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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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FAO ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its last session, took note of FAO's work in support of the implementation of the Second Global Plan for Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA)¹ and welcomed the overall progress made in this regard.² The Commission requested FAO and donors to continue supporting countries in their efforts to conserve plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) *in situ* and on farm, to maintain genebanks for the continued collection, conservation, characterization, evaluation, use and provision of crop germplasm, and to strengthen the links and complementarity between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation.³

2. The Commission also requested FAO to continue supporting countries in strengthening their crop improvement and plant breeding capacities⁴ and in the development or revision of their national seed policy and legislation.⁵ The Commission further referred the revised *Draft Voluntary Guidelines on National Level Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces* and the concept note on *Global networking on in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* to its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) for further review and consultations.⁶ It also requested FAO, to continue strengthening national and regional PGRFA conservation networks, including through capacity-building activities and facilitating partnerships.⁷

3. This document provides summative background to the role of the Second GPA in the global biodiversity framework and reports, for consideration by the Commission, on activities carried out by FAO in support of the implementation of the four types of priority activities of the Second GPA: (i) *in situ* conservation and on-farm management; (ii) *ex situ* conservation; (iii) sustainable use of PGRFA; and (iv) institutional and human capacities for conservation and use of PGRFA.

II. BACKGROUND

4. The Second GPA provides an important internationally agreed framework for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. It is also a supporting component of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Treaty) and its implementation is an essential contribution to achieving the objectives of the Treaty.⁸

5. FAO's work on the themes of the Second GPA falls within the ambit of the Organization's Strategic Programme 2, *Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable* and Strategic Programme 5, *Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises through reducing vulnerability to drought and other impacts of climate change*.

6. FAO's Strategic Framework⁹ aligns its work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰ In particular, the implementation of the Second GPA contributes to SDG 2 on Zero Hunger¹¹ with FAO being the custodian United Nations agency for its Indicator 2.5.1 on *ex situ* conservation of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. By implementing the

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2624e/i2624e00.htm>

² CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 52.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 58.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 59.

⁵ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 60.

⁶ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraphs 63–64.

⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 65.

⁸ Second GPA, paragraph 313.

⁹ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ms431reve.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

¹¹ Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Target 2.5: By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

Second GPA, countries also address essential components of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,¹² adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).¹³

7. The implementation of the Second GPA is also important for countries to meet their obligations under the Paris Climate Accord,¹⁴ especially the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),¹⁵ to implement the related Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction¹⁶ and the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture.¹⁷ By aiming at enhanced access of farmers to a diverse suite of nutrient-dense crops and varieties, the implementation of the Second GPA also contributes to the attainment of the aims of the ICN2 Framework of Action¹⁸ and the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025).¹⁹

8. Regionally determined objectives may also benefit from the implementation of the Second GPA. In Africa, for instance, work on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA contributes to the achievement of aims set out in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)²⁰ and to the implementation of the strategy and roadmap of the Malabo Declaration towards ending hunger in the continent by 2025.

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

A. Global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

9. The Commission, at its last session, reviewed the concept note on *Global networking on in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*²¹ and referred it to its Working Group for further consultations.²² In response to the Commission's request and upon consultation with experts and stakeholders, FAO developed two separate concept notes, one on on-farm management²³ and one on *in situ* conservation.²⁴

10. In reviewing the two concept notes, the Working Group recognized the importance of on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces and *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants. However, it agreed that the establishment of global networks was premature and recommended instead that both concept notes be revised to propose, rather than global networks, an international symposium for each of the two themes to be held, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, prior to the Working Group's Tenth Session and in cooperation with the Treaty.²⁵ The purpose of the symposia should be to share experiences and best practices, discuss possible future activities, including the creation of possible information exchange and networking mechanisms, and identify options for collaboration within a global community of practice, current needs and challenges. Proposals for the two symposia have therefore been prepared for this session of the Commission.²⁶

¹² <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>

¹³ <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/>

¹⁴ http://unfccc.int/files/home/application/pdf/paris_agreement.pdf

¹⁵ <http://unfccc.int/focus/items/10240.php>

¹⁶ <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

¹⁷ https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/application/pdf/cp23_auv_agri.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm215e.pdf>

¹⁹ UN General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/70/259](#).

²⁰ <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/peace/caadp.shtml>

²¹ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.20.

²² CGRFA-16/17/Report/Rev. 1, paragraph 64.

²³ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/Inf.5. Rev.1.

²⁴ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/Inf.6.

²⁵ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraphs 10–11.

²⁶ CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.3; CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.4.

B. Crop wild relatives and farmers' varieties/landraces

11. The Commission, at its last session, endorsed the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants* and requested FAO to publish them.²⁷ In response to the Commission's request, the guidelines have been published in four languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) and are now available in print and electronic formats.²⁸ The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to support countries in the development or revision of their national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives and wild food plants, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary Guidelines*.²⁹

12. The Commission, at its last session, also referred the revised draft *Voluntary Guidelines on National Level Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces*³⁰ to the Working Group for further review and invited Members, observers and National Focal Points (NFPs) to provide comments on this document.³¹ The Working Group considered a revised draft prepared by FAO in the light of comments received from seven countries and two international organizations.³² It invited Commission Members and observers to submit written comments to the Secretariat and requested the Secretariat to revise the draft guidelines in the light of the comments received, for endorsement by the Commission at its Seventeenth Regular Session. The revised document incorporating comments from fourteen countries,³³ is provided as *Draft Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces - Second Revision*.³⁴

C. Technical support

13. Since the last session of the Commission, FAO continued to provide technical support to countries in the implementation of the Second GPA. More detailed information on these activities is provided in documentation presented to the Working Group at its last meeting.³⁵

IV. EX SITU CONSERVATION

A. Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

14. 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*³⁶ (Genebank Standards) and requested FAO to propose a mechanism to monitor their application.³⁷ In response to the Commission's request, FAO undertook a global survey on the use of the Genebank Standards and organized an expert consultation in conjunction with the Global Crop Diversity Trust. The results of the survey and a brief summary of the outcome of the expert consultation were presented to the Working Group at its last session.³⁸

15. In response to the results of the survey and the outcome of the expert consultation, and with a view to increase the user-friendliness of the Genebank Standards, the Secretariat developed a set of routine draft actions steps for the (i) conservation of orthodox seeds, (ii) conservation in field

²⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Report/Rev. 1, paragraph 62.

²⁸ FAO. 2017. *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*. Rome (available online at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7788e.pdf>).

²⁹ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 12.

³⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.18.

³¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report/Rev. 1, paragraph 63.

³² Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and South Africa; Bioversity International and Oxfam.

³³ Bangladesh, Benin, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Jordan, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Poland, Senegal, Spain and Sweden.

³⁴ CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.1.

³⁵ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/2 Rev.1, paragraphs 16–19.

³⁶ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3704e.pdf>

³⁷ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 51.

³⁸ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/Inf.3.

genebanks, and (iii) *in vitro* conservation. The Working Group, at its last session, considered the draft action steps as well as a proposal for monitoring the implementation of the Genebank Standards. The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to prepare practical guides to the use of the Genebank Standards based on the draft action steps, for consideration by the Working Group at its next session. The Working Group also invited Members and observers to submit written comments by 30 September 2018 on the draft action steps and requested the Secretariat to revise the draft action steps in the light of comments received, for endorsement by the Commission.³⁹ The document *Facilitating the Implementation and Monitoring of the Genebank Standards*⁴⁰ contains in its Annexes the draft action steps, as revised in the light of – mainly technical and some editorial – comments received.⁴¹ The revised draft actions steps focus on essential core activities and have been simplified.

B. Technical support

16. FAO supported, during the reporting period, various *ex situ* conservation activities in a number of countries, including Armenia,⁴² Azerbaijan⁴³ and the Philippines.⁴⁴ The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to continue to provide support to countries in their efforts to maintain genebanks for the continued collecting, conservation, characterization and evaluation of crop germplasm.⁴⁵

V. SUSTAINABLE USE

17. The Commission, at its last 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.⁴⁶ FAO has continued to support countries in the development and release of well-adapted crop varieties and the requisite effective seed delivery systems.

A. Support for seed policies and legislation

18. In response to the Commission's request,⁴⁷ FAO supported during the reporting period Armenia, Lao Peoples's Democratic Republic and Mali in reviewing and updating national seed policies or laws, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation*.⁴⁸ The Working Group requested FAO to continue to support, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, countries in the development or revision of their national seed policy and legislation.⁴⁹

19. The Commission, at its last session, also included, as a major output in its Multi-Year Programme of Work, a review of the status and trends of seed policies.⁵⁰ In response, FAO prepared a

³⁹ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 16.

⁴⁰ CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.5.

⁴¹ Comments were received from: Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Jordan, Mali, Mexico, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden.

⁴² TCP/ARM/3503 Grape Genetic Resources Conservation and Sustainable Use in Armenia.

⁴³ GINC/AZE/001/AZE The FAO Azerbaijan Partnership Programme.

⁴⁴ GCP/PHI/062/GFF – Dynamic conservation and sustainable use of Agricultural biodiversity to ensure food security and ecosystems services and resiliency.

⁴⁵ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 15.

⁴⁶ CGRFA-16/17/Report/Rev. 1, paragraph 59.

⁴⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev. 1, paragraph 60.

⁴⁸ GCP/ARM/006/EC Technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia for European Neighbourhood Partnership agriculture and rural development (FAO/ENPARD).

⁴⁹ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 19.

⁵⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev. 1, *Appendix C*.

Review of the status and trends of seed policies and seed laws,⁵¹ which the Commission is invited to consider under agenda item 9.3.

B. Technical support for seed delivery systems

20. During the reporting period, FAO implemented initiatives aimed at strengthening the seed delivery value chain, including by promoting increased access to quality seeds and planting materials of well-adapted varieties, in more than 20 countries. The foci of these initiatives included: the enhanced adoption of crop varieties, including bio-fortified ones; community-level seed production and delivery systems; pre-basic and basic seed production and supply; capacity development for seed testing laboratories; provision of seed processing equipment and related training and strengthening of seed certification systems.

21. FAO also supported the establishment of small- and medium-size seed enterprises for community-level seed delivery systems through strengthening the management skills of seed producers and improved access to markets. In order to enhance the resilience of crop production systems to climate change, FAO promoted access of smallholder farmers to quality seeds of drought- and flood-tolerant crop varieties. More detailed information is provided in documentation that was presented to the Working Group at its last meeting.⁵²

22. The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to continue assisting countries in strengthening national seed systems for the delivery of quality seeds and planting materials, in particular to smallholder farmers.⁵³

C. Rehabilitation of seed systems

23. During the reporting period, FAO distributed, as part of its emergency response activities, quality seeds worth nearly USD 71 million to farmers in 92 countries that suffered massive crop failures due to natural hazards, such as hurricane Matthew in Haiti⁵⁴ and floods in Ghana.⁵⁵ Since the last session of the Commission, FAO continued to implement large-scale emergency seed interventions in response to the drought associated with El Niño. In Ethiopia, for example, the 2016–17 emergency seed response was the largest ever, reaching 1.5 million households with 32 000 tonnes of seed.⁵⁶

24. An underlying principle of FAO's support to countries in the re-building of agricultural production systems post disasters and strife has been ensuring that the provision of emergency seed relief form part of the overall seed sector development in the long term. The supply of seeds and other inputs are typically accompanied with training and support to enhance farmers' capacities to adopt more climate-smart agricultural production practices. As part of rehabilitation efforts, farmer groups have been supported to produce quality seeds and planting materials of adapted crop varieties. For instance, in Haiti, Artisanal Seed Production Groups were established across the country,⁵⁷ while decentralized seed production groups have been supported in South Sudan.⁵⁸

25. FAO is increasingly adopting the use of input trade fairs (ITFs) as an alternative to seed distribution. Through ITFs, beneficiaries use the cash or vouchers provided to them through the intervention to procure their choice of seeds and planting materials from the assembled suppliers. This enhances the diversity of crops and varieties available to farmers.

⁵¹ See documents CGRFA-17/19/9.3 & CGRFA-17/19/9.3/Inf.1.

⁵² CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/2 Rev.1, paragraphs 33–37.

⁵³ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 20.

⁵⁴ OSRO/HAI/701/EC Réhabilitation et diversification des moyens d'existence des ménages affectés par l'ouragan Matthew.

⁵⁵ TCP/GHA/3506 Restoration of productive capacities of flood affected agricultural households in Ghana.

⁵⁶ <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/455625/>, reflecting multiple projects, including: OSRO/ETH/604/CHA; OSRO/ETH/606/NET; TCP/ETH/3504.

⁵⁷ OSRO/HAI/607/BEL Protection, réhabilitation et diversification des moyens d'existence des populations affectées par l'ouragan Matthew en Haïti.

⁵⁸ OSRO/SSD/705/NET Improving seed production, availability and access for crisis-affected populations in South Sudan.

26. The interventions driven by FAO also seek to use better methodologies for the assessment of seed system security as the basis for both the immediate responses and for devising the seed sector development strategies that reflect the prevailing national contexts. During the reporting period, FAO, in collaboration with partners, carried out seed security assessments in various countries. More detailed information on FAO's support to the rehabilitation of seed systems is contained in documentation that was presented to the Working Group at its last session.⁵⁹

D. Strengthening plant breeding

27. During the reporting period, FAO continued to implement several initiatives to strengthen capacities for developing well-adapted crop varieties that are most suited to local conditions and farming systems as noted by the Working Group at its Ninth Session.⁶⁰

28. The Joint Division of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (AGE) implemented 77 crop improvement-related TCPs in 70 countries. The outputs encompassed human capacity-building, technology transfer, infrastructure upgrade and technical advice for the efficient use of mutation breeding in crop improvement. Additionally, through the Coordinated Research Projects (CRP) mechanism of the IAEA, AGE networked researchers from more than 40 different countries to collaborate on five crop improvement-themed collaborative projects. Over the reporting period, 534 trainees were supported to acquire enhanced relevant skills. Overall, about 3 275 mutant crop varieties have been released for cultivation in different countries of the world.

29. The Global Partnership Initiative for Plant Breeding Capacity Building (GIPB) is a multi-partner platform convened by FAO with the aim of improving institutional capacity for effective crop variety development and their distribution through seed systems. The GIPB acts as an information clearing house for sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture building on and complementing existing activities in this area. Therefore, it is open to partners and stakeholders interested in building capacity for effective utilization of PGRFA. GIPB was initially funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) for five years, 2007 to 2012. During this period, it *inter alia* conducted a survey and published a database of global capacity for crop improvement. It facilitated networking of plant breeders through a global directory, developed and disseminated knowledge products and conducted training programmes, including the development of an e-learning course on pre-breeding. GIPB also awarded small grants for pre-breeding activities. More information on GIPB as well as other individual activities is provided in documentation that was made available to the Working Group.⁶¹

30. The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to continue, in close coordination with the Treaty, supporting countries in strengthening their crop improvement capacity, including through the GIPB platform and IAEA and, in particular, in support of the implementation of the Second GPA and Article 6 of the Treaty.⁶² The Working Group also considered the discontinuation of funding for plant breeding activities to be a major concern that needs to be addressed. It stressed the importance of underutilized and neglected crops and crops adapted to harsher marginal conditions. While such crops may play an important role in providing healthy and variable diets in all regions of the world, current research platforms and activities appear insufficient to address them as needed.⁶³

VI. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

31. The Commission, at its last session, requested FAO to continue strengthening national and regional PGRFA conservation networks, including through capacity-building activities and facilitating partnerships.⁶⁴ In response to the Commission's request, FAO supported the strengthening of human

⁵⁹ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/2 Rev.1, paragraphs 38–43.

⁶⁰ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 22.

⁶¹ CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/2 Rev.1, paragraphs 44–54.

⁶² CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 23.

⁶³ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 24.

⁶⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report/Rev. 1, paragraph 65.

and institutional capacities for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA especially in developing countries.

A. National strategies for PGRFA

32. FAO continues to support the on-going development of national strategies and action plans for PGRFA that address capacity needs and link conservation to sustainable use in Angola, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa and Zimbabwe.⁶⁵

33. FAO developed a Regional Rice Strategy in the Asia Pacific Region⁶⁶. This provides the guidelines for member countries to review and formulate their National Rice Strategies. Through the ongoing Regional Rice Initiative, FAO has provided support for the application of environmentally friendly rice farming systems in Asia. In Bhutan, for example, the capacities of extension services personnel, technical staff and smallholder farmers have been strengthened in order to improve yield and productivity of rice in three different agro-ecological zones.⁶⁷ This work included the strengthening of seed support systems (breeder's seed, basic seed, foundation seed, certified seed and seed certification schemes) to increase the availability of quality seeds and planting materials for farmers.

34. FAO supported the building of capacity for the development of a National PGRFA Programme in Moldova in order to strengthen the linkages between the national stakeholders involved in PGRFA conservation and its sustainable use.⁶⁸ Similar initiatives are ongoing in Belarus⁶⁹ and Madagascar⁷⁰ and aim at strengthening institutional and technical capacity in PGRFA management and the upgrade of the infrastructure of the national genebanks.

35. In addition, FAO supported Uzbekistan in improving legislation and strengthening institutional capacities of the national stakeholders for variety testing, registration and protection, seed quality control and certification,⁷¹ while Georgia⁷² was supported in the establishment of a seed law and national seed certification scheme. Similarly, in Armenia, capacities were strengthened for the production of phylloxera-resistant certified grape-planting materials by supporting national certification services and capacities for producing *in vitro* planting materials.⁷³

36. Following the FAO International Symposium on the Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition in 2016,⁷⁴ FAO continued to provide member countries with the platform for the exchange of knowledge and the sharing of experiences on biotechnologies. Two regional meetings, for Asia and the Pacific (RAP)⁷⁵ and sub-Saharan Africa (RAF),⁷⁶ were organized in 2017. Topics discussed ranged from low-technology applications, such as tissue culture, to

⁶⁵ TCP/SFS/3601 (16/VI/SFS/11) Support for the development of national capacities for conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

⁶⁶ <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/perspectives/regional-rice/en/>

⁶⁷ TCP/BHU/3602 Improving rice productivity in Bhutan to enhance rice self-sufficiency- importing fruit scion and rootstock cultivars.

⁶⁸ TCP/MOL/3504 Support to the development of a National Programme for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Moldova.

⁶⁹ TCP/BYE/3601 Strengthening National PGR Program in Belarus for Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources.

⁷⁰ TCP/MAG/3605 RPGAA aux bénéfiques des populations locales - Stratégie Nationale RPGAA et Symposium International.

⁷¹ TCP/UZB/3602 Support to improvement of the national seed, plant variety protection and phytosanitary legislation.

⁷² 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).

⁷³ TCP/ARM/3601 Development of a new certification system for grape planting materials.

⁷⁴ <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechs-symposium/en/>

⁷⁵ <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/events/detail-events/en/c/1440/>

⁷⁶ <http://www.fao.org/africa/events/detail-events/en/c/1035227/>

relatively high-technology use of molecular markers in germplasm characterization and plant breeding.

37. The Working Group, at its last Session, recommended that the Commission call for extra-budgetary funds to support countries in the implementation of the Second GPA, including through the development and implementation of national strategies for PGRFA, in close coordination with the Treaty and its Funding Strategy.⁷⁷

B. National Focal Points

38. The Commission at its Fifteenth Regular Session, invited countries that have not yet done so to nominate a National Focal Point (NFP) for reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA.⁷⁸ In response to this request, the nomination of 114 NFPs has been notified to FAO. This reflects the high level of commitment for reporting on the state of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Beyond the periodic reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA and on SDG Indicator 2.5.1, the NFPs play critical roles in the implementation of the Second GPA and the preparation of country reports for *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

C. World Information and Early Warning System on PGRFA

39. The World Information and Early Warning System on PGRFA (WIEWS) is the information system established by FAO in 1993 for the preparation of periodic, country-driven global assessments of the status of conservation and use of PGRFA. Since October 2014, WIEWS, through its online Reporting Tool, has also been used for country reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA. Since December 2016, WIEWS serves as platform for reporting annually on the plant component of SDG Target 2.5.

40. With its 2014, 2016 and 2017 datasets, WIEWS is presently the largest source of data for monitoring over time the status of the global diversity of PGRFA conserved in genebanks. The 2017 dataset alone includes detailed information on over 4.89 million accessions of 6.9 thousand genera and their 50.7 thousand species secured under medium- or long-term conditions in 575 national genebanks and 16 regional and international centres. Compared to May 2016 the WIEWS data coverage of *ex situ* conservation has increased by 27 percent in terms of reporting countries (19 additional reporting countries) and 36 percent in terms of accessions (an additional 1.2 million accessions documented).⁷⁹

41. The Commission, at its last session, stressed the role of WIEWS as a key PGRFA information system with respect to the implementation of Article 17 of the Treaty and requested FAO to complete the restructuring of WIEWS and publish, through it, information on the implementation of the Second GPA and SDG Target 2.5.⁸⁰ The Commission also requested FAO to consult the Members and observers of the Commission on options for further simplifying the reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Second GPA (Reporting Format) and to prepare a proposal for review by the Working Group.⁸¹

42. More detailed information on the restructuring of WIEWS and the use of WIEWS for monitoring the implementation of the plant component of SDG Target 2.5 is provided in the document *Status of development of the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.⁸² A Reporting Format, simplified in the light of inputs received from Members and observers, is presented in the document *Draft Revised Reporting Format for monitoring the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, for information of the Commission.⁸³

⁷⁷ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 25.

⁷⁸ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 18.

⁷⁹ CGRFA/WG-PGR-8/Inf.1 Rev.1, page 28.

⁸⁰ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 57.

⁸¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 56.

⁸² CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.2.

⁸³ CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.6.

43. The Working Group recommended that the Commission endorse the revised Reporting Format for the next reporting cycle on the implementation of the Second GPA through the WIEWS reporting tool. The Working Group also recommended cooperation of WIEWS with GENESYS. It called on Global Information System (GLIS) of the Treaty, WIEWS and GENESYS of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to make an effort to cooperate in order to avoid duplication. The Working Group recommended that the Commission request FAO to continue updating and improving the WIEWS portal, including through creation of a country profile module as well as the graphical visualization of all indicators and the publication of WIEWS in other languages.⁸⁴

VII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

44. The Commission may wish to:

IN SITU CONSERVATION AND ON-FARM MANAGEMENT OF PGRFA

- (i) Review and revise, as appropriate, the two concept notes, revised in line with the guidance received from the Working Group, for: (i) an international symposium on *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants; and (ii) an international symposium on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces, to be held prior to the Tenth Regular Session of the Working Group.
- (ii) Request FAO to support countries in the development or revision of their national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives and wild food plants, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*.
- (iii) Review and revise, as appropriate, and endorse the revised *Draft Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties and Landraces*.

EX SITU CONSERVATION

- (iv) Request FAO to continue providing support to countries in their efforts to maintain genebanks for the continued collecting, conservation, characterization and evaluation of crop germplasm.
- (v) Request FAO to prepare practical guides to the use of the Genebank Standards based on the action steps outlined in the document *Facilitating the Implementation and Monitoring of the Genebank Standards*, for consideration by the Working Group and the Commission, at their next sessions.
- (vi) Request FAO to develop a proposal for monitoring the implementation of the Genebank Standards, for consideration by the Working Group at its Tenth Regular Session.

⁸⁴ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraphs 27-28.

SUSTAINABLE USE

Strengthening seed systems

- (vii) Request FAO to continue assisting countries in strengthening national seed systems for the delivery of quality seeds and planting materials, in particular to smallholder farmers.
- (viii) Request FAO to continue 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*.
- (ix) Call upon donors for support to countries, including through extra-budgetary funds, in their development and implementation of national seed policy and legislation.

Strengthening plant breeding capacity

- (x) Request FAO to continue supporting countries, in close coordination with the Treaty, in strengthening their crop improvement capacity, including through the GIPB platform and the Joint Programme of FAO and IAEA and, in particular, in support of the implementation of the Second GPA and Article 6 of the Treaty.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

National Strategy for PGRFA

- (xi) Call for extra-budgetary funds to support countries in the implementation of the Second GPA, including through the development and implementation of national strategies for PGRFA, in close coordination with the Treaty and its Funding Strategy.

World Information and Early Warning System on PGRFA

- (xii) Review and revise, as appropriate, the Draft Revised Reporting Format, as given in the *Appendix* to document CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.2, and endorse it for their use during the next reporting cycle.
- (xiii) Request FAO to complete the restructuring of WIEWS, reflect the Revised Reporting Format in the on-line Reporting Tool and make available a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions to facilitate its use.
- (xiv) Invite FAO to continue elaborating, on an annual basis, the status of implementation of SDG Target 2.5 and share results with the Working Group and the Commission.
- (xv) Request FAO to continue developing the WIEWS portal and strengthening cooperation with GLIS and GENESYS to avoid duplication of efforts.