



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



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

**Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda**

**NINTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**New Delhi, India, 19–24 September 2022**

**Report on the Implementation of the Communication Strategy of the  
International Treaty**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Effective communication is key to advancing the implementation of the International Treaty, through increasing visibility and advocating the value of the International Treaty in the PGRFA community, as well as in the wider agricultural and biodiversity sectors and the general public.
2. Increasing awareness and sharing information through effective communication remain key to conveying the importance of the International Treaty in terms of the conservation and sustainable using of PGRFA, as well as equitably sharing the benefits arising from their utilisation, particularly of the crops that feed the world. Highlighting the role that the International Treaty plays vis-à-vis current global issues, particularly in the context of stemming biodiversity loss in the face of climate change is vitally important. Global food security, sustainable agriculture, nutrition and health all depend on PGRFA, a point that the Secretariat continues to illustrate through its communication activities.
3. During this unprecedented inter-sessional period, the Secretariat continued enhancing its communication and outreach efforts in accordance with the Communication Strategy of the International Treaty,<sup>1</sup> despite the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Communication activities included raising awareness about the mandate and activities of the International Treaty, including our response to the impacts of the pandemic, sharing information in a clear, effective and timely manner, and strengthening capacities of partnering institutions to increase visibility of the International Treaty. This included increasing Treaty presence on social media channels; continuously updating the website; updating educational modules; developing new publications and informational products; and supporting Treaty stakeholders, particularly partners involved in Benefit-sharing Fund projects<sup>2</sup> in accordance with [Resolution 3/2019](#) of the Eighth Session of the Governing Body (GB-8).<sup>3</sup>
4. To fulfill the increasing communication and outreach related demand and related tasks, the Secretariat maintained the services of an Expert International Communication Consultant and a Website Specialist Consultant, both working in close coordination with other consultants, and with the FAO Office of Corporate Communication (OCC). The Secretariat also engaged the services of a consultant specifically to increase awareness and visibility of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF).
5. A considerable number of new products and services were developed and disseminated during this extraordinary period. What follows is a brief report on the various communication and information products and activities that have taken place in the period from December 2019 through July 2022:

## II. CORPORATE WEBSITE

6. The [International Treaty website](#) plays a fundamental role in conveying the effectiveness and activities of the Treaty. The website is usually the first entry point for people to learn about our mandate and our work. This biennium, the website has been reviewed in its entirety, its contents have been updated and new sections created. For example, [Voices of Diversity](#) (showcasing experiences and achievements from BSF project partners); [Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA](#), [Inventory of Farmers Rights](#); [Treaty Talks](#) (podcast); [GB-9 webpage](#); numerous short videos on various international days; and a marked increase in the use of info-graphics and other illustrative material.
7. All key sections of the website have been reviewed and improved. The website now contains additional content, technical information, statistics, engaging videos, new info-graphic material, and short and engaging videos. The overall visual appearance of the website has been improved with a

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<sup>1</sup> [IT/GB-7/17/23](#)

<sup>2</sup> This was also in accordance with the recommendation contained in the Report of the [Independent Evaluation of BSF-3](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Resolution 3/2019](#), paragraph 28: “*Emphasizes the importance of continuing the work on resource mobilization, communication, promotion and the International Treaty’s branding and media presence to enhance funding for, and the visibility of the Benefit-sharing Fund and the Fund for Agreed Purposes of the International Treaty in particular, and for the Funding Strategy;....*”

view to making it even more accessible and appealing to multiple audiences around the world. Notably, almost all Treaty website content is now available in all six official languages.

8. The Secretariat continues to update the Treaty website with news items, documents, meeting notices, BSF updates, video material, graphics and other pertinent information for stakeholders, and direct links to the International Treaty's social media feeds.

9. During this biennium, more than 12 meeting pages with over 280 documents were published, some in multiple languages. In addition, four online events were organized during the COVID-19 global pandemic to facilitate discussions on important topical issues regarding PGRFA. There has been a notable increase in the number of unique visits on the website.

10. The website continues to evolve and develop, and the coming biennium is expected to bring a new look with the gradual migration to a new FAO Content Management System (CMS). The preparations for the migration of the International Treaty website is under way in close consultation and in cooperation with the FAO Office of Corporate Communication and the FAO Office of Information Services.

### **III. NEWS ITEMS, PRESS RELEASES, INTERVIEWS, MEDIA COVERAGE**

11. The International Treaty was mentioned in a number of articles in the media, including video interviews and articles (e.g. [DW News](#), [TV5 Monde](#), [El Pais](#), [CBGDF](#) (Chinese nonprofit), [UNDP website](#), ["Biodiversity Beats"](#) (CBD live video interviews), CGIAR website, [Crop Trust](#) website, [Norwegian government website](#), [Seed World Group](#), and Keystone Policy Center. In addition to featuring in various national and international media outlets and websites, the International Treaty also featured a number of times on the FAO organizational website ([fao.org](#)), the [FAO YouTube](#) channel, the [FAO Biodiversity and Climate Change](#) website, as well as on the FAO internal portal, thus reaching a larger audience, externally and within FAO.

12. In this biennium, the International Treaty featured in, at least, 56 news items, including 31 press releases issued by the Secretariat and numerous interview-based articles, online forums, and TV and radio programs. The Secretariat issued Press Releases on important events and circulated them to a wide audience, using various channels of information dissemination, including Treaty partner organizations, FAO Corporate Communication channels, social media outlets, and international and national websites.

### **IV. NEW PUBLICATIONS**

13. This biennium has also seen a number of new publications, most notably on the BSF, Farmers' Rights, Conservation and Sustainable Use, GLIS, the Funding Strategy, the Multilateral System, and Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). This includes brochures, visibility and informational toolkits, booklets, reports, flyers, factsheets and posters.

### **V. SOCIAL MEDIA**

14. This biennium saw a notable increase in the number of followers on all International Treaty social media channels, i.e., Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. International Treaty connections on [LinkedIn](#) have increased to 5 800 connections with new requests coming in every week. Similarly, the number of followers on the Treaty's [Twitter](#) account ([@PlantTreaty](#)) have grown to over 5 900. The Treaty's [Facebook](#) following is somewhat lower, but has a community of almost 1 000.

15. An important part of growing the International Treaty's social media presence has been the development of new informative, succinct and visually appealing material. This has included the first podcast with more planned to be developed in the new biennium.

### **VI. VIDEOS**

16. The Secretariat developed an unprecedented variety and number of videos in this biennium. More than 25 unique short videos were developed, including a music video, BSF videos, video

messages on relevant UN International days of observances, and youth videos. The videos have been posted on social media, the FAO You Tube channel, and on the International Treaty website.

17. In preparation for the GB-9, additional seven new videos are being developed. Five of these feature mini-stories about BSF projects in five different regions, which will form an impactful photo and video exhibit, which will be launched at GB-9, and has been designed to travel to other events and locations around the world.

18. A number of the videos produced have been co-developed with BSF partners and participants. To achieve this, the Secretariat organized a series of webinars that provided practical guidance on how to record clear and succinct video messages using smartphones.

## **VII. YOUTH-ORIENTED PRODUCTS**

19. The Secretariat developed a new initiative to reach youth, in cooperation with youth and a junior consultant. For this, a number of new youth-oriented products were developed, including a music video, animated graphics, GIFs, social media content, online quizzes and games (e.g., Word-of-the-Week), aimed at increasing awareness about the International Treaty and the importance of conserving seeds, and other plant material needed for future food security. More youth products, including a short video and a booklet are in development for the new biennium.

## **VIII. ONLINE SEMINARS/WEBINARS**

20. Given the unique situation faced by the entire world during the global pandemic, the Secretariat had to find innovative ways to provide discussion fora for issues of concern and of interest to the International Treaty community. Among the new ways of communicating during this time has been the use of online webinars/seminars and meetings, which, under normal circumstances, would have been held in different regions of the world in-person. Due to the global pandemic, these were held online. Particularly notable amongst these were the online webinars on the “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Conservation, Use and Exchange of Plant Genetic Diversity,” which was very topical. The International Year of Fruits & Vegetables provided the perfect opportunity to hold a webinar on “Fruit and Vegetable Genetic Diversity: the status and challenges of conservation, exchange and use,” which provided simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, French and Spanish. “Cryopreservation: a long-term strategy for hard-to- conserve PGRFA collections in a post-COVID world” covered a more forward-looking issue. These online meetings were publicized through social media channels, the Treaty website and through partner organizations, attracting significant attendances. The online seminars were developed in close collaboration with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and were well attended.

21. The Secretariat also organized and contributed to several international technical conferences, scientific panels and forums in the biennium. These efforts underpinned the Treaty’s commitment to ensure that countries, at all levels of development, can get access to information and resources to support advocacy, in particular on the key role of crop biodiversity conservation and use for food security.

## **IX. COOPERATION WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

22. This period has seen a considerable increase in collaborating with various partner organizations in the production of a number of communication activities. In addition to the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the Secretariat has collaborated a number of times with NordGen, the Government of Norway, the UN Secretary-General’s Advocates for SDGs, and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, for example, for the Seed Summit held just days prior to the declaration of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The activities related to the Seed Summit included in-person participation in Press Briefings, the issuance of Press Releases, videos, social media messaging and media interviews with the Secretary.

23. Similarly, the Secretariat worked closely with the UNDP and other partner organizations with regard to coverage of the UNDP Goodwill Ambassador’s “Nordic Walk for Biodiversity,” during

which seeds from a number of countries in the Near East Region were deposited at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Throughout the biennium, the Secretariat also worked in close cooperation with the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and other Biodiversity-related Conventions to share and amplify messaging and information regarding the importance of conserving biodiversity, the Global Biodiversity Framework, and actively participated with members of the global Biodiversity Communications Flotilla coordinated by the CBD Communication Team.

24. In addition, the Secretariat continued to expand cooperation with other divisions and units within FAO, in particular with the Office of Corporate Communication, and the Office of Climate, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB), which now hosts the Secretariat of the International Treaty. The Secretariat has further strengthened collaboration with this office, including for the development of various information products and the organisation of events relating biodiversity to climate action, bio-economy and ecosystem services.

## **X. REFRESHED LOGO & VISUAL IDENTITY**

25. This biennium also marks the evolution of the International Treaty into a more contemporary look in collaboration with a branding consultant and in close coordination with the FAO Office of Corporate Communication. The refreshed logo is the first part of fresh Visual Identity Guidelines, which are under development. The International Treaty's new Visual Identity Guidelines are expected to be finalized early in the new biennium. The refreshed branding elements will be reflected in all communication products in the coming biennium.

## **XI. GB-9 PREPARATIONS**

26. In preparing for the Ninth Session, the early selection and approval of the theme, "Celebrating the Guardians of Crop Diversity: Towards an Inclusive Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework", has guided the development of information products, engaging with partners and facilitating the preparation of dedicated exhibits. The Secretariat has developed a comprehensive Communication Plan in preparation for GB-9, led by an experienced expert consultant and in close collaboration with OCC and others. The GB-9 Communication Plan includes the broad range of communication products and activities, such as: key messages; press releases; GB-9 visual identity; BSF photo and video exhibit, featuring farmers and crops from five global regions; social media messaging; graphics; press briefings; interviews; videos; live streaming of plenary sessions; and a Special Event, "Celebrating Farmers as Guardians of Crop Diversity," being organised in close coordination with the host government.