II

KEY GLOBAL GAPS AND NEEDS IDENTIFIED

The following sections summarize the global gaps and needs identified from the draft *Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

KEY GAPS AND NEEDS:**A. *In Situ* Conservation and Management of PGRFA**

- Coordination among ministries of agriculture, forestry and environment.
- Insufficient baselines: difficulty in assessing trends.
- Linkages with genebanks.
- Specialized staff, including taxonomists to develop/implement management plans for crop wild relatives (CWR) and wild food plants (WFP).
- Farmers' involvement in participatory variety selection and plant breeding.
- Assessment of the impact of disasters on crop diversity.
- Preparedness for seed emergencies.
- Awareness of the importance of PGRFA diversity for food security and nutrition.

B. *Ex Situ* Conservation of PGRFA

- Political and financial support.
- Qualified staff.
- Infrastructure and logistics.
- Viability testing, regeneration and germplasm-health issues.
- Long-term storage back-up for species vegetatively propagated or with recalcitrant seeds.

C. Sustainable Use of PGRFA

- Limited availability of characterization data and trait-specific subsets.
- High costs of modern biotechnologies and molecular genetic tools.
- Unaffordable quality seeds of suitable varieties.
- Research and utilization of farmers' varieties/landraces (FV/LR) and underutilized species.

D. Building Human and Institutional Capacities

- Collaboration and synergies with national programmes.
- Information management skills and digital infrastructure.
- Mechanisms to safeguard and monitor genetic diversity.
- Updated national educational programmes and new generations of professionals.
- Continuous renewal of communication strategies and awareness programmes.
- Dedicated long-term financing.

APPENDIX III

RECOMMENDATIONS/RESPONSES FOR THE REVISION OF THE SECOND GPA

Responses from the North America Region to Questions from FAO Commission on Genetic Resources Secretariat regarding the review of the Second Global Plan of Action (GPA) for PGRFA
1. Considering the gaps and needs and development, is the Second GPA still fit for purpose?

Yes, with slight modifications. Continuity ensures that we can compare country reports over time and also the resulting report on the State of the World's PGRFA.

2. Are all its 18 Priority Activities (PA) still relevant?

Yes, the 18 PAs are still relevant. Occasionally, concepts/definitions need to be clarified to ensure reporting is consistent. For example: the distinctions among wild food plants, wild utilized plants, crop wild relatives; and "*in situ* conservation" includes sometimes the aspect of "on-farm conservation". A formerly generated QA document of the Secretariat for reporting should be referred to. The distinctions between "accessions" and "samples" in the reporting for collecting and distributing genebank germplasm need clarification.

PA 3 "Assisting Farmers in Disaster Situations" seems misplaced under "In Situ Conservation and Management." Would it fit better under one of the PAs in the "Sustainable Use" section?

3. Are there missing priorities?

For future reporting addressing the aspect of artificial intelligence (AI) in the context of PGRFA and reporting may be useful, for example, assessing how AI could assist in filling the needs around taxonomy or in the process of initial categorization based on genotypes and plant structures.

Documentation of PGRFA is covered under PA 15, but maintaining and delivering data associated with PGRFA are so important that they might also be included as stand-alone PAs under the "*Ex Situ* Conservation and Management" and "*In Situ* Conservation and Management" sections. The data associated with the PGRFA are essential to assist breeders, researchers, educators and farmers/producers.

4. Periodic monitoring and assessment of its implementation needed?

Periodic assessments should be restricted to easily reported indicators, e.g., number of accessions in genebanks (Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, target 2.5, is done annually), distribution of genebank material. The condensed reporting table with a rating by the National Focal Point is useful. Often it is not feasible to report with quantitative data on the indicators for each PA. A narrative report with a rating assessment as applied in the last reporting is a good option. If the reporting period is split into two periods, these periods should be of equal length.

5. Do we need a Third GPA for PGRFA?

A revised Second GPA which is updated with new data but otherwise only slightly altered, is the best model for a revised 2nd GPA.

6. If so, should the Second GPA be revised in terms of the Contents?

Only minimal adjustments are required. The Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework is supported by the FAO Commission Member activities and the FAO Secretariat communicates with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. There is no need to adjust the GPA. Duplication with the FAO Commission Framework on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture needs to be avoided. PGRFA are the sectorial focus of the GPA.

a) **Structure and presentation?**

The structure and presentation of the Second GPA is thorough and useful but consists of nearly exclusively numbered paragraphs of narrative text. This does not effectively engage some readers. It would be valuable if the narrative text would be supported by figures and tables. The most recent versions of software such as Excel and Tableau have advanced greatly during the last five or so years to facilitate construction of figures and infographics. When available and feasible, concise quantitative data should be presented to bolster the assertions in the narrative text. Describing the data as percentages or ratios can help present quantitative measures/data in a scale-independent matter.

It may be advisable to also create a two-page document that explains the impact for the revised GPA to policymakers.

In addition, an info-graphic for the general public may be useful to advance public communication objectives.

b) **Or should there be a new format?**

Please see the suggestions above.

Prepared Oct 10, 2024

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