



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



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Item 14 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

FIFTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Muscat, Oman, 24–28 September 2013

REPORT FROM THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST

Note by the Secretary

1. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Relationship Agreement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, this document contains a biennial Report from the Executive Board of the Trust to the Governing Body, in the form and language in which it was received.
2. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the Report contained in the Appendix to this document and to provide any guidance it considers appropriate.

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Introduction

1. Article 18 of the Treaty provides that Contracting Parties undertake to implement a funding strategy for the implementation of this Treaty “*to enhance the availability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of financial resources to implement activities under this Treaty*”¹.
2. At its First Session, the Governing Body adopted the *Funding Strategy of the International Treaty* by Resolution 1/2006.² In Resolution 1/2006, the Governing Body noted “*that the Global Crop Diversity Trust is an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the ex situ conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*”.³
3. At its First Session, the Governing Body also concluded a *Relationship Agreement* with the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Trust).⁴ The Agreement, *inter alia*, recognizes the Trust as “*an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty in relation to the ex situ conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*”.⁵
4. Pursuant to the Relationship Agreement, the Governing Body shall provide overall policy guidance to the Trust on matters within the purview of the International Treaty.⁶ The Executive Board of the Trust shall submit an annual report on the activities of the Trust to the Governing Body.⁷
5. At its Second Session, the Governing Body “*recognized the executive independence of the Trust, and stressed the need for closer and effective cooperation. It emphasized that guidance for the Trust was provided under Article 5, 6 and 17 of the Global Plan of Action and Article 5 and 17 of the Treaty*”.⁸
6. At its Third Session, the Governing Body “*highlighted the need to maintain and develop the relationship between the International Treaty and the Global Crop Diversity Trust in a complementary manner. To that effect, the Governing Body encouraged the Global Crop Diversity Trust to continue its communication with the Governing Body on projects and activities funded by the Global Crop Diversity Trust and trusted that this would be maintained and enhanced during the intersessional period.*”⁹
7. At its Fourth Session, the Governing Body re-emphasized that the Global Crop Diversity Trust is an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty in relation to the *ex situ* conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Governing Body “*recognized that cooperation between the Treaty and the Trust and their close and permanent relationship remain of utmost importance to achieving the objectives of the International Treaty.*”¹⁰
8. As part of the preparatory process for the Fifth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary of the Treaty requested the Trust to provide the report in accordance with the

¹ Article 18.1 and Article 18.2.

² IT/GB-1/06/Report, p.2 and *Appendix F*.

³ *Resolution 1/2006*, Preamble, para. (ix), IT/GB-1/06/Report, p.3.

⁴ IT/GB-1/06/Report, *Appendix M*.

⁵ Relationship Agreement, Article 2.

⁶ Relationship Agreement, Article 3(1)

⁷ Relationship Agreement, Article 3(3).

⁸ IT/GB-2/07/Report, para. 59.

⁹ IT/GB-3/09/Report, paragraph 36.

¹⁰ IT/GB-4/11/Report, paragraph 34.

Relationship Agreement. As the report to the Fourth Session did not cover the year 2011, the Report before the Governing Body at this Fifth Session covers the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2012, and provides an update on on-going activities in the year 2013. The Report, in the form and language as it was received, is contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

9. The selection and appointment of members of the Executive Board of the Trust by the Governing Body as well as the possible simplification of the related procedures, are dealt with in a separate document before the Governing Body at this Fifth Session.¹¹

10. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the contents of the Report contained in the *Appendix*, and to give any guidance it considers appropriate within the purview of the International Treaty and the *Relationship Agreement*.

¹¹ *Procedures for the selection and appointment of members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and possible options for the simplification of the Normal Selection and Appointment Procedures*, IT/GB-5/13/16.



Fifth Report of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Introduction

1. The Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust (hereafter referred to as “Trust”) is pleased to submit its fifth report on the Trust’s activities to the Governing Body, as provided for by Article 3.3 of the Relationship Agreement between the two entities.

2. The Trust is an international organization working to ensure the long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity for food security worldwide. The Trust is a direct and unique response to the chronic underfunding of ex situ collections – the genebanks that store the genetic diversity of every crop of importance to humanity. The continued availability of the vast diversity of crop varieties is the only way to guarantee that farmers and plant breeders have the raw materials needed to improve and adapt their crops to ensure continued and improved agricultural productivity.

3. The Trust was therefore created with the main objective of ensuring the long term conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). This would be attained through the following specific objectives (a) safeguarding ex situ collections of unique and valuable crop diversity for food and agriculture; (b) rescuing threatened valuable diversity of PGRFA; (c) promoting the availability and use of crop diversity (d) promoting a rational, goal-oriented, economically efficient and sustainable global system of ex-situ conservation and availability in accordance with the International Treaty and Global plan of Action.

4. This report provides highlights of activities undertaken by the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and up to the first quarter of 2013.

The Role of the Trust in Implementing the International Treaty

5. The Relationship Agreement between the Trust and the Governing Body of the International Treaty recognises the Trust “as an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty in relation to ex situ conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture”.

6. It also notes that the Trust was established in the form of an endowment with the objective of “providing a permanent source of funds to support the long-term conservation of the ex situ germplasm collections on which the world depends for food security”. In this regard, the Agreement highlights the FAO Global Plan of Action’s call for the “development and support of a rational, efficient and sustainable system of genetic resources collections around the world”.

7. The Global Plan of Action recognizes in situ and ex situ as complementary conservation strategies. The Trust, in accordance with its Constitution and the Relationship Agreement with the Governing Body, focuses on efforts concerned with the ex situ (genebank) conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Trust’s profile addresses major portions of the International Treaty

including Articles 5 and 6, and much of Articles 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, in addition to lesser portions of other Articles.

8. Both the Trust and the Benefit-sharing Fund represent formal elements of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty. All Trust activities are directly related to implementation of the Treaty, and thus support of the Trust should be considered as direct support to implementation of the Treaty as is implied by the Trust's unique status as an "essential element of the Funding Strategy" of the Treaty in regards to ex situ conservation and availability of PGRFA.

9. Article 5.1e of the International Treaty requires that Contracting Parties "cooperate to promote the development of an efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation ..." and Priority Activity 6 of the Second Global Plan of Action has as an objective "to develop a rational, efficient, goal-oriented, economically efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation and use for both seed and vegetatively propagated species".

10. Consistent with the requirements of the International Treaty and the Global Plan of Action, the Trust works with partners to develop an effective, efficient and sustainable Global System for the conservation and availability of crop diversity. Such a Global System is not likely to be created through ad hoc unconnected activities. The Trust has therefore engaged in selective, strategic high priority, high impact activities that are consciously intended to build the Global System. This approach is outlined in some detail in the Trust's Funding Strategy, endorsed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty and adopted by the Trust's Executive Board. The Funding Strategy can be viewed at online on the Trust website.

11. The Trust has a broad and important mandate consistent with the requirements of the International Treaty and Global Plan of Action, but financial resources are limited. The Trust focuses its funding on activities that provide maximum global benefits, are cost-effective, efficient and sustainable. The Trust operates on the basis of a Fund Disbursement Strategy, which was adopted by the Trust's Executive Board in 2009 after consultation with the Governing Body of the Treaty and Donors. The Funding Disbursement Strategy can be viewed on the Trust website .

12. The Trust carries out its mandate in partnership with and through other institutions, and therefore relies on the willingness of others to work in cooperation with the Trust and each other to implement the Treaty and Global Plan of Action in concrete ways.

13. The Trust contributes significantly to implementation of the International Treaty and the Second Global Plan of Action. The Trust thus appeals to countries and donor agencies to summon the political will at the highest level to make the investment needed to secure crop diversity through its endowment fund.

Trust Activity Report

14. While the value of crop diversity is undisputed, its conservation remains far from guaranteed as the funding for genebanks remains unstable and unpredictable, despite the fact that it is the reliability of funding that is probably the single largest risk to effective long-term conservation. The endowment fund of the Trust seeks to resolve this, offering precisely the annual guaranteed funding required to ensure that crop diversity is safe and available forever.

15. Funding for long-term grants is provided through the Trust endowment fund, As the endowment fund grows, the annual interest accrued is used to provide in-perpetuity

funding for the operations of all the world's most important collections of crop diversity. Long-term financial support is provided to priority collections held and managed in accordance with international standards. All recipients must have undertaken to cooperate to promote the rational long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of the ex situ collections of germplasm and to manage them under the terms of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

16. To date, the Trust has approved long-term grants to nine CGIAR genebanks and the genebank of the South Pacific Community. The funding is supporting the conservation and availability of 20 international collections of 17 major crops. The supported collections serve an exclusively international role as the backbone of the rational, efficient and effective global system. In addition, the Trust funds the annual operating costs of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

17. Long-term grants now total USD 2.34 million annually and since their initiation in 2006, USD 9.29 million has been disbursed from the Trust endowment.

18. In 2012, the funding for the CGIAR-held international collections has been stabilized for the next five years with the initiation of the new CGIAR Research Program for Managing and Sustaining Crop Collections. The Genebank CRP is a partnership between the Trust and the Consortium of CGIAR Centers. The objective of the partnership is to conserve the diversity of plant genetic resources in CGIAR-held collections and to make this diversity available to breeders and researchers in a manner that meets international scientific standards, is cost efficient, is secure, reliable and sustainable over the long-term and is supportive of and consistent with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Even more importantly, the agreement includes a commitment to phase out the need for these genebanks to solicit annually for funds by building the Trust-managed endowment to ensure sustainable funding of the genebanks long into the future.

19. In 2012 the Trust initiated the external review of genebanks as stipulated in the Trust long-term grant agreement for five-year regular reviews. The review of the IRRI and ILRI genebank included the management, operations, and finance of the genebank over the past five years. In April 2013, the Trust conducted a review of the CIAT genebank.

20. In November of 2012 the Trust held a meeting of the CGIAR genebank managers to discuss challenges and future collaboration efforts. Annual meeting of these genebank managers with other National genebank managers are planned to further information sharing, encourage collaboration, and discuss common issues and challenges.

Regeneration of threatened collections

21. In furtherance of the International Treaty (Articles 5.1(e)(f), 5.2, 7.2(a)(b)) and Second Global Plan of Action (Priority Activity 7), the Trust partnered with developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in some cases through crop and regional networks, to support the regeneration of at-risk accessions in 246 collections held by 86 institutes in 77 countries. The work involved the characterisation of the accessions and their duplication into international genebanks for safety and availability. It included the provision of storage and regeneration equipment and capacity building as needed, and the production of multilingual guides on regeneration and descriptor lists.

22. In 2007, the Trust initiated a large-scale project aimed at furthering the development of a global system for the long-term conservation and availability of crop

diversity. A high priority was the rescue and safeguard of threatened, unique (not duplicated) accessions of 22 major crops on Annex 1 of the International Treaty.

23. Over 76,000 accessions have been successfully regenerated. Partners report over 12,000 accessions as not being viable, underlining the timeliness of this rescue effort and importance of safety duplication. About 40,000 accessions for which stocks are sufficient and the logistical and phytosanitary conditions could be met, have been sent under the SMTA to the appropriate international genebank for long-term safeguard and availability.

24. A meeting in April that brought together 30 national project partners, it was clear that genebanks are starting to recognise and address the problems that the regeneration initiative exposed. They are planning collecting expeditions to replace material that has been lost and may still be in farmers' fields. They are upgrading the documentation on their collections, thinking more about users and use, and collaborating more, including with CGIAR genebanks. This shows movement towards more cooperation and the development of a truly global system.

Safety duplication

25. The International Treaty cites the need "to take appropriate steps to minimize or, if possible, eliminate threats to PGRFA" (Article 5.2) and the Second Global Plan of Action has as an objective "to provide for the planned replication and safe storage of materials not currently safety duplicated". Safety duplication is recognized as an essential element of good genebank management practice aimed at minimizing risk to ex situ collections. The regeneration project aimed to produce enough seed for the creation of safety duplicates at cooperating genebanks meeting international standards for conservation and availability, as well as (in the case of orthodox seeds) the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

26. The Trust also supports the duplication under black-box conditions of unique accessions of the world's most important crop collections at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, in Norway, as an ultimate safety net. This has included the deposit of 530,000 accessions from the international collections managed by the CGIAR Centres, representing 75% of the total holdings

27. The Seed Vault, welcomed unanimously by the then 172 Members plus EU of the Commission, was officially launched in February 2008 and provides virtually fail-safe security for duplicate samples of PGRFA. Since it opened its doors in 2008, the Vault has accepted deposits on 17 occasions, and now holds a total of 774,600 accessions, of which the deposit of 75% was funded by the Trust.

28. The Trust is contributing funding on an ongoing basis for the management and operation of the facility.

Evaluation of collections and promoting the availability and use of crop diversity

29. Article 5 of the International Treaty and Priority Activity 8 of the Second Global Plan of Action emphasize the need for evaluation to promote use of PGRFA. As part of its project to further the global system, the Trust supported a competitive grant scheme for evaluation of collections aimed at identifying accessions with traits of significance to poor farmers in the context of climate change.

30. Three calls for proposals between 2008 and 2010 resulted in 43 projects that evaluated 59 collections of 20 crops for some 143 important agronomic traits, such as drought and heat tolerance, and resistance to pest and diseases. The projects involved

58 national research institutes and 8 CGIAR Centres in 43 countries. The data and findings will become publicly available through partners' web sites, publications and the project's web site, which is under construction.

31. The Trust partnered with the FAO-led Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB) on furthering the GIPB workplan, including training 134 scientists in pre-breeding techniques, developing an online e-course and supporting 6 pre-breeding projects selected by GIPB.

32. Through a set of 6 projects focused on 3 countries of West Africa (Ghana, Mali and Nigeria) and 4 crops (cowpea, pearl millet, sorghum and yam), the Trust and national institutes undertook a series of pilot activities aimed at strengthening the links between genebanks and users of crop diversity. This work was undertaken in part in response to donor calls for a clearer demonstration of the efficacy of the pipeline through which conserved diversity reaches farmers. The activities brought together conservation programmes with breeders, and in some cases farmers, to agree common conservation and breeding priorities, and, among other activities, collect to fill gaps in collections and generate further information on collections through participatory evaluation.

Information and information systems

33. Article 17.1 of the International Treaty requires that Contracting Parties "cooperate to develop and strengthen a global information system to facilitate the exchange of information, based on existing information systems, on scientific, technical and environmental matters related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, with the expectation that such exchange of information will contribute to the sharing of benefits by making information on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture available to all Contracting Parties." Articles 13.2(a) and 12.3(c) address requirements to make information available. Priority Activity 15 of the Second Global Plan of Action calls for "Constructing and strengthening comprehensive information system for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture". The Trust has supported the implementation of two initiatives to enhance the management and availability of information about PGRFA:

- The Trust partnered with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Bioversity International to develop and deploy a state-of-the-art genebank data management software package, GRIN-Global. Version 1.0 was released at the end of 2011 and an improved Version 2.0 is about to be released. The system was introduced to 38 genebanks for evaluation and eventual adoption. More information can be found at: www.grin-global.org
- The Trust and Secretariat of the International Treaty supported the Centres of the CGIAR, under Bioversity's leadership, to develop a global on-line portal to accession-level germplasm information. The portal, Genesys, builds on existing collaborative information systems, namely SINGER, EURISCO and GRIN. It allows searching across multiple genebank databases online and currently contains data on 2.3 million accessions held in some 356 genebanks, including evaluation data from USDA and some CGIAR Centres.

34. In furtherance of Article 17.1 of the International Treaty and Priority Activity 15 of the Global Plan of Action, the Trust will continue to support the development of Genesys as a fundamental component for an effective global conservation system. It will also continue to assist genebanks with the adoption of GRIN-Global and making information on their collections available through Genesys, and thereby contribute to the global system.

Research to develop conservation protocols for vegetative propagated crops

35. Under Article 5.1(e) of the International Treaty, Contracting Parties agree to “Cooperate...to promote the development and transfer of appropriate technologies” for the purpose of promoting the development of an “efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation.” An objective under Priority Activity 6 of the Second Global Plan of Action is “to develop management strategies for ex situ conservation of vegetatively propagated species....”. To promote the implementation of the International Treaty and Global Plan of Action in this area, the Trust has supported a number of research activities. These include making improvements to existing embryo culture techniques in partnership with the coconut network (COGENT), and furthering the development of cryopreservation methodologies for cassava, sweet potato, taro and yam. The research was aimed at providing more robust and cost-effective methods to conserve and make available germplasm of these difficult crops.

Adapting agriculture to climate change: collecting, protecting and preparing crop wild relatives

36. In 2011, the Trust launched a 10-year project to collect high-priority diversity of the wild species related to 29 Annex 1 crops, to secure that diversity for the long-term, and to use it to prepare materials useful to breeding programmes around the world in adapting these crops to climate change. The project is funded by the Government of Norway and guided by an Advisory Group comprising experts and representatives of the Secretariat of the International Treaty and CGIAR Centres. It is being implemented in partnership with the Millennium Seed Bank (MSB) of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK and with specialist institutes and national and international conservation and pre-breeding programmes around the world.

37. The crop wild relatives (CWR) in a total of 92 genera, including the project’s target 29 focal crops, have been catalogued and the database is searchable at the portal Crop Wild Relatives & Climate Change (<http://www.cwrdiversity.org>). A dataset containing about 4 million records has been assembled, representing the largest and most comprehensive resource on the geographic distribution of the wild relatives of the world’s major crops.

38. The dataset is being analysed to identify high priority species and regions for collecting. The collecting will be funded through grant agreements with the Trust which will recognize all relevant national laws and international agreements and be carried out by national institutions with technical back-stopping provided as necessary by staff of the Millennium Seed Bank and CGIAR Centres. Country-specific field identification guides are being developed by MSB to support national partners in their collecting activities, and will represent a long-term resource and important contribution to capacity building.

39. In preparation for the pre-breeding phase of the project, crop-specific consultations are being held with a wide range of breeders and other researchers who have experience in the use of CWRs. Consultations held so far have focused on: potato, beans, sunflower, cereals, eggplant, sweet potato, alfalfa, lentil, banana, apple and cowpea. Two case studies on pre-breeding are underway, on rice and sunflower. These crops were chosen because considerable CWR diversity already exists in genebanks (though some gaps do also remain) and because the crops provide an interesting contrast in terms of level of past investment in breeding.

Table 1. Summary of Trust funding over all programmatic activities

Activity	2010 grants (USD)	2011 grants	2012 grants
A. Long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity	2,052,912	2,343,986	17,409,395
B. Regeneration of threatened, globally important crop diversity	1,106,515	1,899,949	680,413
C. Safety duplication (shipment of accessions to international centers and Svalbard)	60,492	132,268	81,270
D. Collecting	178,992	224,433	23,800
E. Evaluation of collections	503,832	217,407	272,604
F. Information and information systems	1,178,440	234,148	29,180
G. Research to develop conservation protocols	717,497	50,291	33,625
TOTAL	5,798,680	5,102,482	18,530,286

Public Awareness

40. The Trust remains very active and successful in drawing media and public attention to the importance and urgency of crop diversity conservation and its relationship with future food security.

41. Through press releases and related media efforts, the Trust has been successful in raising awareness of the issue, with coverage in major media outlets worldwide. From 2011-2013, Trust media coverage included over 200 articles in international, newspapers, newsletters and journals, including New York Times, SciDev, International Herald Tribune, the Guardian, BBC and CNN.

42. In 2012 the Trust released the redesigned new website at www.croptrust.org. The site includes an interactive portal for sharing project information on Trust activities, highlighting the number of country partners supported by the Trust.

43. The Trust, usually in cooperation with national partners, issued several press releases to highlight successful activities and ongoing challenges. The press releases can be downloaded from <http://www.croptrust.org/content/press-releases>

44. The Svalbard Global Seed Vault continues to attract media attention from around the world, almost three years after its opening. The Trust has issued several press releases in connection with anniversaries and shipments to the Seed Vault, aiming to underscore the importance of crop diversity to global agriculture and food security.

45. On a regular basis, the Trust raises awareness of plant genetic resources and their importance through its website, and through social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

Institutional Report

46. The Trust was established by FAO and Bioversity International, acting on behalf of the CGIAR Centres, and jointly hosted by the two organisations in Rome pending a permanent host country agreement.

47. The decision to accept the headquarter agreement offered by the government of Germany was taken by the Trust's Executive Board after a thorough study of proposals submitted by a number of different countries.

48. The German government offered accommodation for the Trust offices and financial support, as well as commitment to provide high level political leadership for the Trust's fundraising.

49. On the 16th of October 2012, Germany signed the establishment agreement and constitution of the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

50. Accordingly, in January 2013 the Trust started operating from its new offices in Bonn. The offices are adjacent to the UN campus, which houses, among others, the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Desertification and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Four staff members are still temporarily working from Rome as of April 2013, and the Trust will indeed retain office space at FAO into the future.

51. The members of the Executive Board are nominated by the Governing Body of the International Treaty and the Trust's Donors' Council. In addition there are non-voting members appointed by FAO and the CGIAR. The Board generally meets twice a year and reports of its decisions are available on the Trust website. Donors who have contributed USD 25,000 or more are invited to join the Trust's Donors' Council. The Donors' Council meets annually and provides financial oversight and advice to the Executive Board. The Council's reports and the complete list of donors can be found on the Trust website.

52. There have been recent major changes in both the Executive Board and Management of the Trust. The new Board Chair is Ambassador Fust from Switzerland, former head of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In March 2013, Ms Marie Haga took up the position of Executive Director, following the retirement of Professor Cary Fowler in 2012. Ms Haga has held three ministerial positions in Norway and was a member of the Trust's Board from 2010 to 2012. Other Executive Board changes in 2012 and 2013 include:

- Appointment of Dr. Ren Wang, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Appointment of Klaus Töpfer, former Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as former Under Secretary General of the United Nations
- Appointment of Ambassador Andrew Fischer, former Australian Deputy Prime Minister

Other changes in the membership of the Executive Board and staff of the Trust are described on the Trust website at: www.croptrust.org.

53. The Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust held its eighth and ninth meeting in Rome, Italy in 2011, and one teleconference Board meeting in March 2012.

54. As noted above, in 2012, the CGIAR Fund Council approved the Trust-CGIAR Consortium five-year programme for the management and sustainable funding of the collections of plant genetic resources managed by 11 CGIAR Centres. This five-year funding commitment for the international collections includes management oversight by the Trust and the Consortium office and aims to increase efficiencies, ensure accountability, nurture collaboration between genebanks, and most importantly, improve long-term stability of funding. The programme agreement calls for the commitment to “phase-out” annual funding while simultaneously building the Trust’s endowment, thus ensuring true sustainability.

55. To date, the Trust has raised USD 232 million, of which c. USD 130 million are for the endowment . However, the Trust is still far from reaching its endowment target and the programmatic goals recognized in its Relationship Agreement with the Governing Body and set out for itself in its Constitution and Fund Disbursement Strategy.

56. The number of countries (developed and developing), associations, foundations, and companies that have contributed funds and joined the Trust’s Donors’ Council is 30. The Council meets annually and provides financial oversight and advice on such matters to the Executive Board. In addition a number of individuals have contributed to the Trust. The complete list of donors can be found at: www.croptrust.org/main/funds.php. Donor Council representatives held their annual meeting in October 2012 in Rome, Italy to review financial and programmatic activities.

57. The Trust has raised a considerable amount of money for its endowment fund for the purpose of providing stable, on-going financial support to key genebank collections, and currently, the Trust’s endowment provides over USD 2 million of funding annually in a sustainable manner. Although this provides a measure of security unmatched in the history of genebanks, the Trust is still far from reaching its endowment goal and the programmatic goals recognized in its Relationship Agreement with the Governing Body and set out for itself in its Constitution and Fund Disbursement Strategy, At current endowment fund levels, the Trust is able to provide less than 25% of the amount needed to implement relevant Articles of the International Treaty.

58. Full funding of the Trust’s endowment would contribute significantly to implementation of the International Treaty. It would secure collections of crop diversity forever, ensuring their availability to help get agriculture ready for climate change. And, in the long-term it would result in efficiencies and cost savings for national programs and donor agencies.

59. The Executive Board thus appeals to countries and donor agencies to summon the political will at the highest level to make the investment needed to secure crop diversity through the Trust’s endowment fund.

60. More information about the Trust’s strategy, programmes and finances can be found at: www.croptrust.org

61. In closing, the Executive Board would like to use this occasion to reaffirm the Trust’s commitment to pursuing its objectives through the framework of the International Treaty, and to continue fulfilling its role as an essential element of the Treaty’s funding strategy. The Executive Board looks forward to continuing and strengthening the constructive and cooperative relationship that already exists between the Trust and the Governing Body of the International Treaty.