



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**



**International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture**

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda**

**TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023**

**Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy of the  
International Treaty**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Developing effective communication remains an important task for all areas of work undertaken by the Secretariat. Increasing awareness and sharing information about the mandate and activities of the International Treaty through engaging communication products helps demonstrate the importance and proven value of implementing the Treaty around the world.
2. This includes highlighting the role that the International Treaty plays vis-à-vis current and emerging global issues, particularly food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change, conflict, and global pandemics, and in terms of providing innovative solutions for more sustainable agrifood systems.
3. The International Treaty provides a global platform for knowledge, data and information that inform policy-making on PGRFA management and planning, and makes a wealth of resources available to its stakeholders.
4. To communicate this information effectively, it is important to speak to a number of different stakeholder groups (“target audiences”): from policy-makers and technical experts to youth, the media and the general public. In order to effectively reach the International Treaty’s different “audiences” and stakeholder groups, the Secretariat uses different approaches, techniques and types of communication products.
5. During this unusually short inter-sessional period, the Secretariat has continued to strengthen and grow its communication efforts. The Secretariat continued sharing knowledge and information with stakeholder groups in a clear, effective and timely manner, and helping strengthen capacities of partnering institutions to increase visibility of the International Treaty. This included continuously updating the website; increasing Treaty presence on social media channels; updating educational modules; supporting Treaty stakeholders, particularly partners involved in Benefit-sharing Fund projects; developing new publications and informational products; and using new communication techniques.
6. To fulfil the increasing demand for communication material and outreach related tasks, the Secretariat maintained the services of an Expert International Communication Consultant to oversee all communication-related activities, a Website Specialist Consultant, and a BSF Visibility and Knowledge Management Consultant, all working in close coordination with technical officers, and with the FAO Office of Corporate Communication (OCC).
7. What follows is a brief report on the various communication and information products and activities that have taken place in the brief inter-sessional period from December 2022 through September 2023.

## II. CORPORATE WEBSITE

8. The significance of the [International Treaty website](#) as the principal platform for Contracting Parties and individuals interested in understanding the Treaty’s mandate, areas of work, and activities remains high. It plays a crucial role in facilitating effective corporate communication for the International Treaty, and facilitates transparency, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. The website enables Contracting Parties and interested individuals to actively participate in the Treaty’s work and stay updated with its progress.
9. The website continued to evolve and has undergone several updates and improvements during this inter-sessional period. The content has been expanded to include new sections with additional technical information, statistics, and new visual elements, such as short videos, infographics, podcasts and other illustrative material. The website provides a rich wealth of knowledge products and tools catered to the needs of the International Treaty’s target audiences.
10. The Treaty website is continuously updated by the Secretariat with news items, documents, meeting notices, updates on Benefit-Sharing Fund (BSF), and other relevant information for stakeholders. It also provides direct links to the International Treaty’s social media channels to ensure easy access to real-time updates.
11. During this short intersessional period, the Secretariat published more than ten meeting pages containing over 40 documents, most of them available in all official languages. Additionally, several online events have been organized to facilitate discussions such as the “[Unlocking the Power of Millets & Sorghum](#)” webinar.

12. Another noteworthy development is that almost all content on the Treaty website is now available in all six UN official languages. This helps minimize language barriers so that people from at least six different linguistic backgrounds can easily access the information they need from the Treaty website. In fact, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of unique visits to the website, indicating growing engagement and interest from users.

13. The website's evolution also continues in response to FAOs decision to gradually switch the corporate website Content Management System (CMS) from *Typo3* to *Sitefinity*. Consequently, the Secretariat is taking the requisite steps in order to migrate the Treaty website in the next biennium, in close consultation with OCC and the FAO Digitalization and Informatics Division (CSI).

### III. NEWS ITEMS, PRESS RELEASES, INTERVIEWS, MEDIA COVERAGE

14. The International Treaty featured in a number of articles and interviews in the media (print, social media, television and radio), including the following outlets: [Beijing News](#); [The Statesman](#); [Business Standard](#); [Deccan Herald](#); [Press Information Bureau of India](#); [Kisan Tak](#); [LiveMint](#); [China Daily](#); [The Hindu](#); [IndToday](#); and [Voice of Africa](#), to name a few.

15. In addition to featuring in various national and international media outlets and websites, the International Treaty also featured on the FAO organizational website ([fao.org](#)), the [FAO YouTube](#) channel, the [FAO Biodiversity and Climate Change](#) website, as well as on the FAO internal portal (Intranet), thus reaching a larger audience, externally and within FAO. Of particular note are the Secretariat's contributions to the FAO corporate presence, including: "[Millets: forgotten then found](#)," based on a BSF project in India, "[Shifting crops to adapt to changing climate conditions in Malawi](#)" and "[The Plants that Feed the World: new landmark study presents globally relevant metrics to inform strategies for plant genetic resources](#)."

16. News about and from the International Treaty were also featured on external websites and social media channels, including [Crop Trust](#), [Norwegian Government](#), [NordGen](#), and BSF partners in different countries (Serbia).

17. The Secretariat created detailed Communication Plans for a number of global events, notably the [First Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights](#) and a [donor visit to BSF project sites in Zimbabwe](#), including a [celebration of the International Year of Millets](#).

18. During this period, the Secretariat issued more than 20 [news items](#) on important events and circulated them to a wide global audience, using various channels of information dissemination, including Treaty partner organizations, FAO Corporate Communication channels, social media outlets, and international and national websites.

### IV. NEW PUBLICATIONS

19. This biennium has also seen a number of new publications, most notably on various thematic areas such as the BSF, Farmers' Rights, Conservation and Sustainable Use, documentation of crop wild relatives and other crop descriptor lists under the global Information System, and the Multilateral System. This includes brochures, visibility and informational toolkits, booklets, reports, flyers, factsheets and posters. In addition, a landmark publication, titled "[The plants that feed the world – Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture](#)" has been released, for which various global databases have been pooled to create a comprehensive [set of metrics](#) to help inform decision-making in managing PGRFA. These and other key publications support the information-based decision-taking of the International Treaty's target audiences.

### V. SOCIAL MEDIA

20. Social media channels are increasingly important in reaching audiences in this time of constant updates. The Treaty's social media presence has seen consistent growth over this intersessional period across all platforms.

21. Although the website remains the main gateway for information on the International Treaty, Treaty social media channels are increasingly important globally, and demand regular posts and maintenance.

22. International Treaty connections on [LinkedIn](#) have increased to 6 600 connections with new requests coming in every week. Similarly, the number of followers on the Treaty's [Twitter/X](#) account have grown to over 4 800. The Treaty's [Facebook](#) following is somewhat lower but has a community of over 1 000.

23. The Secretariat has initiated the development of a social media strategy, which includes Treaty branded design elements and a monthly social media calendar containing messaging and mini social media campaigns for special events, e.g. online events like the one on Sorghum & Millets, and the Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights.

24. In addition to social media channels, the Secretariat has also developed a [new podcast series](#), called "Treaty Talks," including episodes on Farmers' Rights, ancient grains, and the new crop metrics study, all of which are available through the Treaty website and the FAO's Soundcloud channel.

## VI. VIDEOS

25. The Secretariat also developed new videos in this inter-sessional period, particularly featuring projects supported by the BSF, [Seed Systems in Emergencies](#) and other short videos for social media. The videos have been posted on social media, the FAO You Tube channel, and on the International Treaty website.

26. Another four videos are being developed based on the BSF projects and will be part of a photo-video exhibit at GB-10 designed to take visitors through projects in different regions. These videos have been co-developed with BSF partners and participants.

## VII. YOUTH-ORIENTED PRODUCTS

27. The Secretariat has also been developing new youth-oriented material in cooperation with the FAO World Food Forum (WFF) and the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA). The new Treaty products developed for a young audience include games (e.g. Match the crop to the dish and word searches) and the participation in the first Junior International Food Day, during which the Secretariat interacted with hundreds of students from schools in and around Rome. These activities are aimed at increasing awareness amongst youth about the importance of conserving and sustainably using biodiversity, seeds and other plant material in the face of climate change and for future food security. More youth products are in development for the new biennium, including a short storybook for young children.

## VIII. ONLINE SEMINARS/WEBINARS

28. Given the growing popularity of webinars developed during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat has continued to provide webinars on issues of interest to the International Treaty community. This inter-sessional period has included an International Year of Millets (IYM 2023) Webinar on ["The Role of Sorghum and Millets Genetic Resources in Sustainable Agriculture,"](#) co-organized with the FAO IYM group, in addition to Secretariat participation in a number of external webinars on different issues, e.g. the Global Information System, and Farmers' Rights. The online meetings were publicized through social media channels, the Treaty website and through partner organizations.

29. The Secretariat also organized and contributed to several international technical conferences, scientific panels and forums in this period. These efforts underpinned the Treaty's commitment to ensure that countries, at all levels of development, can get access to information and resources to support advocacy, in particular on the key role of crop biodiversity conservation and use for food security.

## IX. COOPERATION WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

30. This period has seen a steady continuation in terms of collaborating with various partner organizations in the production and dissemination of communication material. In addition to the Crop Trust, the Secretariat has collaborated internally with other divisions and units within FAO, notably the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB), IYM 2023, WFF, YUNGA, and OCC in the development of informational materials, webinars, interviews, videos, and articles.

31. Throughout this period, the Secretariat has also worked in close cooperation with the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and other Biodiversity-related Conventions to share and amplify messaging and

information, notably with regard to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Secretariat continued to participate with members of the global Biodiversity Communications Flotilla coordinated by the CBD Communication Team.

## X. TREATY VISUAL IDENTITY AND STYLEGUIDE

32. This inter-sessional period marked the beginning of an updated visual identity for the International Treaty. The refreshed look was developed to further enhance and reinforce the recognizable Treaty “brand.”

33. To ensure the consistent application of the new visual identity, the Secretariat developed a new *StyleGuide*. The *Treaty StyleGuide* includes updated visual elements and Guidelines on how the design elements should be used. These are particularly helpful for those involved in developing visual material for, about and/or with the International Treaty.

## XI. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TENTH SESSION

34. In preparation for the Tenth Session of the Governing Body (GB-10), the Secretariat has developed a comprehensive Communication Plan guided by the Session’s theme, “From Seeds to Innovative Solutions, Safeguarding Our Future: Contributing to the Implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework for Sustainable Food Systems.”

35. The GB-10 Communication Plan encompasses the broad range of communication products and activities, including a dedicated GB-10 webpage; Key messages; GB-10 visual identity (please see Figure 1 below); posters; social media messaging & graphics; dedicated Trello Board with information and graphic resources; a media advisory note for distribution before the session; several press releases; the “Journey of Seeds” exhibit, extending from the FAO atrium through the flag room where there will be a photo-video exhibition featuring farmers and crops from various agro-ecological regions; daily reportage; photography and videography; and a Special Event.

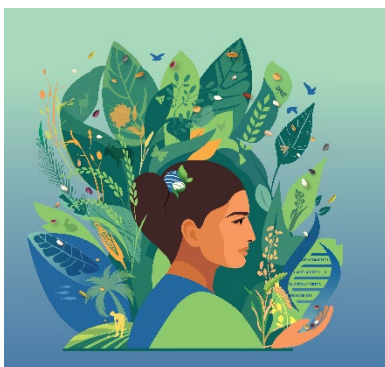


Figure 1: Emblematic visual identity for GB-10, depicting the central role of PGRFA in overall biodiversity.

36. Overall, through all communication efforts, the Secretariat continues to build on the International Treaty as knowledge frontrunner, providing resources for its stakeholders to support them in sustainable PGRFA management, planning and policy-making.