



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



The International Treaty
**ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**THIRD MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP
ON FARMERS' RIGHTS**

Virtual meeting, 25-28 August 2020

**Summary of capacity development activities on Farmers' Rights
undertaken by the Secretariat during the previous biennium**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Governing Body has repeatedly emphasized the importance of capacity development activities for the implementation of the International Treaty, as well as communication, information dissemination and networking (for example, in Resolutions 8/2013, 5/2015, 7/2017, 6/2019).
2. At its Eighth Session, it again requested the Secretary, subject to the availability of financial and human resources, to consider organizing capacity development workshops in the area of Farmers' Rights (Resolution 6/2019).
3. Additionally, the Governing Body encouraged the Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, to continue outreach and communication on Farmers' Rights, to relevant stakeholders as an important measure to advance the realization of Farmers' Rights.
4. The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (Expert Group), at its previous meetings discussed the important role of capacity development and awareness raising activities and incorporated them as one of the categories of the Inventory, "Training, capacity development and public awareness creation" (Category 9).
5. The Secretary has, accordingly, sustained the efforts to keep on delivering on both capacity development and awareness raising, with a significant emphasis on these activities in the last two biennia.
6. This document provides a brief overview of capacity development activities undertaken by the Secretariat in the previous biennium, 2018 - 2019, for the information of the Expert Group.

II. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST BIENNIUM

7. In an effort to continue outreach and communication on Farmers' Rights, with the support of relevant FAO Offices, interested donors and host country national focal points, the Secretariat facilitated three regional training initiatives on conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and Farmers' Rights in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean regions. The objectives of the regional training workshops included enhancing

implementation of the International Treaty through greater understanding of the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights. They also sought to stimulate ideas and identify areas and opportunities for mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights in the context of national plans and programmes on food security and sustainable agriculture, and other relevant sectoral programmes. In addition, they provided a platform for the sharing of experiences and lessons learned on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and implementation of Farmers' Rights.

8. Within the framework of FAO South-South Cooperation, the Secretariat of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) organized three regional meetings in 2018,¹ aimed at (i) identifying national legislation, challenges and best practices for the implementation of Farmers' Rights; (ii) identifying common features of national legislation in the regions; and (iii) proposing options for the implementation of Farmers' Rights within national contexts. The Secretariat participated in one of the regional meetings, and the outcomes of all three regional meetings were submitted to the Secretariat and included in the background documentation for the first meeting of the Expert Group on Farmers' Rights.

9. These events followed various meetings in previous biennia in all FAO regions that brought together Contracting Parties and different stakeholder groups interested in the implementation of Farmers' Rights in practice, including regional and global consultations,² a symposium in collaboration with UPOV and online consultations that supported these meetings.

III. COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

10. As requested by the Governing Body, the Secretariat continues to disseminate and promote the use of the Educational Module on Farmers' Rights. The Module is part of a series of Educational Modules developed by the Secretary involving international experts and stakeholders of all regions. The overall aim of the Educational Modules is to strengthen stakeholders' capacities for the implementation of the International Treaty and to enhance information and raise awareness among other relevant and interested parties.

11. The Educational Module on Farmers' Rights is available on the website of the International Treaty.³

12. In collaboration with InforMEA partners, the Secretariat also developed an interactive online course based on the Educational Module on Farmers' Rights. This course can be accessed through the InforMEA Portal.⁴

13. A major communication tool is the website of the International Treaty, where the Secretary aims at providing ample information, in a user-friendly manner, so as to reach Contracting Parties, farmers, other stakeholders concerned with the implementation of Farmers' Rights, as well as academia, researchers, media and the general public. The Farmers' Rights web pages are currently undergoing a major revision to update the content and enhance their user-friendliness.⁵

¹ Civil society organizations (CSOs) Latin America and the Caribbean Consultation on Farmers' Rights, held in Seberí, Brazil from 17–20 April 2018; CSOs Asia and the Pacific Consultation of Farmers' Rights, held in Kederí, Indonesia from 10–13 July 2018; and CSOs Africa Consultation on Farmers' Rights, held in Nyeleni, Mali from 17–20 July 2018.

² Including participation in thematic workshops of relevance to Farmers' Rights, e.g. Farmer's Pride: networking, partnerships and tools to enhance *in situ* conservation of European plant genetic resources, 7-10 October 2019, Greece.

³ See at <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/tools/training/educational-modules/en/>. It can also be downloaded directly at <http://www.fao.org/3/I7820EN/i7820en.pdf>.

⁴ Available at <https://e-learning.informe.org/course/index.php?categoryid=8>. InforMEA is the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements

⁵ Available at <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/farmers-rights/en/>.

14. The Secretariat also continues to facilitate dialogues on the occasion of relevant international meetings, events and activities that attract a significant presence of farmers' representatives, local communities and indigenous peoples.

IV. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

15. The Secretary relies on a comprehensive network of stakeholders and partners to further strengthen the impact of its capacity development and outreach activities and identify practical ways of providing support to the realization of Farmers' Rights.

16. During the last biennium, within the context of FAO technical cooperation, the Secretariat collaborated with FAO Country offices to support capacity-building of farmers for in situ/on-farm conservation activities, e.g. the establishment of community seed banks, the collection and depositing of traditional crop varieties into national seed banks, and the organization of seed and market fairs.⁶

17. The Secretariat collaborated with the FAO Interdepartmental Working Group on Indigenous Peoples through a series of special events,⁷ regular meetings and the provision of inputs of relevance to Farmers' Rights. These included the High-Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems organized within the framework of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition,⁸ and in the context of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages. The FAO Indigenous Peoples Team helped to disseminate the Educational Module on Farmers' Rights and invited indigenous farming communities to submit their experiences and lessons learned on the implementation of Farmers' Rights to the Secretariat.

18. The Secretariat collaborated with Bioversity International and partners on a number of training and capacity-building activities, aimed at enhancing understanding of Farmers' Rights and its practical implementation. The Secretariat also collaborated with Bioversity International on the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty Fellowship, an initiative specifically designed for the indigenous youth and matrifocal societies.

19. The Secretariat of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) has supported the participation of farmers' and indigenous peoples' organizations in relevant processes within the International Treaty. The IPC Secretariat has continued to promote its programme on Training and Capacity-Building on Farmers' Rights and Sustainable Use, and to assist the Secretariat of the International Treaty in disseminating an invitation to submit measures, best practices and lessons learned on the implementation of Farmers' Rights.⁹

20. Based on Resolution 6/2019, the Secretary made initial plans for further capacity development activities for the current biennium, which, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, had to be put on hold. The Secretary is currently exploring different options and, depending on how the situation evolves and if necessary, will adopt alternative means to undertake capacity development activities during the biennium, subject to the availability of financial resources.

⁶ For example, through the FAO-GEF-funded project: *Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agro-Biodiversity in Traditional Agro-ecosystems of the Philippines*, specific training on the implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty was provided in March 2018, followed by a series of workshops to mainstream Farmers' Rights in drafting proposals to amend the national seed policy law and associated programmes.

⁷ Indigenous Youth: A New Generation from the Matrifocal Societies Revitalizing their Indigenous Food Systems, July 2019.

⁸ Held at FAO Headquarters from 7–10 November 2018. Available at: www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/ifs-seminar/en/.

⁹ FAO South-South Cooperation Gateway – Regional consultations on Farmers' Rights, available at: www.fao.org/south-south-gateway/en/