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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Twentieth Regular Session

Rome, 24–28 March 2025

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its last Session, requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination with the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes. The Commission identified various areas of collaborations, including the preparation of The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Third Report) and the review of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA).¹

2. The Governing Body of the International Treaty, at its Tenth Session held in November 2023, welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the Commission and the Governing Body and requested its Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination with the Secretary of the Commission to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies.²

3. This document, prepared jointly by the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission, provides an update of joint activities since the Commission's last session. Furthermore, the *Report from the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*³ provides information on developments under the International Treaty since the Commission's last session.

II. COOPERATION SINCE THE NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

(i) *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

4. As requested by the Commission, the draft Third Report was made available to the Governing Body at its Tenth Session.⁴ Contracting Parties to the International Treaty were given the opportunity to comment on the draft Third Report as well as on a revised version of the draft Third Report and draft thematic background studies, which were made available in August 2024 and January 2025, respectively.

5. The finalized Third Report will be launched on the occasion of the Commission's Twentieth Regular Session.

(ii) *Implementation and review of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

6. The Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission jointly contributed to the webinar organized by FAO in April 2024 on *Farmers' varieties and landraces: conservation through management on-farm*. The objective of the webinar was to raise awareness of the contribution of farmers' varieties/landraces to food security and nutrition, highlight relevant initiatives and facilitate knowledge exchange among diverse stakeholders on their conservation and sustainable use.⁵

7. The Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission further collaborated in the regional consultations held by FAO in 2024 on the review of the Second GPA. The consultations were attended by National Focal Points to the Treaty and the Commission's National Focal Points for PGRFA. The reports of the regional consultations have been made available to the Commission's

¹ CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 136.

² IT/GB-10/23/Report, Resolution 11/2023.

³ CGRFA-20/25/12.2/Inf.1.

⁴ IT/GB-10/23/16.1/Inf.2.

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/cgrfa/news/news-detail/webinar-on-farmers--varieties-and-landraces--conservation-through-management-on-farm/en>

Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) and the Commission, for their information.⁶

(iii) Implementation of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

8. The International Treaty Secretariat contributed to the implementation of the Commission's initiative regarding the preparation two additional practical guides, addressing the conservation through cryopreservation and the conservation in genebanks of species producing recalcitrant seeds.⁷ The draft practical guides have been developed in collaboration with over 20 technical experts. Virtual expert consultations were held in October 2024, bringing together participants from all FAO regions and representing national research institutes, botanical gardens, academia, CGIAR, Crop Trust and the Secretariat of the International Treaty.

(iv) Effects of seed policies, laws and regulations

9. FAO, in collaboration with the International Treaty and the Commission secretariat followed up on the Commission's request regarding future work on the effects of seed policies, laws and regulations, based on the concept note revised by the Commission at its last session.⁸ FAO and the International Treaty further explored the possibility of having a scoping study on the impact of seed policies, laws and regulations conducted by appropriate external partners. An update of the work is provided in the document, *Implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.⁹

(v) Access and Benefit-sharing

10. The Secretariat of the International Treaty participated, as an observer, in the Seventh Session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing, held in January 2025, which reviewed a draft study the impact of access and benefit-sharing measures on the use and exchange of genetic resources for food and agriculture.¹⁰

III. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

11. The Commission may wish to request the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination with the Secretary of the International Treaty to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty.

⁶ CGRFA-20/25/9.3.2/Inf.1– CGRFA-20/25/9.3.2/Inf.6.

⁷ CGRFA-20/25/9.3.1/Inf.1 & CGRFA-20/25/9.3.1/Inf.2.

⁸ CGRFA-19/23/Report, *Appendix D*.

⁹ CGRFA-20/25/9.3.1.

¹⁰ CGRFA-20/25/3.1.