



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



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

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Item 17 of the Provisional Agenda
SIXTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY
Rome, Italy, 5 – 9 October 2015
DRAFT MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK

Executive Summary

This document presents the draft elements of the first Multi-Year Programme of Work of the International Treaty (MYPOW), elaborated by the Secretary with the guidance of the Bureau of the Sixth Session, in response to the request of the Governing Body at its Fifth Session. It contains a number of key principles, a set of thematic clusters and a list of the main programme elements covering five biennia up to 2025.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to consider and adopt the draft Programme of Work 2016-2025, including its general principles and, in order to keep it under regular review, to make it a standing item on its agenda at each session of the Governing Body occurring during the period covered.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Fifth Session, the Governing Body reviewed and amended the Business Plan and “*requested the Secretary to prepare, with the guidance of the Bureau of the Sixth Session, a draft Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW), for its consideration and adoption at the next session of the Governing Body. The draft MYPOW should provide an indication of the financial and human resources needed for its implementation, and, wherever possible, take account of synergies of other intergovernmental bodies, and avoid duplication of work*”.

2. This document has been prepared with the guidance of the Bureau of the Sixth Session of the Governing Body. It presents information and elements, based on existing multi-year programmes of work, practices and experiences of other conventions, instrument and programmes, for the development of a MYPOW for the Treaty. The information and draft elements presented take into account the Business Plan adopted by the Governing Body at its Fifth Session, as well as the inputs provided by the Bureau of the Sixth Session.

3. It is understood that the MYPOW does not derogate in any way from the standard governance functions of the Governing Body for all the aspects of the implementation of the Treaty or its ability to consider recurring or emerging issues of global concern that are relevant to the Treaty.

II. KEY PRINCIPLES AND COVERAGE

4. In considering the Multi-Year Programme of Work for the International Treaty, the Governing Body may wish to note that similar documents in other international organizations are usually based on a series of key principles, and contain main goals or general programme elements.

5. The MYPOW of the International Treaty could be based on a set of general principles, reviewed by the Bureau of the Sixth Session at its second meeting in March 2015. According to these principles the MYPOW would:

- streamline the dense agenda of the Governing Body and increase efficiency of the Sessions of the Governing Body through a further improved preparation, coherent scheduling and progression, rational organization and implementation of its work, in conjunction with funding needs and resource availability (*Efficiency and cost-effectiveness*);
- deal with the in-depth reviews of relevant provisions and mechanisms of the Treaty taking into account cross-cutting issues like finance, technology transfer, capacity development, awareness raising, training and information sharing (*Monitoring and Assessments*).
- become a community-driven vehicle to strengthen cooperation with other relevant international instruments and organizations and with all communities of practice and actors involved in the value-added chain of product development based on PGRFA, taking into account all uses of PGRFA from research to plant breeding (*Cooperation and coordination*);
- provide Contracting Parties with a tool for mainstreaming PGRFA considerations, through a staged approach, into national policies and plans (*Mainstreaming and awareness-raising*);
- provide donors with a timeframe for the implementation roadmap and facilitate resource mobilization and planning of communication activities (*Outreach and resource mobilization*);

6. The draft Multi-year Programme of Work contained in the *Appendix* to this document covers a period of five biennia, consistent with similar programmes of other partner forums such as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA). The MYPOW takes into account and incorporates the relevant elements of the Business Plan, which was adopted by the Governing Body at its Fifth Session.

7. Taking into account the complex and dynamic environment in which the Treaty operates, the Governing Body may consider the MYPOW as a living and evolving document, and keep it under continuous review at each session in order to take into account major future outputs and milestones of the Treaty, as well as relevant scientific, technical and policy developments.

III. THEMES OF GOVERNING BODY SESSIONS

8. In other fora,¹ when adopting a multi-year programme of work, Contracting Parties typically decide that each regular session of their relevant bodies should be convened with a particular theme to facilitate dialogue and encourage active participation and discussion by the entire international community concerned with the relevant topic, including countries, other stakeholders, donors and partner institutions. These themes are usually set as high-level policy topics. In the context of the Treaty, chosen themes should increase the visibility and importance of the Governing Body as a forum for global discussion on relevant policy matters and emerging scientific issues arising in relation to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

9. When considering various candidate themes for possible inclusion in the Multi-year Programme of Work, it is equally important to understand how they will build upon or contribute to strengthening the previous decisions and resolutions adopted by the Governing Body and the achievement of the overall Treaty objectives. Consequently, this document proposes themes for the first four sessions, which are reflected in the programme elements of the first Cluster:

Seventh Session: The Contribution of Crop Biodiversity to Agricultural Development

Sustainable development has evolved from a movement that mainly focused on environmental matters to a widely recognized framework that presents the potential to link, with a coherent approach, economic, social and environmental issues of importance for decision-making and for the establishment of programmes and plans at international, regional and local levels. The understanding of the contribution of crop biodiversity towards the agricultural development agenda has also improved substantially since the publication of the first state of the world on PGRFA. The proposed theme will offer the opportunity to evaluate the role and contribution of crop biodiversity in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Framework and analyze emerging processes and financial mechanisms of relevance to Treaty implementation.

Eighth Session: Increasing agricultural productivity by integrating PGRFA along the product development chain

Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) are crucial in feeding the world's increasing population, which according with the projections will reach 9.1 billion in 2050. They are the raw materials that farmers and plant breeders use to improve both the quality and the productivity of our food crops. In the coming years, the integration of PGRFA uses along the product development chain will be required to increase productivity in more marginal production areas with less reliable production conditions. The sustainable use of plant genetic resources is vital for local and global agricultural development because they have the potential to increase agricultural productivity and

¹¹ Such as the CGRFA, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), etc.

sustainability and thus contributing to enhanced global food security and reducing poverty.

*Ninth Session: **Supporting the Custodians of Food Crops***

The International Treaty recognizes the enormous contributions of farmers and local and indigenous communities to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. This theme may help advance exchange of information on national measures affecting the realization of Farmers' Rights and on concerted actions or recommendations to protect and promote them in harmony with other international instruments. The proposed theme will also offer the opportunity to evaluate the portfolio of strategies needed to enable vulnerable farmers cultivate the varieties adapted to their needs and agro-ecosystems.

*Tenth Session: **Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation***

Concerns about the potential negative impacts of climate change have grown substantially over the last 15 years. Biodiversity has been recognized as being critically important for the development of healthy farming systems that capture more carbon and emit fewer greenhouse gasses, and for being the breeding source of new varieties needed for agriculture to adapt to the anticipated future environmental conditions. The potential of crop genetic resources to contribute to climate change adaptation was also recognized by recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Concrete impact for climate adaptation through the creation of climate-ready crops has been created by the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty, which over the years has helped to breed new crop varieties and to identify traits relevant to climate change adaptation. It is essential that additional conservation and plant breeding capacity is built up as soon as possible to support farmers and breeders to adapt agriculture to those changes.

10. The Governing Body may wish to decide on additional themes at the Sixth Session or to delegate this task to the Bureau of the Seventh Session for its consideration at the Seventh Session. Furthermore, in proposing new themes or in the course of the reviews of the programme elements at future sessions, there is an opportunity to address any emerging issues of global significance that are highly relevant to, and impacting on PGRFA, in particular issues that are unexpected and not already addressed in the agenda of the respective session.

IV. STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMME ELEMENTS

11. Following the guidance of the Bureau of the Sixth Session, the draft MYPOW has been kept as a short document providing a basic timetable of the main milestones, outputs and activities to be achieved at each Session of the Governing Body. The draft MYPOW follows a cross-cutting approach. The programme elements of the MYPOW are grouped in three clusters:

Cluster 1: Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and emerging policy and governance issues within the global development agenda

This cluster of issues will help the Governing Body to better integrate considerations related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the global agricultural development agenda in relation to food security, climate change, nutrition and other important issues. It would also create opportunities to establish an overall framework for

a more effective and coherent multilateral policy dialogue with partner organizations² for the implementation of the Treaty. The programme elements under Cluster 1 are aligned with the theme of each Session and are expected to be dealt with under the section of the agenda on general policy matters. The relevant inputs will be collected in the form of views and submissions from government and relevant stakeholder organizations.

Cluster 2: Scientific, technical and technological matters

Achieving global food security and sustainable agriculture will require a more integrated research and development chain that fully connects conservation and utilization of germplasm. Genetic resources are a vehicle of innovation for agriculture and a driver for change and increased food production. It is important to understand how the new scientific and technological developments, such as gene discovery and genomic technologies, are applied to enhance Treaty implementation. This cluster will allow an assessment of how these new developments respond to the demands of farmers, plant breeders, the food industry, the consumer and how they impact on the environment and on society. It will also analyse how the Treaty brings innovation to users and how it contributes to add value to the use of PGRFA. By appraising scientific, technical and technological development, the Governing Body will be able to structure programmes of work that integrate the relevant developments into inter-sessional activities, including those provisions that the Governing Body has not fully dealt with so far. In that respect, the programme elements of Cluster 2 provide a bridge between the other two clusters. At each session, the Governing Body may make adjustments based on global trends matched with actual progress made with the implementation of the Treaty.

Cluster 3: Governance of main components of the Treaty

It would help the Governing Body to deal, in a more systematic way, with some of the reviews foreseen in the text of the Treaty and in the Resolutions of the Governing Body, taking into account the period of time needed to collect sufficient information and avoiding of the repetition of these reviews on the agenda at each session. This cluster also groups other follow-ups activities to decisions and Resolutions adopted in the past Sessions. The programme elements under this cluster will be inserted in the section of the agenda dealing with the implementation of the main systems, programmes and components of the Treaty.

12. The Governing Body may wish to delegate to the Bureau of the Seventh Session of the Seventh Session the elaboration of an implementation plan with milestones through which additional guidance is provided on the preparation of some of the major programme elements contained in the MYPOW, such as the elaboration of studies and the establishment of working groups, and any other necessary activities, with indication of the level of additional human and financial that it may be required.

V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

13. The Governing Body is invited to:

Review and adopt the Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2016-2025 contained in the Appendix and its general principles;

Delegate to the Bureau of the Seventh Session the elaboration of a detailed implementation plan for some programme elements and the identification of a theme for the Eleventh session;

² The goals and structure of the draft MYPOW are aligned with those of CBD and its Nagoya Protocol and the Strategic Framework of FAO. Activities such as the review of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the Third Report on the State of the World on PGRFA are currently under the CGRFA's MYPOW.

Decide to keep the MYPOW under review as a standing item in its agenda for the duration of the period covered.

Appendix

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK (MYPOW)– 2016-2025

	7th Session (2016-17)	8th Session (2018-19)	9th Session (2020-21)	10th Session (2022-23)	11th Session (2024-25)
THEMES:	<i>The contribution of crop biodiversity to agricultural development</i>	<i>Increasing agricultural productivity by integrating PGRFA along the product development chain</i>	<i>Supporting the custodians of food crops</i>	<i>Biodiversity and climate change adaptation</i>	
Cluster 1: PGRFA and emerging policy and governance issues within the global development agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crop biodiversity in the Post-2015 Development Agenda - Emerging financial mechanisms for PGRFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PGRFA access and benefit sharing and global food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of farmers as custodians and developers of PGRFA - Outlook of national policy and plans on conservation of PGRFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incentives to reduce loss of and promote sustainable utilization of PGRFA in an era of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution of PGRFA to agriculture, environment and commerce
Cluster 2: Scientific, technical and technological matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing the value of crop germplasm for research and breeding - Emerging technologies for PGRFA value enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-breeding and base-broadening to reduce crop vulnerability and genetic erosion - Advances in characterization, evaluation and documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breeding strategies to meet the needs of vulnerable farmers - Management of crop wild relatives 		
Cluster 3: Governance of the main components of the Treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize enhancement of Multilateral System - Review of the Funding Strategy - Review of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the Global Information System - Review of implementation of Farmers' Rights - Review of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Multilateral System - Review of the Funding Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the procedures and mechanisms on compliance