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ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Report from the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Executive Summary

1. The Secretary of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture reports regularly to sessions of the Treaty on the implementation of relevant components of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work, in particular the supporting components of the Treaty that are under the Commission's aegis, including *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for food and Agriculture.
2. This report, prepared in close collaboration with the responsible technical departments of FAO, focusses on the work of the Commission and activities carried out since the Sixth Session of the Governing Body, in particular activities that are relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the supporting components of the Treaty.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to the *Joint Statement* regarding the Cooperation between the International Treaty and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), “the Secretary of the Commission will report regularly to sessions of the Treaty on the implementation of relevant components of the Commission’s Multi-Year Programme of Work, in particular regarding the supporting components of the Treaty that are under its aegis, including *The State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources and Food and Agriculture* and the Global Plan of Action.”¹
2. The Commission, at its last session, requested its Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the Treaty to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, and in particular with regard to: (a) the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report) and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; (b) the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, including further work on draft technical guidelines on farmers’ varieties/landraces and crop wild relatives (CWR) and global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA; (c) access and benefit-sharing; (d) the Global Information System of the Treaty and the World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS); and (e) global targets and indicators.²
3. This report has been prepared in close collaboration with the responsible technical departments of FAO, for information of the Governing Body. It focusses on major outcomes of the Eighth Session of the Commission’s Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group), held from 8 to 10 June 2016 and the Commission’s Sixteenth Regular Session, held from 30 January to 3 February 2017, as well as on activities carried out since the Sixth Session of the Governing Body (October 2015) that are relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the International Treaty.
4. Information on developments in the cooperation between the Governing Body and the Commission and on-going or possible future joint activities in specific areas of common interest is provided in the document, *Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.³

II. IMPLEMENTATION BY COUNTRIES OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

5. As explicitly stated in Article 14 of the International Treaty, “the rolling Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is important to this Treaty [and] Contracting Parties should promote its effective implementation, including through national actions and, as appropriate, international cooperation to provide a coherent framework, inter alia, for capacity-building, technology transfer and exchange of information, taking into account the provisions of Article 13.” The Global Plan of Action is a “supporting component” of the International Treaty.
6. In 2011, the FAO Council adopted the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), prepared under the aegis of the Commission. The Second GPA updates the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and lays out a series of agreed priority plans and actions that can protect our rich portfolio of diverse PGRFA, while ensuring a sustainable flow of improved varieties, by harnessing enhanced traits to deliver better quality foods, in

¹ *Joint Statement of Intent for Cooperation between the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, see CGRFA-12/09/Report, Appendix H; IT-GB-2/07/Report, Appendix E.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 93.

³ IT/GB-7/17/22.

quantities that match our burgeoning needs. Overall progress in the implementation of the Second GPA is guided by governments and other FAO Members through the Commission.

Key findings

7. On 1 October 2015, FAO invited officially appointed National Focal Points (NFPs) to report through the WIEWS Reporting System on the status of PGRFA in their countries (as of 30 June 2014) and on activities undertaken by their countries between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2014 to implement the Second GPA. The NFPs were asked to use the Reporting Format⁴ which is based on the indicators agreed by the Commission at its Fourteenth Regular Session⁵ and requires NFPs to rate the level of achievement for each indicator. FAO also invited regional and international agricultural research centres holding PGRFA *ex situ* collections to provide information. The 11 centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) conserving germplasm, as well as the World Vegetable Center provided information to FAO on the basis of an adapted version of the Reporting Format used by countries.

8. As of March 2016, 43 countries had completed the online Reporting Format (answering on average 58 percent of the questions). For one specific question and its three indicators associated with *ex situ* collection holdings, data on about 3.6 million accessions could be gathered from 71 countries and 12 international centres. Countries reported directly to FAO on 1.17 million accessions, while the other accessions were sourced from EURISCO and Genesys. A summary assessment of the implementation by countries of the Second GPA as well as a more detailed document were made available to the last session of the Commission.⁶

9. Overall, it should be noted that a greater number of country reports is needed to be able to draw conclusions as to the global state of implementation of the Second GPA.

Conservation

The assessment seems to indicate that in many countries *ex situ* conservation receives often more attention and tends to be better integrated into the PGRFA management cycle than *in situ* conservation. Overall progress on *ex situ* conservation was rated higher than progress on *in situ* conservation. Nevertheless, this relatively high satisfaction with the overall progress made on *ex situ* conservation should not obscure the fact that a high number of accessions is due for regeneration and the budget necessary for regeneration is in many cases not available, even in the case of some collections of global importance. The insufficient level of safety duplication makes the lack of funding for regeneration all the more worrisome.

NFP ratings show a mixed picture with regard to *in situ* conservation and on-farm management. The ratings clearly indicate low progress on *in situ* conservation and management of CWR and wild food plants and therefore underscore the need for their adequate integration into national programmes. On the other hand, relatively good progress was reported on specific activities, such as surveying and inventorying of PGRFA and on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces.

Sustainable use

Activities in support of sustainable use of PGRFA have been given the second highest rating. Activities reported include the characterization and evaluation of accessions, the management and distribution of collections, pre-breeding and breeding, seed systems and promotion of the diversification of crop production and increase of crop diversity on-farm. There were variations in the ratings provided for the different Priority Activities (PAs) of the Second GPA: supporting seed production received the highest average rating. Promoting diversification actions received the lowest average rating.

⁴ CGRFA-15/15/Inf.9.

⁵ CGRFA-14/13/Report, Appendix C.

⁶ *Summary assessment of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2012-2014* (CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.1); *Assessment of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2012-2014* (CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.2).

Building sustainable institutional and human capacities

On a positive note, progress in building institutional and human capacities was rated highest. The PA 13, *Building and Strengthening National Programmes*, received the highest rating of all PAs. On the other hand, PA 16, *Developing and strengthening systems for monitoring and safeguarding genetic diversity and minimizing genetic erosion*, scored lowest among the PAs of this area.

Conclusions and next steps

10. The Commission, at its last session, in considering the status of implementation of the Second GPA and the recommendations of its Working Group⁷, stressed the need for a greater number of country reports. It invited all countries that have not yet done so to provide information on their implementation of the Second GPA between January 2012 and June 2014 as soon as possible, and in no case later than **31 December 2017**, through the Reporting System of the World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS).⁸ The Commission requested FAO to continue supporting NFPs in their reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA.

11. The Commission also expressed concern regarding the high number of genebank accessions due for regeneration for which no resources for this purpose are currently available. It requested governments and relevant international organizations to provide the necessary resources for the regeneration of accessions and invited FAO to continue monitoring this issue.

12. While noting that the WIEWS Reporting System already provides the options of only rating the indicators and providing an explanation for the rating or reporting on a subset of indicators, it requested FAO to consult Commission Members and observers on options for further simplifying the reporting format and to prepare a proposal for review by the Working Group. A workshop on “*Reporting on the State of Plant Genetic Resources*” will be held at FAO Headquarters from 29 November to 1 December 2017.

III. FAO ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

13. During the reporting period, FAO continued to support countries in strengthening their capacities for the implementation of Second GPA, in close collaboration its partners. The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session, following up on recommendations from its Working Group, also pursued other initiatives and activities relating to the four main groups of Priority Activities of the Second GPA, namely: *in situ* conservation and management; *ex situ* conservation; sustainable use; and building sustainable institutional and human capacities.

⁷ CGRFA-16/17/15.

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/>

1. *IN SITU* CONSERVATION AND ON-FARM MANAGEMENT

14. The Commission emphasized the importance of *in situ* conservation and on-farm management on many occasions.⁹ At its last session, it considered again the issue of global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA as well as draft guidelines for the national level conservation of farmers' varieties/landraces and CWR.

A. MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON *IN SITU* CONSERVATION AND ON-FARM MANAGEMENT OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

15. For quite some time, the Commission has been discussing the need for and feasibility of a global networking mechanism for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA.

16. In 2013, at its Fourteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to prepare a concept note detailing the structure, functions and financial implications of the establishment of either one global network on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA or two separate networks addressing these areas. The Commission stressed that the concept note should also consider "means of improving and strengthening national and regional networks and means of avoiding duplication of efforts."¹⁰ In response to the Commission's request, FAO presented a concept note to the Seventh Session of the Working Group¹¹ and, at the request of the Working Group, elaborated the document further, for consideration by the Commission at its Fifteenth Regular Session. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, took note of the revised concept note¹² and requested FAO to convene prior to the Working Group's Eighth Session an informal multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss options for networking for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management, its functions, governance and budgetary requirements, in particular to ensure its long-term funding. The Commission requested FAO to revise the concept note in the light of the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder dialogue, for consideration of the Commission at its next session.¹³

17. In response to the Commission's request, FAO, in collaboration with the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), organized an informal multi-stakeholder dialogue from 6 to 7 June 2016 at FAO headquarters.¹⁴ The Commission, at its last session, took note of the informal multi-stakeholder dialogue, reviewed the concept note on *Global networking on in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*¹⁵ and referred it to its Working Group for further consultations.¹⁶

B. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

18. In response to the Commission's request, FAO continued supporting, in collaboration with international and local partners, several activities on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA. In Moldova, FAO's support resulted in better coordination of efforts amongst partners, improved efficiency in the conservation of PGRFA and enhanced exchange of materials, knowledge and experience among stakeholders¹⁷.

19. FAO supported Albania's efforts aimed at the sustainable management of local crop varieties through strengthening Albania's capacity in surveying and collecting PGRFA, and for

⁹ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 51; CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 96; CGRFA-13/11/Report, paragraph 41.

¹⁰ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 96.

¹¹ CGRFA/WG-PGR-7/14/Inf.3.

¹² CGRFA-15/15/Inf.22.

¹³ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 51.

¹⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.21

¹⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.20.

¹⁶ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 64.

¹⁷ TCP/MOL/3504 *Support to the development of a National Programme for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Moldova*.

the characterization and evaluation of target crops¹⁸. Ecuador, with FAO's technical support as the implementing agency of a project funded by the Global Environment Facility, mainstreamed crop diversity conservation and use into public policies and plans, including those related to land use. The resulting 'Participatory Guarantee Systems' ensure compliance of products with good agricultural practices¹⁹. Crop diversity was promoted for pest and disease management, and linkages to value chains were fostered for incorporating products into local markets and agro-tourism initiatives.

20. FAO, in collaboration with Bioversity International and other partners, continues to provide support to Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia in the conservation and sustainable use of CWR through strengthening of capacities in areas, such as predictive characterization of CWR and their use in pre-breeding. Leveraging FAO's *Guidelines for Developing a National Strategy for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*²⁰, the three countries are currently developing National Strategic Action Plans for *in situ* conservation and sustainable use of CWR.

C. FARMERS' VARIETIES/LANDRACES AND CROP WILD RELATIVES

21. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, invited its Working Group to review and revise two draft guidelines, *National level conservation and use of landraces* and *National level conservation of crop wild relatives*, considering inputs received from Members and stakeholders, such as smallholders and indigenous peoples and local communities²¹. The Working Group reviewed the Guidelines and agreed to invite Commission Members and observers to submit further comments.

22. The Commission, at its last session, reviewed the two draft guidelines, as revised in the light of comments received, endorsed the *Voluntary guidelines for national level conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants*²² and requested FAO to publish them. It referred the revised draft *Voluntary guidelines on national level conservation and use of farmers' varieties/landraces*²³ to the Working Group for further review and invited Members, observers and NFPs to provide comments on this document before 1 June 2017. The Working Group, at its next session will review the revised draft voluntary guidelines, for consideration by the Commission.

2. EX SITU CONSERVATION

23. At its Fifteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to continue supporting countries in the implementation of the *Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*²⁴.

24. FAO provided support to the establishment of field genebanks for germplasm, including of CWR, of apricot and grape in Armenia, a centre for genetic diversity for both plants²⁵. Certain germplasm accessions of Armenian origin were repatriated from other countries.

25. Somalia received support from FAO in the training of genebank personnel and the characterization and evaluation of germplasm accessions. Safety duplications of important PGRFA of Somali origin were deposited in genebanks of the CGIAR, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the International Institute of Tropical

¹⁸ TCP/ALB/3401 *Development of an improved and resilient system for managing local crop varieties in place, which contributes directly to sustainable crop production intensification.*

¹⁹ GCP/ECU/086/GFF *Mainstreaming the use and conservation of agrobiodiversity in public policy through integrated strategies and in situ implementation in four Andean Highlands provinces.*

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/20217930-4d14-4e87-b144-8e0adb6828a7/>

²¹ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 51.

²² <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7788e.pdf>

²³ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.18.

²⁴ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 51.

²⁵ TCP/ARM/3502 *Support for the Establishment of Apricot Collection Orchards for the Purpose of Genetic Fund Preservation - Phase II* of TCP/ARM/3302; TCP/ARM/3503. *Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia.*

Agriculture (IITA) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the Genetic Resources Research Institute of Kenya (formerly the National Genebank of Kenya)²⁶.

26. Through FAO support in the collection, characterization and evaluation of germplasm of 15 regionally important crops, 210 new accessions were added to the collection of the National Germplasm Bank of Ecuador²⁷.

27. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, requested FAO to propose a mechanism for monitoring the application of the Genebank Standards. In response, FAO has carried out a survey on the use of the Genebank Standards and the results will form the basis of a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of the Genebank Standards. FAO is also developing a Practical Guide facilitating the use of the Genebank Standards. FAO, in collaboration with the Global Crop Diversity Trust and other partners will organize an expert consultation in the first quarter of 2018 to review the proposed monitoring mechanism and the Practical Guide.

3. SUSTAINABLE USE

28. The Commission, at its Sixteenth Regular Session, requested FAO to continue supporting countries in strengthening their crop improvement and plant breeding capacities, including through multi-stakeholder platforms, such as the Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB), and the Joint Programme of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and to report on the impact of these activities to the Working Group at its next session.²⁸

A. VOLUNTARY GUIDE FOR NATIONAL SEED POLICY FORMULATION

29. The Commission further requested FAO to support countries in the development or revision of their national seed policy and legislation, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary guide for national seed policy formulation*²⁹ (Voluntary Guide)³⁰.

30. In 2015, the Commission had endorsed the *Voluntary Guide* which is currently available in English, French and Spanish, with translations in other languages pending.³¹ Since its publication, the Voluntary Guide has received considerable attention and is being used by an increasing number of policy makers and administrators. FAO presented the Voluntary Guide at an international conference on *Seeds: the solution to current and future food challenges*, co-organized in October 2015 by the French Groupement National Interprofessionnel des Semences et Plants (GNIS) and FAO under the auspices of the Expo 2015 that was held in Milan, Italy under the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". The Voluntary Guide has since been presented to various stakeholders and expert forums, including an expert meeting, co-organized by the Third World Network, South Centre and Oxfam Novib in March 2016. It has so far been used by several countries, such as Costa Rica, Guinea Bissau and Haiti in the development of their national seed policies.

31. In light of the progress on national seed policy development, including through the technical assistance provided by FAO and the Voluntary Guide, the Commission decided to review status and trends of seed policies at its next session.³²

²⁶ OSRO/SOM/516/EC *Improving the genetic quality of seeds in Somalia*.

²⁷ GCP/ECU/086/GFF *Mainstreaming the use and conservation of agrobiodiversity in public policy through integrated strategies and in situ implementation in four Andean Highlands provinces*.

²⁸ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 59.

²⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4916e.pdf>

³⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 60.

³¹ ³¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 52.

³² CGRFA-16/17/Report, Appendix C.

B. STRENGTHENING SEED SYSTEMS

32. In 2015, FAO continued to provide support to the strengthening of seed systems in various countries, including through partnerships at national, regional and international levels dedicated to the provision of quality seeds and planting materials. Relevant seed sector activities have been implemented especially in developing countries through a combination of Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) and Trust Fund projects. Countries supported by FAO in the development or revision of seed legislation include: Azerbaijan³³, Benin³⁴, Burkina Faso, Chad³⁵, Ecuador³⁶, Georgia³⁷, Guinea³⁸, Guinea Bissau³⁹, Haiti⁴⁰ and Nicaragua.

33. FAO also continued to support community-level seed delivery systems, especially through the creation of an enabling environment for the establishment of small- and medium-size seed enterprises. In Honduras, for example, small- and medium-size enterprises contributed to a significant increase in the production of maize, beans, rice and sorghum by making available quality seeds of well-adapted crop varieties to about 300 000 mainly smallholder farmers, including indigenous peoples.⁴¹ Similar support was provided in Ecuador⁴². In Somalia, landraces of maize, sorghum and cowpea were purified, bulked and distributed to farmers with the support of FAO⁴³. In Georgia, FAO helped to improve significantly the overall seed delivery system by strengthening the national capacity for seed certification and, in addition, increasing the capacity of farms to multiply early generation seeds, i.e. breeder and foundation seeds⁴⁴.

34. FAO contributed, through a project for seed sector development funded by the Government of Turkey⁴⁵, to the development of a Regional Seed Agreement and a related implementation strategy, aiming at facilitating seed trade in the ECO region consisting of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

35. In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), FAO currently supports efforts to improve crop production in Mozambique by making available quality seeds and establishing Farmer Field Schools⁴⁶. Through the South-South Cooperation mechanism and in collaboration with the government of Venezuela, FAO also supports the strengthening of capacities in the rice production of ten countries in Africa (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda⁴⁷).

³³ TCP/AZE/3503 *Support to Seed Sector Development in Azerbaijan.*

³⁴ TCP/BEN/3402 *Projet d'Appui au Développement de la Filière Semence Maïs (PADFSM).*

³⁵ TCP/CHD/3403 *Appui à l'élaboration d'une politique semencière au Tchad.*

³⁶ TCP/ECU/3502 *Apoyo al fortalecimiento en los procesos de fomento de servicios especializados del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca (MAGAP) en el ámbito de la innovación tecnológica y producción de semillas.*

³⁷ GCP/GEO/004/AUT *Capacity Development of the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia: Improved Policy Making and Effective Implementation of the Strategy for Agricultural Development* (contribution to ENPARD Georgia Programme).

³⁸ TCP/GUI/3402 *L'objectif global du projet est de contribuer à améliorer la sécurité alimentaire et l'état nutritionnel de la population par une augmentation durable de la production et de la productivité des cultures vivrières.*

³⁹ TCP/GBS/3503 *Appui au développement durable d'un secteur semencier performant en Guinée Bissau.*

⁴⁰ UTF/HAI/033/HAI *Appui à la relance du secteur semencier.*

⁴¹ TCP/HON/3501 *Desarrollo de las Capacidades de Gestión Empresarial y Competitividad de las Redes de Empresas de Producción de Semilla.*

⁴² TCP/ECU/3502 *Apoyo al fortalecimiento en los procesos de fomento de servicios especializados del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca (MAGAP) en el ámbito de la innovación tecnológica y producción de semillas.*

⁴³ OSRO/SOM/516/EC *Improving the genetic quality of seeds in Somalia.*

⁴⁴ GCP /GEO/003/AUS *National programme for rehabilitation of seed production system in Georgia.*

⁴⁵ GCP /INT/123/MUL *Seed Sector Development in Countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization.*

⁴⁶ GCP /MOZ/111/EC *National Programme on Food security - (EU-MDG Initiative - Agriculture, food security, rural development and natural resource management.*

⁴⁷ GCP/RAF/489/VEN *Partnership for Sustainable Rice Systems Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

C. REHABILITATION OF SEED SYSTEMS

36. In order to ensure that emergency seed relief interventions form part of the overall seed sector development in the long term, FAO supports the use of better seed system security assessment methodologies in countries that are affected by, or prone to, natural disasters and conflicts. FAO carried out seed security assessments and seed relief operations in collaboration with partners in Chad, Mali and Uganda, with further activities planned for Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. In partnership with WFP, FAO provides agricultural inputs and assets to approximately 125 000 at-risk households in Nepal following the April 2015 earthquake⁴⁸.

37. To mitigate the effects of economic turmoil caused by insurgency and natural catastrophes in Pakistan, FAO currently supports the restoration of cropping systems, including by improving access to quality inputs (seed and fertilizers) and the rehabilitation of fruit orchards⁴⁹. In response to similar pressures, Madagascar received assistance in the development of a new agricultural extension system and the rehabilitation of seed systems⁵⁰ while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea received similar support in response to the significant decreases in harvest following the severe drought of 2014⁵¹.

38. Other emergency-related seed interventions in 2015 included support provided to: (i) farmers in the Philippines affected by civil unrest and natural disasters⁵²; (ii) over 15 000 smallholder farmers in Ethiopia affected by drought in 2015 caused by El Niño⁵³; (iii) vulnerable farming households affected by Hurricane Fred in Cape Verde in 2015; (iv) 2 400 vulnerable Syrian households affected by snow storms and unusually low temperatures in January 2015⁵⁴; (v) farmers affected by severe flooding in Malawi⁵⁵ and Ghana⁵⁶ in December 2014 and June 2015, respectively; and (vi) farmers affected by the ongoing civil strife in Yemen who received quality seeds⁵⁷.

39. FAO also supported Sudan⁵⁸ and South Sudan⁵⁹ through enhancing their capacities to adopt climate smart agricultural production systems. In Sudan, this included the procurement and distribution of quality seeds and planting materials.

40. FAO continued to foster and strengthen partnerships with relevant regional and international organizations with seed sector development related mandates. These include especially the Africa Seed Trade Association, International Seed Federation (ISF), International

⁴⁸ OSRO/NEP/504/CAN *Restoring agricultural-based livelihoods of vulnerable earthquake-affected smallholder farmers in Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Dhading, Gorkha, Rasuwa and Dolakha*; OSRO/NEP/501/BEL *Emergency assistance for the restoration of earth affected agricultural system in central Nepal for food and livelihood security*; TCP/NEP/3504 (E) *Emergency response to restore the rural livelihoods of earthquake affected farmers*.

⁴⁹ OSRO/PAK/502/JPN *Project for Assistance to the Recovery and Development of the Agricultural Economy in Federally Administered Tribal Areas*.

⁵⁰ GCP/MAG/081/EC *Actions Intégrées en Nutrition et Alimentation*.

⁵¹ TCP/DRK/3505 (E) *Support to vulnerable farmers to mitigate the impact of drought in North and South Hwanghae provinces of the DPR Korea*.

⁵² TCP/PHI/3504 (E) *Emergency response to restore the livelihoods of conflict affected communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and in Region XII*.

⁵³ TCP/ETH/3504 (15/XII/ETH/232) *Emergency assistance for vulnerable smallholder households affected by El Niño-induced drought in eastern Amhara and southern Tigray Regions*.

⁵⁴ TCP/SYR/3502 *Emergency assistance to restore the livelihoods of vulnerable greenhouse vegetable crop producers affected by the snow storm*.

⁵⁵ OSRO/MLW/502/BEL *Emergency assistance for resuming smallholder crop production in flood affected districts of Malawi*.

⁵⁶ TCP/GHA/3506 *Restoration of productive capacities of flood affected agricultural households in Ghana*.

⁵⁷ TCP/YEM/3503 *Emergency livelihood support to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and vulnerable host communities living in conflict affected areas of Al Dhale Governorate*.

⁵⁸ OSRO/SUD/506/ITA *Integrated Food Security and Livelihoods Project (IFSLP) in Eastern Sudan*; OSRO/SUD/507/CHA *Life-saving food assistance and livelihood support to IDPs and vulnerable households affected by conflict in North Darfur State*.

⁵⁹ TCP/SSD/3405 *Emergency livelihood support to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and vulnerable host community families affected by the recent crisis*.

Seed Testing Association (ISTA), OECD Seed Schemes, and the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV).

D. STRENGTHENING PLANT BREEDING

41. FAO continued to implement several regular programme and trust fund activities to strengthen capacities for developing well-adapted crop varieties that are most suited to local agro-ecologies and farming systems:

- With FAO's support, root and tuber crops value chains are being strengthened in Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda⁶⁰. The interventions include strengthening capacities for the development, handling and dissemination of disease-free planting materials for cassava, yam and potatoes.
- In Bangladesh, FAO assists national partners in developing capacity for crop variety development and adaptation, and in defining the best framework for quality assurance, in partnership with the private sector and seed producers⁶¹.
- In Zambia, FAO supports efforts to genetically improve rice⁶². The interventions include the production of enhanced breeder and foundation seeds.
- FAO, together with other organizations, also promotes crop diversification in Ethiopia through integration of adaptable crops and new varieties into the existing farming systems⁶³. The focus is on nutrition-based agriculture building on nutritionally rich crops and varieties, post-harvest management and loss reduction.

42. As contribution to enhanced nutrition, FAO also continued to build upon the success of the International Year of Quinoa by promoting the production, evaluation, management, utilization, and marketing of the crop under diverse farming systems and agro-ecological regions in 26 countries across Africa, the Near East and Asia.

43. In February 2016, the FAO International Symposium on *The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition* was held in Rome at FAO headquarters⁶⁴. The symposium's objective was to explore the application of biotechnologies for the benefit of family farmers. Over 400 participants took part in the symposium, which highlighted successful case studies for the application of biotechnologies in developing sustainable food systems and improved nutrition. Intellectual Property Rights, funding and scientific and technical capacities were identified as important factors in the adoption of diverse agricultural biotechnologies.

44. The Joint Division of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (AGE) supported 99 countries in the implementation of 72 crop-improvement related TCPs. Additionally, through the Coordinated Research Projects mechanism of the IAEA, AGE networked with researchers from 44 different countries to collaborate on six crop improvement-themed collaborative projects. These efforts have resulted in the development of about 4 241 mutant lines in 17 different crops in 32 countries and 64 publications. 337 trainees acquired enhanced relevant skills both at AGE's Agricultural and Biotechnology Laboratory in Seibersdorf, Austria and other advanced training facilities around the world. An updated version of the Mutant Variety Database, which is a searchable online tool

⁶⁰ GCP/RAF/448/EC *Strengthening linkages between small actors and buyers in the Roots and Tubers Sector in Africa*.

⁶¹ UTF/BGD/044/BGD *Integrated Agricultural Productivity Project Technical Assistance and Capacity Development Component*.

⁶² TCP/ZAM/3501 *Strengthening Rice Seed Production and Enhancing Extension Services to Increase Rice Production in Zambia*.

⁶³ GCP /ETH/085/MUL *Increase the production and productivity of poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers and hence increase the availability of diversified livelihood through increased production in crop and livestock products for household consumption as well cash generation from market sales of these products*.

⁶⁴ Symposium website <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechs-symposium/en/>

for over 3 200 officially released mutant crop varieties worldwide, became available in May 2015⁶⁵.

4. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

45. PGRFA activities are carried out by public entities, private companies, nongovernmental organizations, botanic gardens, farmers, indigenous and local communities, and individuals from the agriculture, environment, research and development sectors. The integration of such different actors in the framework of a unified and coherent national programme provides the opportunity to add value to their diverse efforts so that the whole becomes bigger than the sum of its parts.⁶⁶ The Commission therefore assists countries in building sustainable institutions and structures for PGRFA governance.

A. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PGRFA

46. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, endorsed as a voluntary reference tool *Guidelines for Developing a National Strategy for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*⁶⁷. These guidelines have been published and are available in English, French and Spanish, with translations in other languages pending⁶⁸. At its last session, the Commission called for extra-budgetary funds to support countries in the implementation and monitoring of the Second GPA, including through the development and implementation of national strategies for PGRFA, taking into account the Commission's Guidelines, as appropriate.⁶⁹

47. Increasingly, regions develop strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Examples include the *Strategic action plan to strengthen conservation and use of Mesoamerican plant genetic resources in adapting agriculture to climate change* (SAPM) 2014-2024. In the Near East, FAO worked with four countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iran) on the development of national PGRFA strategies that identify priority activities for the conservation and sustainable utilization of PGRFA in the countries⁷⁰.

48. Efforts are underway in Moldova to establish a national programme for the long-term conservation and sustainable utilization of the diversity of PGRFA. The work addresses the four main areas of the Second GPA: *in situ* conservation, *ex situ* conservation, sustainable use and institution and capacity building.

49. To develop a cooperative framework that accelerates cross-border flow of PGRFA among Asian countries, FAO in collaboration with the Treaty, supported capacity development in 15 countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam⁷¹.

B. NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

50. The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session, had invited all countries that had not yet done so to nominate a NFP for reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA⁷². As of 1 October 2017, a total of 114 countries have officially appointed NFPs for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA and for the preparation of country reports for the Third Report. This might reflect both, a strong commitment by countries to the implementation of the

⁶⁵ Available online from: <http://mvd.iaea.org/>

⁶⁶ Second GPA, paragraph 214.

⁶⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4917e.pdf>

⁶⁸ Available online from: <http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/20217930-4d14-4e87-b144-8e0adb6828a7/>

⁶⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 61.

⁷⁰ TCP/SNO/3401 *Optimizing the Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for Adaptation to Climate Change*.

⁷¹ GCP/RAS/284/JPN *Enhancing Understanding and implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Asia*.

⁷² CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 18.

Second GPA and a common interest of countries in the status and trends of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

C. WORLD INFORMATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEM ON PGRFA

51. Overall progress on the implementation of the rolling Second GPA and the related follow-up processes are monitored and guided by governments and other FAO Members through the Commission. The Commission, at its last session, requested FAO to complete the restructuring of WIEWS, and publish, through WIEWS, information on the implementation of the Second GPA and SDG Target 2.5. It welcomed the coordination with the Genesys database hosted by the Global Crop Diversity Trust.⁷³

52. WIEWS is FAO's information system for PGRFA and operates since 1983 as the key information system for the preparation of global assessments of the status of PGRFA. In 2000, WIEWS was among the first databases of FAO that provided access to officially appointed users for reporting and updating through the Internet. Updating WIEWS, improving its functionalities, increasing its accessibility and user-friendliness are therefore key concerns for FAO. Accordingly, FAO redesigned WIEWS to fully integrate the monitoring system of the Second GPA based on the indicators adopted by the Commission in 2013. The databases of WIEWS and NISMs have been merged into one integrated database achieving efficiencies in terms of system administration, maintenance and data management. The new system that was pre-released in 2014 and became operational during the first semester of 2015 allows countries to provide information, on the basis of the agreed indicators, on the level of implementation of the Second GPA.⁷⁴ The system is accessible through the internet to the officially nominated National Focal Points and the stakeholders designated by them. The multi-language feature of NISM has been preserved. Other features, including data input, data search, dataset import and dataset export have been improved with the latest available web technology and a more user-friendly and portable interface. Monitoring data will be made publicly available in the future through the redesigned WIEWS portal.⁷⁵ WIEWS continues to provide the WIEWS *instcode*, a globally used unique identifier system for institutions holding germplasm.

53. WIEWS continues to be a crucial repository of PGRFA data, which is widely used by key global institutions. A recent set of studies analyzing the potential monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the Treaty relies to a considerable extent on data drawn from WIEWS.⁷⁶ With the full integration of the implementation monitoring component with the country reporting process for the Third Report, WIEWS is expected to play an even more important role in the future.

54. Since 2006 countries have been using their NISMs for publishing publicly accessible information on PGRFA. In many cases NISMs turned out to be useful for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA and the preparation of periodic global assessments of the state of the world's PGRFA. At countries' request, FAO initially agreed to host many NISMs on its web servers⁷⁷. Following the implementation of a new information technology policy at FAO in June 2015, the domain at which the NISM were hosted was discontinued. The NISMs have been archived and migrated to a new address under FAO domain where they will be maintained for historical reasons.⁷⁸ Since 1 March 2017, only the archived NISM databases are accessible while the individual country NISM portals are no longer available on FAO's web servers.

⁷³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 57.

⁷⁴ CGRFA-15/15/Inf.9.

⁷⁵ www.fao.org/wiews

⁷⁶ Moeller, N.I. & Stannard, C. (2013). Identifying benefit flows. Studies on the potential monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, pp. 41; 44; 257 (available at: http://www.planttreaty.org/sites/default/files/Identifying_Benefit_Flows.pdf)

⁷⁷ www.pgrfa.org

⁷⁸ www.fao.org/pgrfa-gpa-archive

IV. THE THIRD REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

55. The Commission, at its last session, considered the status preparation of the Third Report.⁷⁹ It endorsed the revised timeline for the preparation of the Third Report and the monitoring of the implementation of the Second GPA.⁸⁰ It took note of the revised provisional budget.⁸¹

56. The Commission requested FAO to adjust the list of thematic studies,⁸² as necessary and appropriate, and to consult the Working Group and the Commission on the thematic studies before work commences.

57. The Commission invited donors to provide extra-budgetary resources to support the preparation of the Third Report, ensure the participation of developing countries, in particular least-developed countries, in the preparation of implementation assessments and country reports, and to facilitate the preparation of thematic studies and the publication of the Third Report.

58. The Commission recommended that FAO invite countries to report annually on the SDG indicator 2.5.1, starting in February 2017. As recommended by the Commission, the new WIEWS platform enables NFPs to report annually on this indicator. An explanatory note, including an Excel format for reporting annually on the SDG indicator is available on the WIEWS website.⁸³

59. The Commission further requested FAO to assist countries in assessing their national reporting obligations and improving data and capacity to report on SDG indicator 2.5.1. It requested the Secretariat to continue collaborating with the Statistical Division of FAO and to inform the Commission of any relevant developments, including the final decisions taken by the UN Statistical Commission on the global reporting mechanism for the SDGs.

V. THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

60. The farming of seaweeds and freshwater macrophytes to produce chemicals for the food and other industries, as well as products for direct consumption as human food, is the world's largest aquaculture operation.⁸⁴ The genetic resources of these important aquatic plants will be covered by the first report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

61. The Commission, at its last session, welcomed the draft report on *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*⁸⁵ and took note of various thematic background studies.⁸⁶ It invited countries that have not yet done so to nominate NFPs and to submit country reports by 30 June 2017, and encouraged countries that have already submitted a country report to submit a revised version, as appropriate, by the same deadline.⁸⁷

62. The Commission requested FAO to prepare a Revised Draft Report, taking into account the information contained in the country reports received by 30 June 2017, the thematic background studies, information provided by international organizations, and the comments and recommendations provided by the Commission and its Ad Hoc Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. It invited countries to comment on the Revised

⁷⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 66-70.

⁸⁰ CGRFA-16/17/17, *Appendix I*.

⁸¹ CGRFA-16/17/17, *Appendix II*.

⁸² CGRFA-16/17/17, *Appendix III*.

⁸³ www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/wiews/docs/SDG_251_data_requirement_sheet_table_EN.docx

⁸⁴ CGRFA-15/15/17, *Appendix 3*.

⁸⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.13.

⁸⁶ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/AquaticGeneticResources/en>

⁸⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 39.

Draft Report, when it becomes available, and further requested the Committee on Fisheries and its subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, to review the Revised Draft Report and provide inputs.⁸⁸

63. The Commission also requested that a second meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group be convened and requested it to review the Revised Draft Report in light of all comments and inputs received.⁸⁹

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

64. The Commission, at its last session, considered the status of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources.⁹⁰ It called upon countries to continue implementing the Global Plan of Action to contribute to sustainable forest management, the 2030 Agenda and other relevant international commitments on forests, including the Cancun Declaration. The Commission encouraged countries to support, as appropriate, the regional networks on forest genetic resources and contribute to the activities of these networks, to strengthen regional collaboration on forest genetic resources. It also recommended that countries pay attention to the regional networks on forest invasive species and encouraged the various networks to exchange information relevant to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

65. The Commission requested FAO to continue coordinating and supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, in collaboration with the regional networks on forest genetic resources and relevant international organizations, bodies and processes. It further requested FAO to prepare draft voluntary guidelines for preparing a national strategy for forest genetic resources in line with the proposed outline⁹¹ and, taking into account existing guidelines for the preparation of national forest programmes and for the formulation of forest policy, to avoid duplication of work. Moreover, the Commission requested FAO to continue pursuing extra-budgetary funds, developing the funding strategy to assist countries in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and encouraging donors to provide support.

66. The Commission adopted the targets, indicators and verifiers for forest genetic resources to be used as assessment tools to monitor the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.⁹² It also adopted a schedule for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.⁹³

67. The Commission requested FAO to prepare draft guidelines for the preparation of country progress reports and reporting guidelines for regional networks and international organizations and agreed on a process to develop the guidelines. The Commission encouraged countries to prepare themselves for the collection of information and data, as appropriate, to facilitate timely submission of the first country progress reports. The Commission requested FAO to consider the interface between the reporting systems for plant and forest genetic resources to avoid any duplication of efforts.

68. The Commission requested FAO to pursue extra-budgetary funds to support developing countries, in particular least-developed countries, in the preparation of country progress reports. It also requested FAO to invite regional networks on forest genetic resources and relevant international organizations to report on their contributions to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. Furthermore, the Commission requested FAO to collaborate with other relevant assessments and data providers in monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

⁸⁸ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 40.

⁸⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 41.

⁹⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 71-76.

⁹¹ CGRFA-16/17/19, *Appendix A*.

⁹² CGRFA-16/17/20, *Appendices A & B*.

⁹³ CGRFA-16/17/20, *Appendix C*.

VII. CROSS-SECTORAL MATTERS

69. While the different components of biodiversity for food and agriculture have distinct characteristics, they also share common features. All contribute to meeting the basic needs of food and livelihood security and many depend on human management. The different components face both unique management challenges, as well as common threats, such as climate change.

70. The Commission is committed to addressing cross-cutting issues that can impact any or all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture, such as climate change or the issue of access and benefit-sharing. A number of international bodies deal with these issues. However, the Commission provides a permanent forum where Governments discuss all matters, including cross-sectorial matters, specifically relevant to genetic resources for food and agriculture. It follows carefully policy developments in other international fora and aims to ensure policy coherence through close collaboration with other international organizations and instruments.

(i) *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*

71. The Commission, at its last session, considered the draft report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*.⁹⁴ It stressed the importance of ensuring that as many country reports as possible are submitted and invited countries that have not yet done so to submit their reports by the agreed date of 30 June 2017.

72. The Commission requested the Secretariat to make the Revised Draft Report and a draft in-brief version available by 1 March 2018 and to invite Members and observers to provide comments on them by 16 June 2018. It further requested that the thematic studies and regional synthesis reports be made available as supporting documentation at the same time as the Revised Draft Report. It requested the Secretariat to finalize the Report in the second half of 2018, taking into account comments received from Members and observers, and prepare and publish an in-brief version of the Report in all UN languages.

73. The Commission also agreed on a process to further review and revise, as appropriate, the draft needs and possible actions with regard to biodiversity for food and agriculture, as identified during the informal regional consultations and consolidated by the Secretariat.⁹⁵

(ii) Access and benefit-sharing

74. The Commission, at its last session, requested the Secretariat to continue working on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA), with the aim of raising the awareness of Members, their diverse authorities involved in ABS and other stakeholders, to assist Members in reflecting in their ABS measures the importance of GRFA, their special role for food security and the distinctive features of the different subsectors, with a view to contributing to the achievement of SDG Targets 2.5 and 15.6, and to enable the subsectors to engage in a meaningful way and promote communication in relevant processes at local, national, regional and international levels. The Commission requested the Secretariat to convene, as soon as practicable and in collaboration with the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an international workshop to assist countries to raise awareness of distinctive features and specific practices of subsectors of GRFA in the context of the Elements to facilitate domestic implementation of access and benefit-sharing for different subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture (ABS Elements).⁹⁶ The International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will take place on 10 to 12 January 2018 in Rome at FAO headquarters.⁹⁷

75. The Commission also agreed to produce non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA, to complement the ABS Elements.

⁹⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 10-15.

⁹⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 16-18.

⁹⁶ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 25.

⁹⁷ <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-meetings/abs/en/>

76. The FAO Conference, at its Fortieth Session, welcomed the International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing to be convened by the Commission Secretariat in collaboration with the CBD and Treaty Secretariats, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, and encouraged donors to provide the necessary funds.⁹⁸

77. In line with the Commission's request, the International Workshop will:

- consider the inputs received from Members, observers and other stakeholders for the explanatory notes, including on their practical experiences in implementing national ABS measures related to GRFA and the distinctive features and the specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA;
- provide a forum for participants to exchange information, experiences and views; and
- provide outputs for subsequent elaboration into non-prescriptive explanatory notes describing, within the context of the ABS Elements, the distinctive features and specific practices of different subsectors of GRFA.

(iii) The role of genetic resources for food and agriculture

78. The Commission, at its last session, considered various options to raise awareness of the role genetic resources for food security and nutrition.⁹⁹ It stressed the importance of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) to food production, and to all four dimensions of food security. The Commission invited countries to raise awareness of the important roles of the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA and of access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for GRFA for food security and nutrition. It also invited countries to integrate GRFA into their food security and nutrition policies, including public research and extension programmes, public procurement and education policies, and market and value chain development, with the aim of arriving at policies that support food security, adequate nutrition, and the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA.

79. The Commission requested FAO to prepare a study addressing the contribution of GRFA to the four pillars of food security and to the achievement of relevant SDGs, and to reflect the outcomes of the study in the revised report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*.

(iv) Climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture

80. The Commission, at its last session, reviewed its *Programme of Work on Climate Change and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.¹⁰⁰ It welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the programme and agreed to integrate the Commission's work on climate change into its Multi-Year Programme of Work. It requested FAO to ensure that the Commission's work on GRFA and climate change be fully integrated into the Organization's Strategic Framework and its Climate Change Strategy.

81. The Commission invited countries to implement the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning¹⁰¹ and provide feedback in this regard to the Secretary. It also requested FAO to assist countries in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.

82. The Commission invited countries to integrate diversity of GRFA into national climate change planning, addressing their potential for adaptation to climate change and for climate change mitigation, including in line with their respective nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans.

83. The Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for the preparation of a country-driven global assessment of the role of GRFA in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, for consideration by the Commission at its next session. It stressed that any reporting process should be voluntary in nature, undertaken in collaboration with relevant international

⁹⁸ C 2017/REP, paragraph 54(d).

⁹⁹ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 19-23.

¹⁰⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraphs 26-31.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/290cd085-98f3-43df-99a9-250cec270867/>

entities and, as appropriate, national governments, and preferably based on a simple questionnaire that is usable at national level.

VIII. MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

84. The Commission, at its last session, reviewed its *Multi-Year Programme of Work and draft Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2018–2027)*¹⁰² and expressed its appreciation for the substantive progress made in the implementation of the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) over the last decade, in collaboration with partners.

85. It updated the major outputs and milestones of the MYPOW and agreed that the Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture¹⁰³ adopted at the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session remains valid.

86. The Commission agreed on a draft resolution which the FAO Conference, at its Fortieth Session, adopted. Resolution 4/2017, *The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its Contribution to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*, invites, *inter alia*, Members to include the implementation of the Commission's Global Plans of Action, as appropriate, among their priorities in their national efforts to achieve SDG 2, particularly Target 2.5, as well as other relevant SDGs and to mainstream biodiversity for food and agriculture into policies, programmes and national and regional plans of action on agriculture, climate change, food security and nutrition and other relevant sectors.¹⁰⁴

87. The Commission also established a new work stream on “digital sequence information on GRFA”¹⁰⁵ and requested the Secretariat to prepare, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, an exploratory fact-finding scoping study on “digital sequence information on GRFA” to provide information on, *inter alia*, terminology used in this area, actors involved with “digital sequence information on GRFA”, the types and extent of uses of “digital sequence information on GRFA”, such as:

- characterization,
- breeding and genetic improvement,
- conservation, and
- identification of GRFA

88. as well as on relevance of “digital sequence information on GRFA” for food security and nutrition, in order to facilitate consideration by the Commission, at its next session, of the implications of the use of “digital sequence information on GRFA” for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.

¹⁰² CGRFA-16/17/22.

¹⁰³ CGRFA-14/13/Report, *Appendix I*.

¹⁰⁴ C 2017/REP, *Appendix E*.

¹⁰⁵ The term is taken from decision CBD COP XIII/16 and is subject to further discussion. There is a recognition that there are a multiplicity of terms that have been used in this area (including, *inter alia*, “genetic sequence data”, “genetic sequence information”, “genetic information”, “dematerialized genetic resources”, “*in silico* utilization”, etc.) and that further consideration is needed regarding the appropriate term or terms to be used.