



COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 14 of the Provisional Agenda

Seventeenth Regular Session

Rome, 18–22 February 2019

COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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CGRFA 17

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its last session, requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration with the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Treaty) to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies, and in particular with regard to:
 - (a) the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report) and the consideration of the Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
 - (b) the monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), including further work on draft technical guidelines on farmers' varieties/landraces and crop wild relatives and global networking on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA);
 - (c) access and benefit-sharing (ABS);
 - (d) the Global Information System (GLIS) of the Treaty and the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WIEWS); and,
 - (e) global targets and indicators.¹
2. The Commission welcomed the joint preparation by the Secretariats of the Commission and the Treaty of an analysis of the relevance of the Treaty's information systems to efforts to support the monitoring of the implementation of the Second GPA and the preparation of the Third Report, and the relevance of WIEWS and Genesys to efforts to support the Parties of the Treaty in reporting on the implementation of the Treaty. It also welcomed the proposal to hold a joint international workshop on ABS for genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA), subject to the availability of the necessary extra-budgetary funds.² The Commission requested the Secretary to continue strengthening collaboration to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies. It also decided to keep the transfer of activities to the Treaty under review.³
3. The Governing Body, at its Seventh Session, held in October/November 2017, considered its cooperation with the Commission⁴, took note of additional information submitted by the Commission Secretariat⁵ and adopted Resolution 11/2017, as contained in *Appendix I* to the document *Cooperation with international instruments and organizations*.⁶
4. This document, prepared jointly by the Secretaries of the Treaty and the Commission provides information on the cooperation between the two secretariats and identifies possible areas of future collaboration.

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 93.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 94.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 95.

⁴ IT/GB-7/17/22.

⁵ IT/GB-7/17/Inf.23.

⁶ CGRFA-17/19/14,

II. COLLABORATION IN 2017/2018

(a) Preparation of The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture:

5. The Treaty Secretariat participated in an expert consultation convened by FAO from 29 November to 1 December 2017 on *Reporting on the State of Plant Genetic Resources*. The objective of the workshop was to identify ways for enhancing quality and coverage of data reporting on the state of PGRFA under the on-going monitoring frameworks for the implementation of the Second GPA and for SDG target 2.5.

(b) Monitoring and implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

6. The two Secretariats continued collaborating with regard to monitoring and implementation of the Second GPA, including on the draft voluntary technical guidelines for the conservation and sustainable use of farmers' varieties/landraces and the proposals to hold jointly international symposia on on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces⁷ and *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants⁸.

7. The WIEWS reporting tool used by National Focal Points to report on-line on the implementation of the Second GPA was presented by FAO at several regional workshops organized by the Treaty Secretariat (i) to enhance the capacity of national focal points to prepare and submit the national reports on the implementation of the International Treaty; (ii) to provide an overview on the major areas of work and a brief update on the status of intersessional processes; (iii) to facilitate discussion and coordination on ongoing policy and operational processes under the International Treaty.

(c) Access and benefit-sharing

8. The Commission and the Governing Body, at their last sessions, welcomed the suggestion to collaborate in the organization of an international workshop on ABS for GRFA. As requested by the Commission, the Secretariat organized in close collaboration with the Secretariats of the Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) the *International Workshop on Access and Benefit-Sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* that was held from 10 to 12 January 2018. The Secretaries of the Treaty and the Commission and a representative of the CBD Secretariat opened the workshop; the Treaty and the CBD Secretariat also contributed to its success through a presentation of the Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.⁹

9. The Secretariat of the International Treaty participated, as an observer, in the Fourth Session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS Expert Team), held in October 2018. The Secretariat of the International Treaty also participated in the Ninth Session of the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which discussed, *inter alia*, explanatory notes to the ABS Elements related to PGRFA.

(d) Global Information System of the Treaty and the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

10. The Governing Body and the Commission, at their last sessions, took note of the analysis of the information collected by the Governing Body on the implementation of the International Treaty and by the FAO World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS) on PGRFA on the implementation of the Second GPA.¹⁰ The Governing Body also invited Contracting Parties "to use FAO WIEWS, Genesys or other existing information systems that the Global Information System is

⁷ See CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.3.

⁸ See CGRFA-17/19/9.2 Inf.4.

⁹ See FAO. 2018. [Proceedings of the International Workshop on Access and Benefit-sharing for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#).

¹⁰ Governing Body Resolution 11/2017, paragraph 7; CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 94.

built on, for the notification of material that forms part of the Multilateral System.”¹¹ The Governing Body recognized the value of country reports on the implementation of the Second GPA to measure progress in the context of Article 6 of the Treaty.¹² The Commission’s Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group), at its last session, recommended that the GLIS of the Treaty build on WIEWS and that WIEWS and GENESYS of the Crop Trust cooperate. It also called upon GLIS, WIEWS and GENESYS to make an effort to cooperate in order to avoid duplication.¹³

11. The Governing Body further requested its Secretary to link GLIS to the PGRFA data on *ex situ* collections and on-farm management in WIEWS¹⁴ and requested the Secretaries of the Treaty and the Commission to explore technical options that allow users of one system to either refer to or use information previously submitted to the other system.¹⁵ Efforts are currently being undertaken to link the GLIS to WIEWS data on PGRFA *ex situ* collections, through DOIs, and on on-farm management.

(e) Sustainable use

12. The Secretariat of the Commission participated in the informal expert meeting on the implementation of the sustainable use of PGRFA and the joint programme on biodiversity in agriculture held from 23 to 25 May 2018 in Valenzano, Italy.

III. POSSIBLE AREAS OF FUTURE COLLABORATION

13. Collaboration between the two secretariats may continue in various areas of mutual interest, to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the respective programmes of work of the two bodies.

- (a) The preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the preparation of a draft Third Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture remain an important area of collaboration.
- (b) The secretariats intend to collaborate in the organization of the international symposia on on-farm management of farmers’ varieties/landraces and on *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants. The proposals for both events have been prepared in collaboration with the Treaty Secretariat.¹⁶
- (c) Collaboration should also continue with regard to the monitoring and implementation of the Second GPA, including technical instruments that facilitate its implementation, such as the Genebank Standards.
- (d) The secretariats are already collaborating to ensure that the objectives and relevant work and policies of the two bodies are integrated into global strategies and frameworks, such as the FAO Biodiversity Strategy and the post 2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as to update FAO Members on progress in the implementation of their respective mandates and work programmes, for example through briefings for Permanent Representations.
- (e) The secretariats may collaborate on topics, such as ABS and “digital sequence information” on PGRFA.
- (f) Further areas of collaboration may include the GLIS and FAO WIEWS, and targets and indicators.

¹¹ IT/GB-7/17/Resolution 4/2017, paragraph 2.

¹² IT/GB-7/17/Resolution 6/2017, paragraph 2(v).

¹³ CGRFA-17/19/9.1, paragraph 27.

¹⁴ IT/GB-7/17/Resolution 5/2017, paragraph 5.

¹⁵ Governing Body Resolution 11/2017, paragraph 7.

¹⁶ See CGRFA-17/19/9.2/Inf.3 & CGRFA-17/19/9.2 Inf.4.