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The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



Item 17 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

FOURTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Bali, Indonesia, 14-18 March 2011

PROGRESS REPORT ON PARTNERSHIPS, SYNERGIES AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNING BODY, THE IARCs AND OTHER RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 15 OF THE TREATY

Note by the Secretary

- i) *Article 19.3(g) of the Treaty provides that the Governing Body shall “establish and maintain cooperation with other relevant international organizations and treaty bodies, including in particular the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, on matters covered by this Treaty, including their participation in the funding strategy.”*
- ii) *Article 20.5 of the International Treaty provides that the Secretary shall “cooperate with other organizations and treaty bodies, including in particular the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in achieving the objectives of the Treaty”.*
- iii) *The Governing Body has repeatedly affirmed that cooperation with other international organizations is of particular importance to the Treaty, in many aspects of its work.¹*
- iv) *The Governing Body, at its Third Session, also recognized the significant role of the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research in supporting the Treaty and welcomed the progress made with the Joint Capacity Building Programme for Developing Countries set up by the International Treaty, FAO and Bioversity International to provide technical assistance with implementation of the Treaty and in particular its Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing by developing countries.²*
- v) *This document contains a report on the relevant activities undertaken by the Secretary, and progress made since the last Session of the Governing Body to maintain, strengthen and extend partnerships, synergies and cooperation with other organizations. Possible elements of a Resolution are provided for the consideration of the Governing Body.*

¹ IT/GB-1/06/Report, paragraph 45; IT/GB-2/07/Report, paragraphs 84-87; IT/GB-3/09/Report, Resolution 8/2009.

² IT/GB-3/09/Report, paragraph 52 and Resolution 8/2009.

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Appendix:

*Draft Resolution **/2011 - Cooperation with other treaty bodies and international organizations, including with the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other international institutions that signed agreements under Article 15 of the Treaty.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Article 19.3(g) of the Treaty provides that the Governing Body shall “*establish and maintain cooperation with other relevant international organizations and treaty bodies, including in particular the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, on matters covered by this Treaty, including their participation in the funding strategy.*”
2. At its First Session, the Governing Body “*noted that cooperation with other international organizations was of particular importance for the Treaty, in many aspects of its work*”.³
3. At its Second Session, the Governing Body also “*recognized the importance of collaboration between the Secretary of the Treaty and the International Agricultural Research Centres in the implementation of the Treaty. It expressed appreciation for the joint programme set up by FAO and Bioversity International to provide technical assistance to facilitate developing country implementation of the Treaty, and in particular, to initiate the Multilateral System*”⁴.
4. At its Third Session, the Governing Body “*recognized the important role of the International Agricultural Research Centres of the CGIAR in supporting the International Treaty*”⁵. It also highlighted the need to maintain and develop the relationship between the International Treaty and the Global Crop Diversity Trust in a complementary manner.
5. The Governing Body, by Resolution 8/2009, recognized the importance of the cooperation between the Secretary of the Treaty and other organizations in accordance with the Treaty and the guidance of the Governing Body, and further acknowledged the ongoing fruitful collaboration between the Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).
6. The Governing Body also recognized the need to expand the duration of the Joint Capacity Building Programme set up by the International Treaty, FAO and Bioversity International to the full biennium 2010-2011 and the number of countries that receive assistance thanks to voluntary contributions to the Special Funds for agreed purposes.
7. It requested the Secretary, *inter alia*, to:
 - i) continue enhancing the collaboration with other international organizations, especially the CBD in regard to the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity, access to plant genetic resources and benefit-sharing, and to continue participating in relevant meetings of WIPO, UPOV and WHO;
 - iii) continue overseeing the Joint Capacity Building Programme for Developing Countries, and to invite on a voluntary basis, additional funding and partners for expanding the Programme;
 - iv) convene the second and third meetings of the Capacity Building Coordination Mechanism to exchange information and coordinate capacity building initiatives for implementation of the Treaty by relevant organizations and institutions as well as to indicate areas where further guidance from the Governing Body may be required based on experiences and lessons learned;

³ IT/GB-1/06/Report, paragraph 45.

⁴ IT/GB-2/07/Report, paragraph 84.

⁵ IT/GB-3/09/Report, paragraph 52.

- vi) foster cooperation with other organizations and strengthen existing cooperative arrangements with a view to developing synergies and reducing inefficiencies in a manner consistent with the respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programs, based on available resources;
- vii) regarding the implementation of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty, continue collaborating with the Global Crop Diversity Trust (GCDDT) and other international organizations in the further development and implementation of operational procedures;⁶ and
- viii) report to the Governing Body at this Fourth Session on relevant activities undertaken by the Secretary to maintain, strengthen and extend the partnerships, synergies and cooperation with other organizations.
8. This document contains the report requested by the Governing Body for this Session.

II. COOPERATION WITH OTHER TREATY BODIES AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. Convention on Biological Diversity

9. In order to enhance collaboration with the Convention in regard to the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity, access to plant genetic resources and benefit-sharing, the Treaty Secretariat participated in the eighth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (WG-ABS) held in Montreal, Canada on 9-15 November 2009. On that occasion, the Secretariat organized a side event entitled “Benefit-sharing under the regime of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” in order to provide participants with information on the Treaty, the current status of the Benefit-sharing Fund and the first projects approved under the Fund. The Chairperson of the Fourth Session of the Governing Body, Ms. Cosima Hufler, also participated in the side-event.
10. The Treaty Secretariat also participated in the ninth meeting of the WG-ABS held in Cali, Colombia on 22-28 March, and continued in Montreal on 10-16 July and 18-24 September 2010. The Secretary and representatives of the Secretariat followed the negotiations both in plenary and contact groups, and provided delegates and participants with relevant Treaty-related information.
11. While in Montreal, the Secretary discussed the status of and prospects for further collaboration with the Executive Secretary and officers of the Secretariat of the Convention.
12. The Secretary participated in the Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP-10) and the High-Level Segment held in Nagoya, Japan on 18-29 October 2010. The Secretary promoted due recognition of the Treaty, in particular in the discussions related to the access and benefit sharing, highlighting in particular the full operation of the Multilateral System and the progress made in regard to the Benefit-sharing Fund. COP-10 adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization (Nagoya Protocol), which made specific recognition of the importance of the Treaty and its Multilateral System. On the occasion of the Tenth Conference of the Parties, the Secretary of the Treaty and the Executive Secretary of the Convention signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in the context of the relationship between the Treaty and the Convention. Information on the Nagoya Protocol and other outcomes of COP-10 of relevance to the Treaty are contained in the document, IT/GB-4/11/22, *Relationship with the Convention on Biological Diversity*.

⁶ IT/GB-3/09/Report, Resolution 3/2009 “Implementation of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty”.

B. World Intellectual Property Organization

13. As requested by the Governing Body at its Third Session, the Secretary participated in relevant meetings of WIPO, including the fourteen and fifteenth sessions of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) held in Geneva, Switzerland on 29 June-3 July and 7-11 December 2009. Areas of possible intersection between the Treaty and IGC's work, include intellectual property-related clauses under the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) and access and benefit-sharing contracts in general; the patentability of genetic resources within and outside of the Multilateral System; the protection of traditional knowledge in the context of Article 9 of the Treaty; and the relevance of patent information systems in the context of Article 17 of the Treaty.

14. Furthermore, the Secretariat consulted with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Centre in the in regard to the preparation of customized mediation rules under the Third Party Beneficiary Procedures (see the document IT/GB-4/11/14, *Report of the Chair of the Ad Hoc Third Party Beneficiary Committee*) and consulted with the officials that manage WIPO's electronic filing system, the Secure Applications Filed Electronically (PCT-SAFE), to seek technical advice for the establishment of highly secure information management processes and tools for SMTA reporting.

15. The Secretary also met with the WIPO Director General and a wide range of delegates and representatives of other international organizations to discuss issues of mutual interest and promote the Treaty, its organs and mechanisms. In this context, the Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and WIPO signed in December 2010 envisages technical cooperation between the two organizations on issues of relevance to the Treaty.

16. At the request of WIPO, the Secretariat participated in the Symposium on Intellectual Property and Global Challenges and the Open-ended Forum on Development Agenda Projects held in Geneva, Switzerland on 13-14 July and 13-14 October 2009. The Secretariat made a presentation on the progress of Treaty mechanisms in the context of intellectual property and global challenges regarding agriculture and food security.

C. United Nations Information and Computing Centre

17. As a follow-up to several ongoing work tracks, the Secretariat of the Treaty held meetings with the United Nations Information and Computing Centre (UNICC) to advance cooperation on information technology tools for the management of the Multilateral System, share experiences about the maintenance of those systems, discuss the installation of the Treaty server and the hosting of the SMTA datastore as well as explore further areas for support and collaboration.

D. International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties

18. The Secretariat co-organized with UPOV and other partners, the Second World Seed Conference, held in Rome on 8-10 September 2009. As follow-up to the Conference, the Secretary of the Treaty met with the Secretary General and Vice-Secretary General of UPOV to discuss continued collaboration between the two instruments and identified the inclusion of relevant information systems in future work on Article 17 of the Treaty as a concrete option for future collaboration.

19. A meeting of the Steering Committee of the Conference was held in Paris on 2 October 2009. The meeting identified several technical follow-up activities to be undertaken by the Conference partners. The Secretariat also attended the meeting of the UPOV Council, held on 20-21 October 2010 and reported on progress with relevant Treaty mechanisms.

E. World Trade Organization

20. Following the recognition by the Governing Body of the importance of cooperation with other organizations, collaboration between the International Treaty and the WTO continued during this intersessional period.

21. Mr. Antony Taubam, Director of the Intellectual Property Division of the WTO, participated in the “Policy Seminar on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Global Challenges and Future Directions”, that was held in Bali in December 2009. Discussions are being held to explore possible areas of concrete collaboration and interaction.

F. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

22. Following the request from the UNFCCC Secretariat for close cooperation with the Treaty, the Secretary has been in constant communication with the UNFCCC Secretariat to explore possible areas of cooperation in relation to climate change adaptation in agriculture and genetic resources. In particular, the UNFCCC Secretariat suggested the participation of the Treaty as a partner in the REDD initiative and other potential areas of collaboration. However, due to budgetary and administrative constraints, the Treaty Secretariat was unable to participate in the fifteenth Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 7-8 December 2009 and to the sixteenth Conference of the Parties held in Cancun, Mexico on 29 November -10 December 2010.

23. During the Policy Seminar held in Bali in December 2009, experts highlighted the potential of the Treaty to address the challenges posed by climate change and discussions focussed on the need to ensure that the Treaty is recognized as part of the international climate change policy process.

24. In this context and as a starting point of cooperation between the Treaty and the UNFCCC, the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy was integrated into the UNFCCC database of funding options available for climate change adaptation.

G. United Nations Environment Programme

25. The Secretariat participated in the Workshop on Knowledge Management and Multilateral Environmental Agreements that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized in Chexbres, Switzerland on 22-24 September 2009. At the workshop, possible synergies were identified in order to facilitate the exchange of technical information of interest to users. The Treaty Secretariat presented the work on information technology tools in support of the Multilateral System and the Treaty website.

26. The Secretary of the Treaty met with the UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, in December 2010 to discuss the extension of cooperation between the Treaty and UNEP. Possible areas of future cooperation were identified, including: promoting coordination among biodiversity-related Conventions, food security and climate change; collaborating in capacity building on access and benefit-sharing; structuring cooperation under the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty; fostering collaboration through the regional Focal Points the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in order to take advantage of their presence in the regions and contacts at the country level; and designing global information systems on biodiversity and genetic resources. It was agreed that such activities could form the basis for a framework agreement between UNEP and the Treaty, subject to guidance by the respective governing bodies.

27. At the invitation of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, the Secretariat of the Treaty took part in consultations on the first plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The Secretariat of the Treaty, together with the Secretariats of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, has been asked to be a member of the planning group that will provide feedback and support to the preparation of the IPBES first plenary meeting.

III. COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH INSTITUTIONS UNDER ARTICLE 15 OF THE TREATY

A. International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

28. Since the Second Session of the Governing Body, the Secretariat has continued to collaborate with the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR Centres) on the implementation of the Treaty. In this context, the Secretary participated in the conference “Diversity for Life”, organized by Bioversity International and held in Bellagio, Italy, on 15-17 July 2009.

29. The Secretariat participated in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth meetings of the Genetic Resources Policy Committee (GRPC) of the CGIAR Centres held in Maccarese on 22-24 September 2009 and 5-7 May 2010 respectively. The GRPC discussed a number of issues, mostly related to the Multilateral System and the SMTA, such as: the distribution of materials for non-food/non-feed purposes; the distribution of material to farmers for direct cultivation; patenting trends and evolving positions within the private sector on the research exemption for plant breeding in patent laws; assessment of the CGIAR Centres’ impact on technology transfer and the implementation of farmers’ rights; and developments in the negotiations of the international ABS regime.

30. The Secretariat brought the operational questions arising from the GRPC and other interactions with the CGIAR Centres to the attention of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Technical Committee on the Standard Material Transfer Agreement and the Multilateral System (AC-SMTA), at its two meetings in January and August 2010. Some of the key outcomes of the meetings of the Committee are contained in the document IT/GB-4/11/12, *Report on the Implementation of the Multilateral System*.

B. Other International Institutions That Signed Agreements under Article 15 of the Treaty

31. The Secretariat finalized the agreements with both the International Cocoa Gene Banks (ICG) and the South Pacific Community (SPC) Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT), which were signed by the Director-General of FAO, on behalf of the Governing Body. These agreements will bring in significant additional accessions within the scope of the Multilateral System. On the basis of the agreement with SPC, the Secretariat was consulted on a regular basis on various policy and operational issues. The Secretariat also cooperated with SPC on capacity building activities under the Joint Capacity Building Programme for Developing Countries (see section VI.B below).

III. TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH RELEVANT FAO DEPARTMENTS, OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST

A. Relevant FAO departments

32. The Secretary continued cross-cutting collaboration with relevant FAO departments, divisions and technical units, including the Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP), the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), the Legal Office, the Right to Food Unit, and the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division. Such collaboration consisted, among other activities, of:

- i) Participation of the Secretary in the Special Information Seminar “Policies and Arrangements for Access and Benefit-sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” organized for the Twelfth Regular Session of the CGRFA, held in Rome on 17 October 2009;
- ii) Participation in the Twelfth Regular Session of the CGRFA held in Rome on 19-23 October 2009;
- iii) Preparatory discussions with AGP on the Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB);
- iv) Joint elaboration, with the Legal Office, of the agreements and operational procedures for the projects of the Benefit-sharing Fund that were approved by the Bureau of the Third Session of the Governing Body;
- v) Co-organization of, and participation in the regional consultations for the updating for the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources that were held in Antigua, Guatemala for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region in August 2010; in Aleppo, Syria for the Near East Region; in Chiang Mai, Thailand for the Asia Region in September 2010; in Nairobi for the Africa Region in June 2010; and in Suva, Fiji for the South Pacific Region in December 2010;
- vi) Participation in the FAO International Technical Conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries, hosted by the Government of Mexico on 1-4 March 2010;
- vii) Involvement of the Legal Office in preparatory work for and meetings of the *Ad Hoc* Third Party Beneficiary Committee and the *Ad Hoc* Technical Advisory Committee on the Standard Material Transfer Agreement and the Multilateral System;
- viii) Cooperation with the Right to Food Unit on the notion of a toolbox to assist countries with sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (see document IT/GB-4/11/17, *Implementation of Article 6*, for an analysis of the toolbox); the Right to Food Unit also collaborated with the Secretariat on the elaboration of training materials on the International Treaty and participated in the Policy Seminar held in Bali in December 2009;
- ix) Hosting by the FAO Liaison Office in Geneva of the fifth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy, held on 26-27 May 2010 and organization by the same office of the Information-sharing Session, “Towards a Successful Operation of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty: Meeting Challenges of Climate Change and Food Security”, held on 26 May 2010. The session facilitated the sharing of experiences of other international funds and mechanisms for the operation of the Benefit-sharing Fund and generated improved understanding on the role of the Treaty and its Benefit-sharing Fund to address climate change.

- x) Regular in-house briefings and joint staff meetings with the various divisions and units

B. Intergovernmental agencies and international organizations

33. The Secretariat co-organized with UPOV, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, FAO, the International Seed Federation and the International Seed Testing Association, the Second World Seed Conference, which was held in Rome on 8-10 September 2009. The conference comprised a two day Expert Forum, followed by one-day Policy Forum. The Secretariat of the Treaty organized a session on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the context of access and benefit-sharing.

34. Participants discussed the use of plant genetic resources in plant breeding; the mechanisms of the Multilateral System to facilitate access and ensure benefit-sharing globally; the exchange of genetic material through the SMTA; the experiences of the private seed sector with the Multilateral System and the impacts on the seed systems of Treaty implementation at the national level.

35. The conference recognized the following relevant aspects:

- i) plant breeding, sustainable use and conservation of plant genetic resources are interdependent;
- ii) the International Treaty is a unique and innovative legally binding instrument providing facilitated access to genetic material for plant breeding at all levels;
- iii) the Multilateral System is a simple and cost-effective instrument to use to facilitate access to germplasm;
- iv) the involvement of the private sector in the design of access and benefit-sharing schemes is necessary for well-functioning access and benefit-sharing mechanisms; and
- v) the full success of the Treaty and its Multilateral System will depend on local, national and regional implementation, as well as on the availability of funds at the local, national and regional levels.

36. In the further development and implementation of the Funding Strategy, especially its Benefit-sharing Fund, the collaboration with other international organizations was strengthened. The Treaty Secretariat issued an invitation to all entities that might qualify as potential partners of the Benefit-sharing Fund to express their interest in developing possible partnerships with the Treaty to implement the Fund. International institutions were invited to submit information on their mandates, work, technical and financial capacity to implement projects.

37. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the GCDT; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); Oxfam International; the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); the World Bank and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre (CATIE) responded positively to the invitation.

38. Information regarding the possible establishment of partnerships with these organizations and the main elements of such partnerships are included in document IT/GB-4/11/9, *Report on the implementation of the Funding Strategy*.

39. The Secretariat of the Treaty and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) co-organized a meeting on agrobiodiversity and the development importance of local varieties and indigenous species, in Rome on 20-21 January 2011. It emerged from the meeting that both GFAR and the Treaty are keen to facilitate greater collaboration and synergies among the many programmes addressing local crop varieties and indigenous species.

D. Global Crop Diversity Trust

40. The Governing Body, at its Third Session, highlighted the need to maintain and develop the relationship between the International Treaty and the Trust in a complementary manner. Accordingly, the Governing Body encouraged the Trust to continue its communication with the Governing Body on projects and activities funded by the Trust.⁷

41. During the last inter-sessional period, the respective Secretariats have significantly strengthened the cooperation between the two organizations, especially in order to promote programmatic complementarities.

42. The Secretariat has been partnering with the Trust and Bioversity International in the development of an accession-level information system, initially formulated as the Global Information on Germplasm Accessions Project (GIGA) and subsequently as “Genesys”. Further information on this global information system is included in document IT/GB-4/11/19 *Vision paper on the development of the global information system*.

43. The Trust also participated in the Peer Review Meeting of the Expert Advice held in London on 13 April 2010, organized by the Treaty Secretariat to discuss the experts’ advice on the execution of the Benefit-sharing Fund’s project cycle. Discussions during the meeting included the thematic focus and strategic and programmatic approach of the Fund as well as the need for international cooperation in further operationalization of the Benefit-sharing Fund.

44. Furthermore, in keeping with the guidance and requests of the Governing Body, the Secretariats of the Treaty and the Trust held meetings on a regular basis to exchange information and maintain general interaction on a broad range of issues, especially on ways to keep the Treaty informed on projects and activities funded by the Trust, as well as on the options for simplifying the procedures for selection and appointment of members of the Trust Executive Board by the Governing Body. Further information regarding on the procedures is provided in document IT/GB-4/11/21 *Report on the selection of the members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and possible options for the simplification of the normal selection and appointment procedures*.

45. The Secretariats of the Treaty and the Trust held a joint briefing at the Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, in The Hague, Netherlands on 4 November 2010.

V. COOPERATION WITH CONTRACTING PARTIES, NON-CONTRACTING PARTY STATES, CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER ENTITIES

A. Contracting Parties

46. At the invitation of the government of Spain, the Secretary participated in the eighth meeting of the National Institutes for Agricultural Research of Iberoamerica in Antigua, Guatemala, on 19-22 July 2009. The Secretary made a presentation on the Treaty and briefed participants on the main outcomes of the Third Session of the Governing Body.

47. At the request of the Ministry of Agriculture of Italy, the Secretariat provided organizational support to the “Policy Seminar on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Global Challenges and Future Directions”, held in Bari, Italy, from 15-18 December 2009. The Vice-Chairs of the Governing Body, regional experts of different subsidiary bodies and several organizations undertaking projects funded by the Benefit-

⁷ IT/GB-3/09/Report, paragraph 36.

sharing Fund participated in the seminar. The seminar offered a platform to facilitate interactive brainstorming discussions regarding the role of the International Treaty in addressing major global challenges such as climate change and food security.

48. At the request of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Secretariat assisted Denmark and the other Contracting Parties of the Nordic Council in convening a side-event on “Genetic Diversity and Food Security in a Time of Climate Change” at the World Summit on Food Security, held in Rome on 18 November 2009. The Secretary presented the contribution of Treaty systems to climate change adaptation and food security. At the side event, regional cooperation in the Nordic Countries and in the SADC region, including through use of the SMTA, was presented.

49. At the request of the government of Norway, and in execution of the Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund, the Secretariat assisted the Minister of Agriculture in convening an informal breakfast meeting for Ministers of other Contracting Parties which expressed their interest in contributing to the Benefit-sharing Fund. The meeting resulted in a very positive informal exchange of views and suggestions for resource mobilization.

50. The Ministries of Agriculture of Indonesia and Norway jointly organized the “Workshop on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Benefit-sharing in the Multilateral System”, in Bogor, Indonesia, on 9-11 March 2010. More than forty international participants attended the workshop and discussed the benefit-sharing components of the Multilateral System, with a focus on exchange of information, technology transfer and capacity building.

51. At the request of various Contracting Parties, the Secretariat also participated in several regional, sub-regional and national events on the International Treaty, including in:

- i) Helsinki, Finland, at the Nordic Symposium on Synergies Among Biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements, on 8-9 April, 2010;
- ii) The Hague, the Netherlands, at the Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, on 31 October 2010;
- iii) Sabah, Malaysia, at the Second National Conference on Agrobiodiversity and Sustainable Utilization for Sustainable Economic Development, on 11-13 May, 2010;
- iv) Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, at the Conference on Agricultural Biodiversity in Africa, on 19-20 July 2010;
- v) Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala, at the “Taller Nacional sobre los Recursos Fitogenéticos para la Alimentación y l’Agricultura”, on 13 August 2010.

52. The Government of Italy organized a High Level Round Table on the “Importance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for the Future Challenges of Food Security, Climate Change and Agro-biodiversity”, in Rome on 7 December 2010. The Ministers of Agriculture from all the Contracting Parties of the Treaty were invited. Twenty Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Contracting Parties, out of a total of sixty delegations, attended the event.

53. During the round table, several announcements of contributions to the Treaty’s Core Administrative Budget and the Benefit-sharing Fund were made. Participants reaffirmed the unique features of the International Treaty as an effective, efficient and direct tool to accelerate crop diversity conservation and utilization. Participating Ministers and Deputy Ministers highlighted the innovative system of fair and equitable sharing set forth through the Benefit-sharing Fund.

54. It is to be noted from the activities outlined above that the level of requests for cooperation from Contracting Parties is rising, and that such an increase shows a growing engagement in Treaty processes.

B. Non-Contracting Party States

55. Following up to a series of informal contacts, the Secretary met with staff of the U.S.A. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the U.S.A. Administration to discuss possible ratification of the International Treaty. The Secretariat also provided information on a number of issues related to the systems and activities of the Treaty. A hearing was subsequently held by the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, and the next steps will include possible consent to ratification by the Senate.

56. The Secretariat also held discussions with, and provided information on request to, the governments of Dominica, Japan, Nigeria, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Swaziland and Vanuatu in order to facilitate their ratification of/accession to the Treaty.

C. Civil Society and other entities

57. The Secretariat participated in the International Advisory Council of the Initiative for Open Innovation (IOI), organized by the Centre for Applied Molecular Biology in Agriculture (CAMBIA) in Port Douglas, Australia, on 16-21 August 2009. The meeting identified several IOI components for possible integration into the Article 17 work requested by the Governing Body.

58. At the invitation of the Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES), which is a non-governmental organization based in Cusco, Peru, the Secretariat participated in the International Training Workshop on Methods and Processes for Establishing Indigenous Biocultural Territories as Agrobiodiversity Conservation Areas, on 20-29 September 2009. The workshop brought together farmers and researchers from Ethiopia and the communities of the Potato Park of Peru to share experiences on methods for designing, planning and managing agrobiodiversity conservation areas. It was envisaged that the training workshop would contribute to the possible establishment of a conservation area in Ethiopia based on the Potato Park model.

59. During the training workshop, the Secretariat of the Treaty made a presentation on implementation of the Multilateral System, in particular on the inclusion of material in the System, non-monetary benefit-sharing, technology transfer and capacity building.

60. The Secretariat attended the International Symposium on Designing the Microbial Research Commons, organized by the U.S.A. National Academy of Sciences in Washington DC, U.S.A., on 8-9 October 2009. The Treaty was considered by this initiative as a possible model for governing microbial genetic resources.

61. The Secretariat of the Treaty held a meeting in Rome, Italy, on 23 November 2009 with representatives of the Vavilov Institute of the Russian Federation. At the meeting, representatives of the Institute expressed a number of needs in relation to *ex situ* conservation. The Secretariat highlighted the significance and advantages of the Treaty and invited the representatives of the Institute to include material into the Multilateral System. Attention was drawn to the opportunity of utilizing the SMTA to exchange accessions for further research and breeding.

62. At the invitation of the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, the Secretariat participated in an international workshop on “Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: General Aspects and Research Opportunities”, in Rome, Italy, on 5-6 November 2009.

63. The Secretariat of the Treaty participated in the Regional Forum on Agricultural Biodiversity of the Mediterranean, held in Marseille, France, on 14-15 October 2009, organized by the French Farmers’ Seed Network, where participants discussed the main issues related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and farmers’ rights in Europe.

64. The Secretariat also participated in the International Seminar on the Role of Agricultural Biodiversity in Helping to Ensure Global Food Security in the Context of Climate Change,

organized by the University of Córdoba and held in Córdoba, Spain, on 14 September 2010. The seminar was one of the major events convened in Spain to celebrate the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity and to highlight the importance of international cooperation for conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.

65. Participants to the seminar considered the International Treaty as a key tool in the fight against hunger. They affirmed the importance within the Treaty of sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as the support to small farmers as custodians of agricultural biodiversity.

VI. MECHANISMS FOR FACILITATING COOPERATION

A. The Capacity Building Coordination Mechanism

66. At its Third Session, the Governing Body requested the Secretary to convene, in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to Resolution 8/2009, the second and third meetings of the Capacity Building Coordination Mechanism (CBCM), to exchange information and coordinate capacity building initiatives by relevant organizations and institutions as well as to indicate areas where further guidance from the Governing Body may be required based on experiences and lessons learned.

67. Due to the lack of financial and human resources available to the Secretariat, the Secretary has not been able to convene the meetings of the CBCM as requested by the Governing Body.

B. The Joint Capacity Building Programme

68. At its Third Session, the Governing Body welcomed the progress made with the Joint Capacity Building Programme for Developing Countries set up by the International Treaty, FAO and Bioversity International to provide technical assistance with implementation of the Treaty and in particular its Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.

69. The Governing Body also recognized the need to expand the duration of the Joint Capacity Building Programme to the full biennium 2010-2011 and the number of countries that receive assistance by voluntary contributions to the Special Funds for Agreed Purposes.

70. The Governing Body requested the Secretary to continue overseeing the Joint Capacity Building Programme and invited on a voluntary basis additional funding and partners for its expansion.⁸

71. Under the Joint Capacity Building Programme, regional workshops were organized to raise awareness among policy makers and other stakeholders, and facilitate possible regional coordination for the implementation of the Multilateral System. The workshops were run in close partnership with recognized regional organizations, such as the SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and SPC. The European Cooperative Programme on Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) co-funded and participated in a regional workshop with the East African Plant Genetic Resources Network (EAPGREN). ECPGR made a substantive contribution to a roadmap for implementation of the Multilateral System in the region, which was endorsed by the representatives of EAPGREN member countries.

72. At the national level, workshops were convened in order to consult with relevant national stakeholders and, where possible, develop or review the draft technical recommendations. More

⁸ IT/GB-3/09/Report, Resolution 8/2009.

information on the activities undertaken under the Joint Capacity Building Programme is included in document IT/GB-4/11/12, *Report on the implementation of the Multilateral System*. For the purpose of this document, it is worth recalling that, after completing a first two-year cycle in the last quarter of 2010, the Joint Capacity Building Programme is currently on standby, due to lack of funding.

VII. POSSIBLE ELEMENTS OF A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING BODY

73. Cooperation activities remain of paramount relevance to Treaty processes, not only to develop synergies for efficient technical implementation of the Treaty but also to reach and maintain an adequate positioning of the Treaty in relevant international processes. Since its coming into force, the Treaty has progressively been recognized by other relevant international agreements and processes as playing an important role in addressing current and emerging global challenges, from food security to climate change.

74. Cooperation has proven to be an essential element for, among other activities, launching and operationalizing the Multilateral System and its Benefit-sharing Fund, not only within the regular Treaty community but also beyond that community into new constituencies where the Treaty can be leveraged as an operative international instrument for sustainable agriculture and food security. Cooperation will remain essential to promote synergies, for instance on capacity building, with other international agreements, including with the new Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization.

75. The *Appendix* to this document contains elements of a Resolution, reflecting the relevance of cooperation, for consideration by the Governing Body. The Governing Body is invited to give any further guidance it considers appropriate to foster cooperation with other treaty bodies and organizations as well as to strengthen existing cooperative arrangements according to the respective mandates, governance structures and agreed programs.

Appendix

DRAFT RESOLUTION **/2011 (PART II)**COOPERATION WITH OTHER TREATY BODIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTRES OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT SIGNED AGREEMENTS UNDER ARTICLE 15 OF THE TREATY****THE GOVERNING BODY,**

Cognizant of the need to establish and maintain cooperation with other relevant international organizations and treaty bodies, on matters covered by the Treaty, including their participation in the Funding Strategy;

Acknowledging the ongoing fruitful collaboration between the Treaty and other related international organizations and treaty bodies, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the World Health Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the World Trade Organization;

Recognizing that the adoption and possible entry into force and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization offers an immediate opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Acknowledging the positive outcomes of the strategy of cooperation with relevant international organizations to facilitate the implementation of the Funding Strategy, especially its Benefit-sharing Fund;

Welcoming the expressions of interest in partnerships to implement the Funding Strategy and its Benefit-sharing Fund, especially from the United Nations Development Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development;

Further recognizing the function of the Joint Capacity Building Programme set up by the Treaty, FAO and Bioversity International to facilitate implementation of the Treaty, and in particular of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, by developing country Contracting Parties;

Noting the need to continue providing assistance under the Joint Capacity Building Programme to developing country Contracting Parties in the process of implementation of the Multilateral System;

Recalling the significant support to the objectives of the International Treaty by the International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and other international institutions that signed agreements with the Governing Body under Article 15 of the Treaty;

- i) **Requests** the Secretary to continue to foster collaboration with other treaty bodies, especially with the Convention on Biological Diversity in regard to the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity, access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and benefit-sharing in the framework of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from

- their Utilization, according to the respective mandates, governance structures and agreed programs;
- ii) **Requests** the Secretary to continue participating in relevant meetings of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, the World Health Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization;
 - iii) **Requests** the Secretary to foster cooperation with other international organizations and strengthen existing cooperative arrangements with a view to developing synergies and reducing inefficiencies consistently with the respective mandates, governance structures and agreed programs, and based on available resources;
 - iv) **Requests** the Secretary to explore possible areas of cooperation with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, given the connection between climate change adaptation in agriculture and genetic resources, such as the participation of the Treaty as a partner in the REDD initiative;
 - v) **Acknowledges** the importance and value of building partnerships with international organizations to enhance the impact of the Benefit-sharing Fund, including with regard to resource mobilization, programming and effectiveness of the Fund's operation, including by relying as much as possible on designated implementing entities, which are to fulfil project, financial, management and fiduciary high standards in order to provide services of project formulation, supervision and implementation;
 - vi) **Requests** the Secretary to explore areas of cooperation with other international organizations to further develop and implement the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty and its Benefit-sharing Fund;
 - vii) **Welcomes** the conclusion of Memoranda of Cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Development Programme to support the further development of the Benefit-sharing Fund and the overall implementation of the Treaty;
 - viii) **Requests** the Secretary to continue establishing partnerships with other interested relevant international organizations to support the Benefit-sharing Fund, especially with those multilateral institutions that act as implementing entities for other multilateral funds, have a comparative advantage in the area of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and a recognized capacity for project and financial management, are present at field level and capable to support co-funding of projects;
 - ix) **Requests** the Secretary to develop a standard procedure and cooperation framework for the establishment of partnerships with other interested international organizations taking into account lessons learned in the development of partnerships with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Development Programme;
 - x) **Reaffirms** the need to expand the duration of the Joint Capacity Building Programme to the remaining part of the current biennium as well as to the full biennium 2012-2013 and **invites** on a voluntary basis additional funding and partners for expanding the Joint Capacity Building Programme;
 - xi) **Requests** the Secretary to report to the Governing Body at its Fifth Session on relevant activities undertaken to maintain, strengthen and extend the partnerships, synergies and cooperation under the present Resolution.