



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Item 14.3 of the Provisional Agenda
SIXTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY
Rome, Italy, 5 – 9 October 2015
Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Executive Summary

1. At its Fifth Session, the Governing Body encouraged close cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission). It further agreed to keep the matter of a functional division of tasks and activities between the Commission and the Governing Body, within their respective mandates, under review.
2. This document summarizes main developments relevant to the cooperation with the Commission since the Fifth Session and provides information regarding the functional division of tasks and activities between the Commission and the Governing Body, and on on-going and possible future cooperation with the Commission in specific areas.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to review and adopt the elements of a draft Resolution contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Body and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) have stressed the necessity of ensuring close and effective cooperation.¹ At its Fifth Session, the Governing Body provided guidance on cooperation with the Commission.²
2. At its Fifteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested 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.³
3. This document first focuses on institutional matters related to cooperation with Commission, in particular to follow-up to the request of the Governing Body to keep the functional division of tasks and activities, within the respective mandate of each body, under review. It then reports of on-going cooperation in a number of targeted areas and seeks the guidance of the Governing Body on future cooperation.
4. The *Report from the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*⁴ provides additional relevant information on the importance of on-going work of the Commission to the work of the Governing Body.
5. The Governing Body may wish to consider the elements of a draft Resolution on cooperation with the Commission, contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

II. COOPERATION WITH COMMISSION: INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

6. The Governing Body has encouraged a close cooperation between the Commission and the Governing Body that may gradually lead to an agreed functional division of tasks and activities between the two intergovernmental bodies. At its last Session, the Governing Body considered an analysis of legal, administrative and financial implications related to the transfer of activities and tasks from the Commission to the Governing Body,⁵ and requested additional information, particularly in respect of financial and administrative implications that is necessary to take a decision on the transfer of tasks and activities. It agreed to keep the matter of the functional division of tasks and activities under review.
7. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session held in January 2015, took note of Resolution 4/2013 of the Governing Body and requested that the additional information mentioned above be also provided to the next session the Commission. It recalled that, at its last session, there had been no consensus among its Members on the transfer of tasks or activities and agreed to keep the matter under review.⁶

¹ At its Second Session, the Governing Body adopted a Joint Statement of Intent for Cooperation with the Commission. The statement addresses the cooperation between the Governing Body and the Commission and between their Secretariats. For more information, see: CGRFA-12/09/Report, Appendix H.

² Resolution 4/2013. <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/resolution-42013-cooperation-commission-genetic-resources-food-and-agriculture>

³ CGRFA-15/15/Report, para. 80.

⁴ IT/GB6/15/Inf.8.

⁵ IT/GB-5/13/12.

⁶ CGRFA-15/15/Report, para. 80.

8. The document *Additional information on financial and administrative implications related to the transfer of activities or tasks from the Commission to the Governing Body*⁷ has been prepared by the Secretary, in close collaboration with the Secretary of the Commission, following the requests of the Governing Body and the Commission, at their last Sessions.⁸

9. Paragraphs (1) to (2) of the Draft Resolution contain the guidance of the Governing Body related to institutional matters in the cooperation with the Commission.

III. COOPERATION DURING THE BIENNIUM 2014/2015

10. *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 2014.⁹

11. *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.¹⁰ 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 Resources Capacities.¹¹

12. *Global targets and indicators*: The Secretariat of the International Treaty has actively cooperated with the Commission Secretariat in this area, including in the elaboration of FAO contributions to Targets and Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The two Secretariats have been jointly proposing a possible indicator to the Target 15.6 "Ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources", which refers, on the one hand, to the number of SMTA, as communicated to the Governing Body and, on the other, to the number of permits or their equivalents made available to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearinghouse established under the Nagoya Protocol.

13. *Capacity building and other technical areas*: The Secretariat of the International Treaty has actively collaborated with AGP and decentralized FAO Offices in FAO programmes, projects and activities, related to capacity-building for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, mainly at regional level. For example, FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific implemented a project funded by Japan to enhance, *inter alia*, the understanding and implementation of the Multilateral System of the International Treaty.

⁷ IT/GB6/15/Inf.9.

⁸ Resolution 4/2013, paragraph 10; CGRFA-15/15/Report, para. 80

⁹ CGRFA-15/15/Inf.11; CGRFA-15/15/Inf.12.

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

¹¹ <http://www.planttreaty.org/capfitogen>

14. The Treaty Secretariat and FAO technical officers participated in international workshops in areas of common interest, including FAO's workshop related to the development of national strategies for implementation of the Global Plan of Action and an international workshop on the public-private partnership on pre-breeding which reaffirmed key value propositions of strengthening capacities for pre-breeding and the transfer of knowledge, technologies and materials to support pre-breeding activities.¹²

15. *Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*: FAO and the Commission Secretariat participated, as observers, in the Second Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, held on 2-3 March 2015. The Committee recognized "the opportunity and value of cooperation with other initiatives and processes, in particular under the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO, the Global Forum for Agricultural Research and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture".¹³

IV. PLANNING FUTURE COOPERATION

16. *Access and Benefit-sharing*: the Commission will continue work on access and benefit-sharing during the biennium 2016/2017, including on awareness raising, capacity building and technical assistance. The Commission Secretariat has been requested to cooperate with the Treaty Secretariat in these activities.

17. The ABS Expert Team established by the Commission at its Fourteenth Regular Session will consider, at its forthcoming Third Session, subsector-, including PGRFA-specific, ABS Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-sharing, as elaborated by the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups, bearing in mind the on-going activities or processes under the Treaty.

18. On-going activities or processes under the Treaty related to Access and Benefit-sharing include:

- The current process initiated by the Governing Body to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.
- The on-going cooperation of the Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol to support the harmonious implementation of the Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, at various levels, including through the Secretariats and within countries through the national focal points.

19. Subject to the availability of extra-budgetary funds, the two Secretariats are planning to collaborate in awareness-raising, capacity-building and technical assistance on access and benefit-sharing during the next biennium. Such collaboration will include holding a joint global workshop on *Access and Benefit-sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The workshop would aim to raise awareness and to facilitate the exchange of experiences amongst policy-makers and stakeholders from different sub-sectors on access and benefit-sharing in the food and agriculture sector.

20. *Programming future cooperation with the Commission*: at this session, the Governing Body is considering, for adoption, a draft Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) in order to,

¹² IT/GB6/15/12

¹³ IT/ACSU-2/15/Report, para. 18.

inter alia, strengthen cooperation with other relevant international forums, such as the Commission.¹⁴

21. The adoption of the MYPOW by the Governing Body offers the opportunity to improve the cooperation with the Commission, which also has its MYPOW, by planning cooperation between the two bodies in a more coherent schedule. The next major milestones on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture on the Commission's MYPOW scheduled for 2020/2021 are:

- The presentation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report); and,
- Consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.¹⁵

22. The Commission adopted the timeline and outline for the Third Report, at its last Session. It stressed the importance of the integration of the Third Report with the monitoring of the implementation of the Second GPA. During the second semester of 2015, countries are in the process of reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA using the indicators and reporting format adopted by the Commission for this purpose. The Governing Body, at its last session, had requested Contracting Parties and stakeholders to report on their implementation activities to the Governing Body using the indicators for monitoring of the Second GPA and relevant reporting formats. The Third Report will include an analysis of key developments and progress made in the implementation of the Treaty since its entry into force. Such analysis will take into account *inter alia* current information available from, and ongoing work under, the International Treaty.

23. The Secretariats are planning to collaborate during the next biennium in the preparation of a study 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 the implementation of the Treaty.

24. Paragraphs (3) to (6) of the Draft Resolution contain the guidance of the Governing Body related to future cooperation with the Commission.

V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

25. The Governing Body is invited to **review** and **adopt** the elements of a draft Resolution contained in the Appendix to this document.

¹⁴ IT/GB6/15/22.

¹⁵ CGRFA-14/13/Report, *Appendix I*, Table 1.

*Appendix***DRAFT RESOLUTION: COOPERATION WITH THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****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 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.