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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 7 of the Provisional Agenda

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

Eighth Session

Rome, 8-10 June 2016

REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Eight Session, the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will receive reports from international organizations and forums. This report has been prepared by Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) to provide an input to the discussions by the Working Group, and to its advice to the Commission.

2. This information document focuses on major outcomes arising from the Sixth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty, which was held in Rome, Italy, from 5 to 9 October 2015. At its Sixth Session, the Governing Body adopted Resolution 9/2015 *Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, which is provided in Appendix 1 of this document.¹

3. In previous sessions, the Working Group has encouraged countries to ratify and support the implementation of the International Treaty. The International Treaty has now 140 Contracting Parties.² A number of members of this Working Group have recently ratified the Treaty, such as Argentina and Chile, and other members are currently advancing in their ratification process.

II. ENHANCEMENT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM

4. The Governing Body decided, through Resolution 2/2013, to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (the “Working Group”), with the tasks of:

- (a) Increasing user-based payments and contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and predictable long-term manner, and
- (b) Enhancing the functioning of the Multilateral System by additional measures.

5. At its Sixth Session, the Governing Body adopted Resolution 1/2015, *Measures to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing*. The *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (the Working Group) has been requested, *inter alia*:

- To elaborate a full draft revised SMTA focusing especially on the development of a Subscription System and aiming to avoid the necessity of any other legal instrument primarily through a revision of Article 6.11 of the SMTA;
- If a legal instrument would nevertheless be deemed necessary to develop an effective subscription system, to elaborate a complete proposal for an appropriate legal instrument, (including an amendment of or a Protocol to the Treaty);
- To elaborate options for adapting the coverage of the Multilateral System based on different scenarios and income projections;
- To consider the issues regarding genetic information associated with the material accessed
- from the Multilateral System.

6. The Working Group is consulting relevant stakeholders in carrying out its tasks. The fifth meeting of the Working Group will take place in Geneva (Switzerland) from 12 to 14 July 2016. At this meeting, the Working Group will focus on the elaboration of a full draft revised SMTA to be

¹ Resolution 9/2015 is available in all official languages at: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/resolution-092015-cooperation-commission-genetic-resources-food-and-agriculture>

² http://www.planttreaty.org/list_of_countries

presented by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group. The tentative date for the sixth meeting of the Working Group is November 2016.

7. The implementation of the International Treaty is relevant to the on-going work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the area access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture. In this context, the following processes and activities related to the International Treaty need to be borne in mind:

- The current process to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System;
- The on-going cooperation to support the harmonious implementation of the International Treaty and Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol, at various levels including on capacity-building support to Parties, especially developing countries, for the mutually supportive implementation of these instruments.³
- The on-going processes by Member States to ratify the International Treaty and the Nagoya Protocol.

8. These processes and activities need to be taken into account in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to limit the complexity in the global exchange of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture by developing several access and benefit-sharing implementation modalities.

III. GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

9. At its Sixth Session, the Governing Body adopted the Vision and the Programme of Work for the Global Information System of the International Treaty.⁴ In doing so, it was “*mindful of the role of the International Treaty and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as caretakers of agro-biodiversity, including information related to PGRFA.*”

10. The Global Information System for PGRFA integrates and augments existing systems to create the global entry point to information and knowledge for strengthening the capacity for PGRFA conservation, management and utilization.

11. The development of a truly effective Global Information System as foreseen in the International Treaty involves, inter alia: strengthening existing systems and, where gaps remain, establishing new systems and initiatives; promoting inter-connectivity among systems; and providing overarching mechanisms to ensure ready access to the information and services provided.

12. In order to create a web-based platform with use-oriented entry points to PGRFA information, the Programme of Work on the Global Information System recognizes the “need to engage with FAO, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol and other organizations to build on the experience accumulated on the development of global portals.”

13. The Programme of Work on the Global Information System acknowledges the role of FAO information systems and the need to engage with FAO in the programme’s implementation phase. The Governing Body at its Sixth Session welcomed 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 on the implementation of the Treaty.

³ For more information, see Resolution 7/2015 of the Governing Body of the International Treaty: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/resolution-072015-relationship-convention-biological-diversity>

⁴ Resolution 3/2015, The Vision and the Programme of Work on the Global Information System: <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/resolution-032015-vision-and-programme-work-global-information-system>

IV. SUSTAINABLE USE

14. The Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) and Supporting Initiatives (2016-2019) has been endorsed by the Governing Body at the Sixth Session. It will be implemented in cooperation with relevant partners such as FAO technical units, the CGIAR, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Contracting Parties and any relevant and interested stakeholders. It has been requested to report on its implementation to the 7th (2017) and 8th (2019) session of the Governing Body.

15. Subject to the availability of financial resources, the Governing Body has also decided to reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Sustainable Use of PGRFA (ACSU). A meeting of the ACSU will be convened on October 2016 and will provide advice to the Secretary on:

- implementation of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Supporting Initiatives;
- cooperation with other international processes and institutions in the field of sustainable use of PGRFA;
- identification of additional activities and synergies within the Programme of Work and between the Programme of Work and other areas of work of the Treaty;
- elaboration of the current gaps in conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA through the support of Contracting Parties and donors.

16. The components of the Programme of Work include:

- 1) Report on activities, projects and programmes for the achievement of sustainable use of PGRFA, as per Article 6 of the Treaty;
- 2) Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA;
- 3) Platform for the Co-Development and Transfer of Technologies within the context of non-monetary benefit-sharing;
- 4) Training and capacity building on Farmers' Rights¹ and sustainable use; and
- 5) Raising awareness of the actual and potential value of crop wild relatives, landraces and underutilized species of local and regional importance for food security and sustainable development.

17. The Treaty is a well-tailored framework to ensure the implementation of such programmes supporting the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

APPENDIX 1

RESOLUTION 9/2015 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);

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;

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;

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;

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;

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;

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.