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The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Item 16 of the Provisional Agenda**

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Bali, Indonesia, 14 – 18 March 2011**

# REPORT FROM THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST

***Note by the Secretary***

*1. Pursuant to Article 3 of the Relationship Agreement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the Secretary of the Governing Body presents in this document the Report from the Executive Board of the Trust to the Governing Body.*

*2. The Report is structured into two parts, the first on the role of the Trust and the complementarities with the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy of the Treaty and the second on the Trust's activities. The list of activities highlight the long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity; the regeneration of threatened, globally-important crop diversity; safety duplication and collection of plant genetic resources; evaluation of collections, and information systems; Research to develop conservation protocols for vegetative propagated crops; public awareness and institutional matters.*

*3. The Governing Body is being invited to take note of the contents of the Report contained in the* Appendix *and to and to give any further guidance it considers appropriate.*

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## Introduction

1. Article 18 of the Treaty provides that "*Contracting Parties undertake to implement a funding strategy for the implementation of this Treaty*" with the objective "*to enhance the availability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of financial resources to implement activities under this Treaty*"[1].

2. At its First Session, the Governing Body adopted the *Funding Strategy of the International Treaty* by Resolution 1/2006.[2] In Resolution 1/2006, the Governing Body noted "*that the Global Crop Diversity Trust is an essential element of the Funding Strategy in relation to the* ex situ *conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*".[3].

3. At its First Session, the Governing Body also concluded a *Relationship Agreement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust*. That Agreement, *inter alia*, recognizes the Trust as "*an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty in relation to the* ex situ *conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*". Pursuant to Article 3 of the Relationship Agreement, the Secretary of the Governing Body receives and presents a *Report from the Executive Board of the Trust to the Governing Body*.

4. At its Second Session the Governing Body "*recognized the executive independence of the Trust, and stressed the need for closer and effective cooperation. It emphasized that guidance for the Trust was provided under Article 5, 6 and 17 of the Global Plan of Action and Article 5 and 17 of the Treaty*".

5. At the Third Session, the Governing Body

> *highlighted the need to maintain and develop the relationship between the International Treaty and the Global Crop Diversity Trust in a complementary manner. To that effect, the Governing Body encouraged the Global Crop Diversity Trust to continue its communication with the Governing Body on projects and activities funded by the Global Crop Diversity Trust and trusted that this would be maintained and enhanced during the intersessional period*.[4]

6. At its third meeting, the Bureau of the Fourth Session of the Governing Body highlighted the importance of ensuring that positive synergies between the tasks and functions of the Governing Body and the Trust's work in ensuring that globally important crops were safeguarded, maintained and further generated. In that regard, the Bureau felt that it was important to continue discussions on how to further enhance the relationship between the Governing Body and the Trust in the different aspects of their relevant activities.

7. As part of the preparatory process for the Fourth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary of the Treaty requested the Executive Secretary of the Trust to provide the annual report in accordance with Article 3 of the *Relationship Agreement*. The Report on the activities of the Trust is contained the *Appendix* to this document.

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

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[1] Article 18.1 and Article 18.2.

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

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

[4] IT/GB-3/09/Report, paragraph 36.

***Appendix 1***

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST TO THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

## I .- Introduction

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

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

## II.- The Role of the Trust and Complementarities with the Benefit-sharing Fund in Implementing the International Treaty

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

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

5. The Global Plan of Action recognizes *in situ* and *ex situ* as complementary conservation strategies. The Trust, in accordance with its Constitution and the Relationship Agreement with the Governing Body, focuses on efforts concerned with the *ex situ* (genebank) conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Trust's profile addresses major portions of the International Treaty including Articles 5 and 6, and much of Articles 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and lesser portions of other Articles.

6. The contribution of the Trust's work to the implementation of the International Treaty and to the promotion of food security is directly related to the importance of genebanks and the crop diversity they maintain and provide. *Ex situ* collections/genebanks, which are complementary to *in situ* / on-farm conservation are therefore critically important and need to be supported in order to ensure future availability of crop diversity and promote sustainable agriculture and food security. The Trust was created to increase funding available for *ex situ* conservation for the following reasons:

- A huge amount of crop diversity is conserved *ex situ*, in genebanks, yet funding is not sufficient to cover even basic conservation costs. Much of this diversity is only found or conserved today in genebank collections, having been lost or displaced from *in situ* / on-farm conditions. The first FAO Report (1998) on the State of the World's Plant Genetic

Resources concluded that most of the diversity of the major staple crops was now conserved *ex situ*. The total number of accessions worldwide has continued to grow over the last 10 years, with this now standing at 7.4 million according to the Second FAO Report (2010) on the World's State of PGRFA.

- *Ex situ* provides security against many of the threats posed to crop diversity found *in situ*: replacement by modern varieties, by market forces, by development and other changes in land use, and through climate change. The Second FAO Report (2010) on the World's State of PGRFA reports increased interest in collecting and maintaining crop wild relatives largely due to risks posed by these threats.

- It is possible to collect and make a huge amount of information available about the diversity held in genebanks, and about the traits contained in individual samples. The Trust is promoting research that will generate even more information about the diversity held in genebanks, and the useful traits it harbors. The Trust is also supporting development of new genebank information systems to enhance the accessibility and utilization of PGRFA under the Treaty's Multilateral System for Facilitated Access and Benefit sharing (MLS).

- Genebanks are the main source of crop diversity for both public and private plant breeding efforts as well as for scientific research. Genebanks are very well placed to respond to the principle of interdependence of countries for PGFRA as they facilitate the exchange of resources from distant localities, which will be essential to crop improvement programs aimed at sustaining crop production and climate change adaptation.

7. Climate change will present additional challenges for on-farm management of crop diversity, and heightened risks of replacement of traditional farmer varieties and, unless there is collection and *ex situ* conservation, of the permanent loss of genetic diversity.

8. Writing in the journal, Global Environment Change, Burke, *et al*., contend "farmer selection and local seed systems alone will likely be insufficient to adapt African agriculture to climate change … For a majority of Africa's farmers, warming will rapidly take climate not only beyond the range of their personal experience, but also beyond the experience of other farmers within their own country.[5]"

9. Adaptive traits will need to be integrated into existing and/or new planting materials. Because future climates will be so different from existing climates, these appropriate adaptive traits are unlikely to be sourced within a farmer's own planting materials, within the same farm communities, or even from adjacent countries. Indeed, in the case of Africa, few countries today offer analogues for tomorrow's projected climates in Africa (Burke, et al.). The traits necessary for climate change adaptation – whether undertaken by farmers or formal sector plant breeders - will therefore in large part need to be sourced remotely from genebank collections where the relevant traits can be identified and accessed.

10. According to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, many wild species of plants, including crop wild relatives presumably, are expected to become extinct this century.[6]

[5] Burke, Marshall, D. Lobell and L. Guarino. (2009) "Shifts in African Crop Climates by 2050, and Their Implication for Crop Improvement and Genetic Resources Conservation." Global Environmental Change.

[6] Feeling the Heat. UNFCCC. http://unfccc.int/essential_background/feeling_the_heat/items/2917.php

These genetic resources are likely to contain new and important traits for climate change adaptation. *Ex situ* approaches thus become central to the conservation of crop diversity – domesticated and wild – as a result of various serious threats to diversity now existing *in situ*.

11. In the coming decades, the chief benefit of crop diversity will be realized in the field in the form of crop varieties adapted to new climates and through the contribution this makes to food security. This benefit will not be fully realized unless the international community lays the groundwork for it.

12. Recognizing the threat that climate change poses to *PGRFA* conservation, the Trust initiated specific work to address the challenges of climate change six years ago. Today, many of the Trust's activities with partners – collecting, screening, information systems, etc. - are aimed at building collective capacity for plant breeders and farmers to breed crops adapted to climate change. So too is the Trust's work to build a strong, secure global genebank conservation system. If diversity is lost, if it exists but its traits are unknown, or if it is legally or practically unavailable, then the options it may contain and the benefits these could provide to farmers and consumers, go unrealized. There are no benefits to be generated or shared. Genebanks offer the world's most potent tool for conserving, researching and providing genetic diversity to help agriculture adapt to climate change, the stark fact that underscores the importance of the Trust's work.

13. Together with Stanford University in 2007, the Trust cosponsored a groundbreaking international gathering of climatologists, plant breeders and genetic resource experts to examine the effects of climate change on agriculture and the implications for management of genebank collections. A second workshop on climate extremes and crop adaptation was held in 2009. And in 2010, Stanford and the Trust brought together experts to examine the role of crop wild relatives in adapting agriculture to climate change. Reports from these meetings are available at http://foodsecurity.stanford.edu/events/conservation_of_crop_genetic_resources_in_the_face_of_climate_change/ and http://foodsecurity.stanford.edu/events/climate_extremes_and_crop_adaptation/.

14. This preparation provided the scientific foundation for a dedicated, focused, goal-oriented Trust program to get agriculture prepared for climate change and better positioned to strengthen future food security. For example, to date the Trust has sponsored the evaluation of 60 collections of 20 crops for 113 traits of significance to the poor in the context of climate change. This screening has involved 57 different national/regional research institutes and 8 CGIAR Centres in 43 countries.

15. Consistent with the requirements of the International Treaty and the Global Plan of Action, the Trust works with partners to develop an effective, efficient and sustainable Global System for the conservation and availability of crop diversity. Such a Global System is not likely to be created through *ad hoc* unconnected activities. The Trust has therefore engaged in selective, strategic high priority, high impact activities that are consciously intended to build the Global System. This approach is outlined in some detail in the Trust's Funding Strategy, endorsed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty and adopted by the Trust's Executive Board. The Funding Strategy can be viewed at http://www.croptrust.org/main/governance.php?itemid=79.

16. As indicated below, these activities have included collection, rescue of threatened genebank accessions through regeneration, screening of targeted collections for important traits, development of information systems for better managing collections and improving visibility and availability to users, basic research to develop better and more cost-effective conservation techniques, and the provision of on-going support to certain internationally important and highly-accessed collections.

17. Because the Trust carries out its mandate in partnership with and through other institutions, it relies on the willingness of others to work in cooperation with the Trust and each other to implement the Treaty and Global Plan of Action in concrete ways. The requirement to cooperate is underscored and elaborated in Article 5.1 (e) of the Treaty, which states that Contracting Parties shall *"cooperate to promote the development of an efficient and sustainable system of* ex situ *conservation…"*.

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

19. The Trust has indicated its interest in exploring opportunities for synergies between the current Trust work program with the upcoming Benefit-sharing Fund projects.

## III .- Trust Activity Report

### *A. Long-Term Conservation and Availability of Crop Diversity*

20. Article 5.1e of the International Treaty requires that Contracting Parties "cooperate to promote the development of an efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation …" At the core of the Trust is the endowment fund, created to provide financial security to globally important collections of crop diversity in perpetuity.

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

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

23. To date, the Trust has approved long-term grants to ensure the conservation and availability of international collections of 15 major crops in 18 collections by 8 CGIAR genebanks and one regional genebank (banana and plantain, barley, bean, cassava, edible aroids, faba bean, forages, grass pea, lentil, maize, pearl millet, rice, sorghum, wheat, yam). In addition, the Trust provides an ongoing grant for the operations of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. The supported collections serve an exclusively international purpose as the backbone of the rational, efficient and effective global system. Collectively they provide more access to more plant breeders, researchers and farmers than any other institutions in the world.

24. Trust long-term grants total USD 2.05 million per year. Thus far almost USD 7 million has been provided through these long-term grants with this amount being leveraged in the Agreements by additional Centre contributions of USD 13.3 million.

25. Despite this substantial support underpinning the largest and most used collections in the world, significant additional resources will need to be placed in the Trust's endowment if the Trust is to meet its goal of providing stability, security and sustainability to these collections. Currently, the Trust's endowment is less than 25% of the total required. The security of the biological foundation of agriculture and the ability of agriculture to adapt to climate change depend on completing the endowment as an "essential element of the Funding Strategy" of the Treaty.

*B. Regeneration of Threatened, Globally-Important Crop Diversity*

26. Three years ago, when the Trust initiated a large-scale project aimed at putting in place or strengthening key components of a Global System, a large amount of unique (non-duplicated) crop diversity was threatened. Many national genebanks reported that 50-100% of their collections were in urgent need of regeneration. Regeneration refers to the growing out and harvesting of seed samples before their viability declines and the seeds die. It is an essential, but often overlooked, part of conservation.

27. The first step in building a Global System therefore was to rescue this diversity before it was lost forever. Crop experts assisted in identifying priority collections where Trust assistance could help save unique accessions that could not, for instance, be restored by other genebanks.

28. With developing country partners, and in furtherance of the International Treaty (Articles 5.1(e)(f), 5.2, 7.2(a)(b)), the Trust embarked on funding the regeneration of threatened priority collections of 22 Annex I crops held in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The initiative currently involves 86 institutes in 72 countries as well as crop and regional networks in regenerating approximately 90,000 accessions. The projects include the characterisation and documentation of the regenerated accessions and their duplication at a genebank meeting international standards of management. Where necessary, equipment for regeneration and storage has also been provided.

29. The regeneration initiative included the development of multilingual guidelines (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish) to assist participating institutes in following proper regeneration procedures for the target crops. Those guidelines can be found at: http://cropgenebank.sgrp.cgiar.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=206

30. Grant Agreements concluded for these activities are typically for a period of three years. One year remains for most of the projects. The Trust believes that most unique and threatened crop diversity of the 22 crops will have been rescued and secured at the conclusion of the project. Several relevant genebanks were unwilling to agree to use of the SMTA and to the standard requirement of safety duplication. The Trust was unable to conclude regeneration agreements with these facilities and their particular collections remain endangered. However, we are pleased to report that the overwhelming number of collection holders – 86 institutes – have partnered with the Trust in this historic endeavor, arguably the largest single effort ever to save and conserve crop diversity.

*C. Safety Duplication*

31. The International Treaty cites the need "to take appropriate steps to minimize or, if possible, eliminate threats to PGRFA" (Article 5.2). Safety duplication of accessions stored in genebank collections is a recognized element of good management practices aimed at minimizing risk and threats to ex situ collections. Safety duplication of accessions at a separate location minimizes the risk of loss of important crop varieties, due to natural or human factors. The

regeneration work funded by the Trust also produces enough seed for the creation of safety duplicates, which are sent to appropriate cooperating genebanks as well as (in the case of orthodox seeds) the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

32. In addition to ensuring the safety duplication of unique diversity in managed genebanks, the Trust is also supporting the duplication under black-box conditions of unique accessions of the world's most important crops at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, in Norway, as an ultimate safety net.

33. The Seed Vault, welcomed unanimously by the 172 Member plus EU of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources, was officially launched in February 2008. It now provides virtually fail-safe security for 600,000 duplicate samples of PGRFA. The Trust is contributing funding on an ongoing basis for the management and operation of the facility. The Executive Secretary of the Trust currently serves as the Chair of the Seed Vault's International Advisory Council, whose membership also includes the Chair of the Governing Body of the International Treaty. Approximately 466,000 samples, representing 77% of the total housed in the Seed Vault have been shipped to Svalbard with funding from the Trust.

34. Currently, and in addition to a number of significant in-kind services, the Trust provides USD 130,000 annually in direct support for the operations of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. The Trust has allocated USD 1 million to support the black-box safety-duplication of unique accessions over the period 2008 to 2010.

*D. Collecting*

35. With funds from a grower-supported organisation in Australia, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), the Trust has issued 6 grants for the collection of plant genetic material from priority areas and populations likely to harbour traits of use in adapting crops to climate change. These projects target landraces and wild relatives of cowpea, pearl millet, finger millet, pigeon pea and sorghum in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. In all cases, collecting work is being undertaken with national partners. This has allowed the Trust to provide material support for Article 5.1b of the International Treaty that calls on Parties to "promote the collection of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and relevant information on those plant genetic resources that are under threat or are of potential use".

36. At the end of 2010, the Trust received a significant grant from the Government of Norway for a major climate change adaptation initiative. The project will work with the wild relatives of 23 Annex 1 crops of major importance to food security. It will: identify those crop wild relatives that are missing from existing collections, are most likely to contain diversity of value to adapting agriculture to climate change, and are most endangered; collect them from the wild; provide them to genebanks for conservation; prepare them ('pre-breeding') for use in breeding crops for new climates; evaluate them for useful traits; and make the resulting information widely available. The project will therefore introduce a range of new and exciting adaptive options for agriculture that might otherwise have been lost, whilst helping protect biodiversity from disappearing.

*E. Evaluation of Collections*

37. The conservation of crop diversity makes sense only in the context of its availability and use. When little is know about the traits contained in genebank accessions, users are deterred and opportunities are lost. Recognizing that lack of knowledge about accessions constituted a severe impediment to the functioning of an effective and efficient Global System, the Trust embarked on an initiative to support evaluation of collections. Evaluation adds value to collections by identifying material with particular, important agronomic traits and adaptations.

38. The Trust has completed three calls under a competitive grants scheme for evaluation. The final call issued in 2009 brought the total of evaluation projects to 42. These projects cover 60 collections of 20 crops for 113 traits of significance to the poor in the context of climate change. They involve 57 different national/regional research institutes and 8 CGIAR Centres, in 43 countries. Information will be placed in publicly accessible databases, and the genetic resources themselves made available under the terms of the Treaty's SMTA.

*F. Information and Information Systems*

39. Article 17.1 of the International Treaty requires that Contracting Parties "cooperate to develop and strengthen a global information system to facilitate the exchange of information, based on existing information systems, on scientific, technical and environmental matters related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, with the expectation that such exchange of information will contribute to the sharing of benefits by making information on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture available to all Contracting Parties." Articles 13.2(a) and 12.3(c) address requirements to make information available.

40. To promote implementation of the International Treaty in this area, and to enable plant breeders and others to make greater use of genetic resources and thus contribute to generating and then sharing benefits as noted in Article 17.1, the Trust has embarked on a number of significant activities to enhance information about PGRFA and information systems:

- The Trust is working with the USDA and Bioversity International to develop and deploy a state-of-the-art genebank management programme, GRIN-Global, which will be user-friendly, flexible and powerful, and useful for all sizes and types of genebanks anywhere in the world.

- The USDA GRIN-Global software system will be made freely available to genebanks in early 2011 to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Training-the-trainers sessions have been held, and technical assistance will be available to help genebanks adopt the system.

- The Trust has been collaborating with the Secretariat of the International Treaty and Bioversity International to develop a global on-line portal to accession-level germplasm information, Genesys. This builds on existing collaborative information systems such as SINGER and EURISCO. The system, which allows searching across multiple genebank databases, is currently undergoing testing, and will be further developed.

41. The Trust's goal in supporting the development of GRIN-Global and Genesys was to provide the information systems necessary for the professional management and curation of genebank collections, and to promote use by enabling effective searching for needed materials across genebanks. Without effective information systems, the vision of a rational and effective Global System enunciated by the Treaty and the Global Plan of Action cannot possibly be realized. This explains the priority placed on these endeavours by the Trust and the Trust's continuing prioritization of this critical element.

*G. Research to Develop Conservation Protocols for Vegetatively Propagated Crops*

42. Under Article 5.1(e) Contracting Parties agree to "Cooperate…to promote the development and transfer of appropriate technologies" for the purpose of promoting the development of an "efficient and sustainable system of ex situ conservation." This is particularly

critical in cases where crops are difficult or especially costly to conserve. Given the Trust's commitment to providing long-term financial support for the efficient and sustainable conservation of crop diversity, early improvements in conservation technologies promise to provide substantial cost savings over time, and are thus particularly attractive investments.

43. To promote the implementation of the International Treaty in this area, the Trust has embarked on a number of research activities. These include making improvements to existing embryo culture protocols in partnership with the coconut network (COGENT), and developing cryopreservation methodologies for cassava, sweet potato, taro and yam. The research is aimed at providing more robust and cost-effective methods to conserve and make available germplasm of these crops.

44. The Trust is supporting the application of cryopreservation to the international banana collection managed by Bioversity International, to help secure its long-term conservation. Work to cryopreserve 250 accessions is well underway.

*Table 1. Summary of Trust funding over all programmatic activities*

| Activity | 2009 grants (USD) | 2010 grants (USD) |
|---|---|---|
| A. Long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity | 1,863,100 | 2,052,912 |
| B. Regeneration of threatened, globally important crop diversity | 1,498,657 | 1,106,515 |
| C. Safety duplication (shipment of accessions to international centers and Svalbard) | 74,106 | 60,492 |
| D. Collecting | 0 | 178,992 |
| E. Evaluation of collections | 430,663 | 503,832 |
| F. Information and information systems | 1,130,312 | 1,178,440 |
| G. Research to develop conservation protocols | 595,663 | 717,497 |
| TOTAL | 5,592,501 | 5,798,680 |

*H. Public Awareness*

45. The Trust is very active in public awareness activities. Drawing attention to the links between climate change and agriculture is central to the Trust's public awareness efforts. This connection is highlighted in virtually every issue of Crop Diversity Topics, the organization's analytical newsletter.

46. In preparation for the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in 2009, the Trust drafted a statement on agriculture, climate change and crop diversity signed by more than 60 of the world's leading figures in agriculture. Executive Secretary Cary Fowler attended the climate change negotiations promoting crop diversity as an essential component of any effective strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The statement can be found at http://www.croptrust.org/main/climatestatemen.php.

47. In 2010, the Trust worked to publicize the threat posed to the Pavlovsk Experimental Station in St. Petersburg, Russia, by takeover for a housing development. This collection of 5500 fruit and berry varieties – 90% estimated to be unique – is the largest field collection in Europe. More than 50,000 people signed Trust-initiated petitions. The case has received extensive media coverage. The collection remains threatened. A verbal update will be provided to the Governing Body.

48. The Trust, typically in cooperation with national partners, issued several press releases in the past year. The press releases can be downloaded from http://www.croptrust.org/main/press.php:

- On the importance of yam and yam diversity in West Africa. Focus was on Trust-funded work to conserve yam at International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

- On Trust-funded efforts to save vulnerable varieties of bananas, rare coconuts, and 1,000 other unique varieties of staple fruit and vegetable crops across the Pacific. This media effort attracted further attention to crops critical to combating diet-related health problems and which are particularly important to the poor.
- A number of press releases were issued with and by partner organizations highlighting their work on the regeneration of threatened genebanks accessions and screening for traits important for climate change adaptation and to the poor.

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

50. In the past year, the Trust has been involved in generating more than 200 newspaper and magazine articles, and has participated in dozens of radio and TV interviews. Crop diversity has been highlighted in media such as the Guardian, New York Times and BBC.

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

## IV. - Institutionall Matters

52. The Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust held its seventh meeting in Rome, November 2010. Dr. Margaret Catley-Carlson is Chair of the Board and Prof. Adel El-Beltagy is Vice-Chair. Two new Board Members were provided by the Governing Body for 2010 and 2011 respectively: Ms. Åslaug Haga, former Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy and Minister of Local Municipalities and Regional Development, and leader of the farmers' party in Norway, and Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and former Prime Minister of Niger.

53. Two Board Members were elected by the Trust's Donor Council for 2010 and 2011 respectively; Ambassador Walter Fust, CEO of the Global Humanitarian Forum and past Director of the Swiss Development Corporation, and Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, Brazilian agricultural leader, former Minister of Agriculture and former head of the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives.

54. The number of countries (developed and developing), associations, foundations, and companies that have contributed funds and joined the Trust's Donors' Council is 30. The Council meets annually and provides financial oversight and advice on such matters to the Executive Board. In addition a number of individuals have contributed to the Trust. The complete list of

donors can be found at: www.croptrust.org/main/funds.php. In addition to financial donations, Norway and Sweden have provided associate professional officers to the Trust, and Australia and the Netherlands have seconded senior staff, full-time and part-time respectively.

55. The Trust and the Treaty Secretariat have started joint fundraising activities, and have twice travelled to make joint presentations on the importance of PGRFA, the Treaty, and the Trust and the Benefit Sharing Fund as components of the funding strategy. There are plans to continue this approach where appropriate.

56. During the last two years, the Trust has attended more than 15 formal meetings hosted by the International Treaty as well as many more informal meetings with Treaty Secretariat staff or Bureau members. In addition, the Trust aims to meet regularly with the Secretariat to information share, often during International Treaty Secretariat staff meetings. Dr Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary of the Governing Body attends the Trust's Executive Board meetings with observer status.

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

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

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

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

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