



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



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

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda

NINTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

New Delhi, India, 19–24 September 2022

Implementation of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Executive Summary

At its Eighth Session, the Governing Body reaffirmed the key role of the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the link between Farmers' Rights under Article 9 and the provisions of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty on conservation and sustainable use.¹ It also reconvened the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee or ACSU).

This document summarizes the work done and activities undertaken in implementing Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty and provides information on related processes. The document also reflects the advice the Ad Hoc Technical Committee provided on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 during the past biennium and on possible future areas of work.

1. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and, in particular, to :
 - welcome the new prototype of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and provide any necessary further guidance;
 - consider the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for possible endorsement and further guidance;

¹ Resolution 5/2019. www.fao.org/3/nb783en/nb783en.pdf

- review the *Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6*; and
 - provide guidance on areas of future work on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
2. The Governing Body is also invited to provide any further guidance it considers appropriate for the effective implementation of Articles 5 and 6, and to adopt a Resolution, taking into account the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture contained in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12.2, as well as the draft elements provided in the *Appendix* to this document.
 3. In this context, the Governing Body may wish to reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and is invited to consider the elements included in *Annex 1* to the *Appendix* in developing the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Eighth Session, the Governing Body reaffirmed the key role of the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the link between Farmers' Rights under Article 9 and the provisions on conservation and sustainable use of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.² It also reconvened the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee or ACSU).

2. This document summarizes the work done and the activities undertaken to implement the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and provides information on related processes.

II. THE AD HOC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

3. Taking into account the need to strengthen synergies between the various areas of work of the International Treaty, and recognizing that sustainable use should be closely linked to the conservation of PGRFA, the Governing Body, through Resolution 5/2019, decided to reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee or ACSU) with the new Terms of Reference.³

4. The Committee met twice in the past biennium, for its fifth and sixth meetings, and took part in a prior informal briefing session to receive updates, exchange views on some of the substantive aspects of its tasks, and provide initial guidance to the Secretary on preparations for the formal meeting. All the meetings were held virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. The report of the Committee to the Governing Body is available in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12.2, *Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body*. The report describes the major outcomes of the Committee's discussions, including some recommendations.

III. TOOLBOX FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

6. The Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA (Toolbox) is an online database of resources on the management and sustainable use of PGRFA. It contains publications, reports, research and studies, and other relevant information resources from various organizations and bodies worldwide, including research and academic institutions, intergovernmental bodies, and national and international agricultural research institutions.

7. The Toolbox was launched in 2017. Since then, the Secretariat has continued to populate it with relevant information resources. As of May 2022, 1 908 resources have been made available in the Toolbox,⁴ most of which are open source. In addition, the Secretariat regularly updates the Toolbox to include the latest relevant information and resources from different sources.

8. The Governing Body, through Resolution 5/2019, requested the Secretary to continue to update the Toolbox, disseminate information about it, and provide information about its use for consideration by the ACSU.

² Para. 1, Resolution 5/2019. www.fao.org/3/nb783en/nb783en.pdf.

³ Page 3, Annex, Resolution 5/2019. www.fao.org/3/nb783en/nb783en.pdf

⁴ Available resources as of 30 May 2022: English, 1 480; French, 195; and Spanish, 233.

9. The Governing Body also mandated the Committee to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the Toolbox and prepare concrete recommendations on how it can be monitored, evaluated, and improved to better guide Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the sustainable use of PGRFA.
10. In April 2021, the Secretariat conducted an online survey to evaluate the usage, relevance, and effectiveness of the Toolbox, and to gather suggestions for its further improvement. The outcome was presented to the Committee at its fifth meeting.⁵
11. The Committee acknowledged the importance of the Toolbox as a valuable source of information, guiding Contracting Parties and stakeholders in implementing Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty. The Committee made several suggestions to improve the Toolbox's operational aspects, use, and effectiveness.
12. The Committee welcomed the improvements to the Toolbox and invited the Secretary to prepare an information document detailing the new prototype of the Toolbox, including a communication strategy and visibility plan, for the Ninth Session of the Governing Body. The new prototype of the Toolbox is presented in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12/Inf.1, *New prototype of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

IV. POSSIBLE JOINT PROGRAMME ON BIODIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

13. In reconvening the Committee, the Governing Body assigned it to provide advice about the possibility of a future Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA based on the documentation prepared by the Secretariat. At its fifth and sixth meetings, the Committee considered the information and documentation provided by the Secretariat, including the first draft of a Joint Programme concept note.
14. In light of the current discussions in other international fora, and taking into account the urgency, momentum, and the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation for addressing the climate crisis, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (when adopted), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), the Committee highlighted that there is a “window of opportunity” for developing and implementing such a Joint Programme. In particular, the Committee considered the outcomes of the informal meeting of experts as a basis for the possible Joint Programme and identified the thematic area and objective that could be most relevant to the current challenges and context.⁶
15. The Secretariat initiated an informal meeting with a group of potential partners to discuss the draft concept note and the partners' possible role in, and contributions to, the envisaged Joint Programme.⁷ Each organization identified initial links to its own ongoing and planned activities and provided valuable inputs to further improve the draft Concept Note.

⁵ IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Inf.2, *Outcomes of the online survey on the use, relevance and effectiveness of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA*. www.fao.org/3/cb6757en/cb6757en.pdf

⁶ Thematic area 3 “A food-system approach to food and nutrition security and ensuring resilience to climate change”; Objective 5 “Boost sustainable use activities on the ground through an integrated approach to *in-situ*, on-farm and *ex-situ* strategies”. See: IT/GB-9/ACSU5/21/Inf.3. *Proceedings, informal meeting of experts, 23-25 May 2018, CIHEAM Bari, Italy: Exploring possible elements of a Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA 2020-2030*. www.fao.org/3/cb6762en/cb6762en.pdf

⁷ To facilitate the process, the Secretariat considered those institutions/organizations with existing memoranda of understanding/cooperation with FAO/International Treaty: the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-Bari), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

16. They also noted that the Joint Programme is expected to respond to the call for a transformation of contemporary food systems to become more sustainable, equitable, and resilient, and to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, once adopted.

17. The Joint Programme will work towards agricultural and food production that is nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive while promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture. The updated concept note of the Joint Programme is presented in Annex 2 to the Appendix for the consideration of the Governing Body.

V. BACKGROUND STUDY ON THE BOTTLENECKS AND CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLES 5 AND 6 OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

18. At its Eighth Session, the Governing Body requested the Committee to “recommend further steps on how the Governing Body can assist Contracting Parties in advancing the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty for consideration of the Governing Body at its Ninth Session”.

19. At its fifth meeting, the Committee discussed a range of possible further steps to support Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.⁸ In considering the possible new initiatives, the Committee highlighted the opportunity to develop country/region-specific studies to address the poor implementation of Articles 5 and 6.⁹

20. The Secretariat, in response to the need expressed by the Committee, prepared a *Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 (Background study)*. The *Background study* was prepared based primarily on the National Reports on the implementation of the International Treaty that were submitted by Contracting Parties in accordance with the Compliance Procedures of the International Treaty.¹⁰ Other sources of information for the data analysis included:

- the outcomes of the regional webinars on the Benefit-sharing Fund, Farmers' Rights and Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA organized by the Secretariat in all regions in early 2022;
- the outcomes of the three regional training workshops on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights organized by the Secretariat in 2019 for the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and;
- the results of the global survey conducted in 2016 by the Secretariat of the International Treaty to gather the views and needs of PGRFA stakeholders.

21. The *Background study* identifies four main types of bottlenecks to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA that are of greater or lesser significance, depending on the regions and countries concerned:

- i. The first type of bottlenecks relates to policy, legal and institutional issues. These may include the lack of an enabling, efficient, integrated, and comprehensive national legal and policy framework to promote the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA; poor implementation of laws, policies, and/or strategies; limited intersectoral coordination; lack

⁸ Section V of the document, IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/5, paragraph 20 (i) activities for strengthening and capitalizing on ongoing initiatives to increase their benefit, impact and visibility; and (ii) possible new initiatives to further support Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

⁹ IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Report. *Report of the Fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. www.fao.org/3/cb7136en/cb7136en.pdf

¹⁰ National Reports available at: www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/compliance/compliance-reports/en/

of legal and policy expertise; and lack of awareness of the importance of PGRFA and the International Treaty.

- ii. The second type of bottlenecks encompasses scientific and technical issues, including lack of access to technologies for information management; lack of reliable data and information; lack of scientific interest in specific types of crops and varieties; and lack of activities in certain areas of conservation and use of PGRFA, for instance, regeneration of *ex situ* accessions and agromorphological characterization.
- iii. The third type of bottlenecks involves operational and resource constraints, including lack of adequate equipment and storage facilities; the poor operation of gene banks; lack of access to remote areas; lack of technical capacities and human resources; and lack of financial resources.
- iv. Finally, the fourth type of bottlenecks covers market issues, including the prevalence of commercial varieties, resulting in the disappearance of traditional varieties; the lack of adequate marketing opportunities for landraces/farmers' crop varieties; the disconnect between farmers and the market; the asymmetric power distribution in the value chain; and the lack of negotiation skills of farmers and producers.

22. Identifying the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty should help determine opportunities for improvement and collaboration to address these issues. It should also further assist the Governing Body in making informed decisions on how it can support Contracting Parties in advancing the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

23. The *Background study* is presented in document IT/GB-9/22/12/Inf. 2, *Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty*.

VI. EXAMPLES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST CONTRACTING PARTIES AND STAKEHOLDERS IN IMPLEMENTING ARTICLES 5 AND 6 OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

24. The Secretary prepared a compilation and summary of the work and activities on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty for the fifth meeting of ACSU.¹¹ The document included the following information:

- overview of submissions received from Contracting Parties and stakeholders;
- National Reports in accordance with the Compliance Procedures;¹²
- implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund;
- information gathered from the Regional Training Workshops.¹³

25. The compilation also included outcomes of the First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – Technical Consultation on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA.¹⁴

¹¹ IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/4, *Compilation and summaries of submissions and examples on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*. www.fao.org/3/cb6878en/cb6878en.pdf

¹² IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Inf.4.1, *Summary of National Reports on Compliance submitted by Contracting Parties in relation to Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. www.fao.org/3/cb6879en/cb6879en.pdf

¹³ IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/Inf.4.3, *Regional Training Workshops on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights; Summary of presentations*. www.fao.org/3/cb6758en/cb6758en.pdf

¹⁴First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – Technical Consultation on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA, held 29 and 30 March 2021. The two-day symposium was co-organized by FAO, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Secretariat, the

The Committee took note of the information provided in the documents prepared by the Secretariat and identified options on how best to address the task assigned by the Governing Body. The options identified by the Committee are contained in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12.2.¹⁵

VII. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

26. During the inter-sessional period, the Secretariat continued to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders and partners, both within and outside FAO, to support projects and initiatives that promote capacity development and innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.¹⁶

27. The Secretariat continued to collaborate and liaise with the Secretariats of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture¹⁷ and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also collaborated with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the CGIAR Centers,¹⁸ the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation, and other relevant stakeholders.¹⁹

28. Moreover, within the context of FAO technical development cooperation, the Secretariat collaborated and liaised with other units²⁰ and decentralized offices to provide technical inputs and support national projects on agricultural biodiversity thematic areas, e.g. *in situ*/on-farm conservation activities, of local crops, the establishment of community seed banks, the collection and depositing of traditional crop varieties into national seed banks, and providing technical guidance on mainstreaming PGRFA into existing policies and measures.²¹

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Secretariat and the Global Crop Diversity Trust.
www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-symposium-on-pgrfa/en/

¹⁵ IT/GB-9/22/12.2 *Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body.*

¹⁶ For example:

- [Web Symposium on Plant Health](#), 16 December 2020, organized by Società Italiana Genetica Agraria.
- Presentation and panel discussion – [Realizing peasants’ and indigenous peoples’ rights to seeds: Key issues and challenges for the implementation of farmers’ rights and international negotiations](#), 29 April 2021, organized by the Secretariat of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).
- International conference – [Ensuring Diversity for Food and Agriculture – Plant Genetic Resources in Nature and On-farm](#), 28 June to 1 July 2021, organized by Farmer’s Pride in association with the European Association for Research on Plant Breeding – Genetic Resources Section, and the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources.
- Seminar – [Guardianas de Semillas](#), 5 July 2021, organized by Sembrares, Spain.
- [Seed Policy Dialogue – the FAO Treaty and Farmers’ Rights](#), held on 30 September 2021, convened by Let’s Liberate Diversity.
- Series of three workshops – [Bringing farmers to the table: Innovating plant breeding](#), 30 March, 28 April and 2 December 2021, organized by Oxfam-Novib.
- [International Symposium on Genetic Resources for Latin America and Caribbean \(SIRGEAC\)](#), 30 November - 3 December 2021.
- [Congress of the African Seed Trade Association \(AFSTA\)](#), 27 February to 3 March 2022.

¹⁷ They co-organized the First International Multi-Stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, a two-day technical consultation on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA.
www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-symposium-on-pgrfa/en/

¹⁸ Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, as partner/convenor of capacity-building activities, e.g. Live Session “Genetic Resources Policies for CGIAR Scientists”, 2 February to 23 March 2022.

¹⁹ Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, as contributor to the book *Orphan crops for sustainable food and nutrition security*, published in 2022.

²⁰ For example: The Indigenous Peoples Unit’s Global Hub contributed to the publication of White/Wiphala paper on indigenous peoples’ food systems; the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment on possible joint activities to promote the work on Articles 5 and 6 within the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems’ sites.

²¹ For example, through the FAO-GEF-funded project: Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agro-Biodiversity in Traditional Agro-ecosystems of the Philippines.

29. The Secretariat also continued to partner with academic and research institutions, in particular supporting field projects and advanced research aimed at conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.²² The majority of these field projects promote innovative approaches to conservation, management, and characterization of genetic resources, crop diversification, environmental and agrobiodiversity preservation, and equitable economic development through the valorization of local crops.

30. The Secretariat collaborated with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, CGIAR, and the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, along with 32 other partners, in convening the 2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress.²³ The congress resulted in the establishment of a common basis for multisectoral action: “The 2021 Rome Manifesto: Using agrobiodiversity to transform food systems”. This manifesto highlights three urgent agrobiodiversity-related needs for tackling global challenges: (i) the need to consume diverse nutritious, safe, accessible foods; (ii) the need to produce food in diverse and sustainable food systems; and (iii) the need to conserve agrobiodiversity to provide options for sustainably and inclusively transforming food systems and improving lives.²⁴

VIII. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

31. At its Eighth Session, the Governing Body “requested the Secretary, in collaboration with other stakeholders, and subject to the availability of financial resources, to facilitate training and capacity building to support the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty”.

32. During the inter-sessional period, training and capacity-building activities were limited due to the global pandemic. Nonetheless, the Secretariat continued to collaborate or participate in various events and activities aimed at capacity building and awareness-raising of the importance of crop genetic resources, and promoting their use and valorization. These capacity-building activities targeted different audiences at various levels and scales and were conducted via electronic means or through face-to-face interactions whenever feasible.²⁵

33. Furthermore, during the first quarter of this year, the Secretariat organized five regional webinars on the Benefit-sharing Fund, Farmers’ Rights, and Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA.²⁶ The webinars provided updates on preparations for the 5th cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund, shared available information on platforms, tools, and resources aimed at promoting and guiding the implementation of sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers’ Rights, and sought to identify and

²² These projects include:

- Diversifood: <https://diversifood.eu/>
- Dynaversity: <http://dynaversity.eu/project/>
- Farmers Pride: www.farmerspride.eu/
- G2P-Sol: <https://sostenibilita.enea.it/projects/g2p-sol>
- INCREASE project: www.pulsesincrease.eu/
- European Evaluation Network (EVA) on wheat/barely: www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/resources/european-evaluation-network/eva-workshop-on-wheatbarley/
- Bresov: ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/bresov
- GenRes Bridge: www.genresbridge.eu/
- RADIANT project, Horizon 2020: www.radiantproject.eu/

²³ The 2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress was held from 15 to 18 November 2021.

²⁴ The manifesto is available at:

static1.squarespace.com/static/60ba6f3c74111c29f5572da2/t/61858fcf0fa6a109fcc0b7d3/1636143057956/Manifesto_brochure_final_v3.pdf

²⁵ See footnote²⁶

²⁶ The regional webinars via electronic means were conducted as follows: Africa, 25 January 2022; Asia and Southwest Pacific, 26 January 2022; Latin America and the Caribbean, 27 January 2022; Near East, 28 January 2022; Europe, 2 February 2022; and North America, 3 February 2022.

discuss bottlenecks and challenges in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

IX. FUTURE WORK ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

34. Pursuant to its Terms of Reference, the Committee will recommend further steps on how the Governing Body could assist Contracting Parties and stakeholders in advancing the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, for consideration of the Governing Body at its Ninth Session.²⁷

35. At its fifth and sixth meetings, based on documentation prepared by the Secretariat,²⁸ the Committee considered the design of future work for supporting the integrated implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

36. The Committee discussed and agreed to focus on the possible immediate further steps, which could be divided into:²⁹

- i) Activities for strengthening and capitalizing on ongoing initiatives to increase their benefit, impact, and visibility, including:
 - the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA;
 - the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA; and
 - country/region-specific studies to address bottlenecks in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the Treaty.
- ii) Possible new activities to further support Contracting Parties and stakeholders in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty:
 - regional briefings among Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6;
 - development of a series of training materials on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including on cryopreservation;
 - policies and regulatory frameworks supporting the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including crop wild relatives (CWR), and recognition schemes for local and indigenous communities and farmers;
 - awareness-raising on the value of crop genetic diversity and local activities; and
 - enhanced coordination and partnerships among public institutions, researchers, private entities, and other stakeholders.

X. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

37. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and:

- to welcome the new prototype of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and to provide any necessary further guidance;
- consider the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for possible endorsement and further guidance;

²⁷ Resolution 5/2019, Annex, para. 6.

²⁸ IT/GB-9/ACSU-5/21/5, *Future work on conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*. www.fao.org/3/cb7017en/cb7017en.pdf; IT/GB-9/ACSU-6/22/5. *Future work on conservation and sustainable Use of PGRFA and recommendations to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body*. www.fao.org/3/cb8654en/cb8654en.pdf

²⁹ Section VI. Para. 24, IT/GB-9/ACSU-6/22/Report, Section IV of document IT/GB-9/ACSU-6/22/Report. www.fao.org/3/cb8996en/cb8996en.pdf

- review the *Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6*; and
- provide guidance on areas of future work on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

38. The Governing Body is also invited to provide any further guidance it considers appropriate for the effective implementation of Articles 5 and 6, and to adopt a Resolution, taking into account the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture contained in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12.2, as well as the draft elements provided in the *Appendix* to this document.

39. In this context, the Governing Body may wish to reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and is invited to consider the elements included in *Annex 1* to the *Appendix* in developing the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

DRAFT RESOLUTION **/2022**IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLES 5 AND 6, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****THE GOVERNING BODY,**

Acknowledging the paramount importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the vital role of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA in addressing global challenges, including food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change adaptation, and poverty alleviation for smallholder farmers;

Noting that in the last three years, 2020–2022, the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA has been implemented mostly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly affected and will continue to affect the global policy and operational environment;

Taking note of the ongoing discussion on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and, when adopted, its implementation is expected to contribute to the enhancement of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;

Recalling Resolutions 7/2013, 4/2015, 5/2015, 6/2017 and 5/2019;

1. *Takes note* of the Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (The Committee or ACSU), and *thanks to* the Committee for carrying out its work and for defining possible indicative future areas of work to advance implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
2. *Decides* to reconvene the Committee with the Terms of Reference contained in Annex 1 to this Resolution;
3. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Secretary to update and improve the usability, relevance, and effectiveness of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA as a useful online database of valuable information for the management and sustainable use of PGRFA, and *takes note* of the new prototype of the Toolbox and its communication and visibility plan;
4. *Requests* the Secretary to continue to promote, disseminate, regularly update and monitor the Toolbox, and *invites* Contracting Parties and stakeholders to continue to share information resources and to encourage its use;
5. *Endorses* the concept note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA (Joint Programme) as contained in Annex 2 of this Resolution and *thanks to* the Committee, experts and initial partners for its development and finalization;
6. *Invites* Contracting Parties, relevant stakeholders, and donors to consider the thematic areas and activities of the Joint Programme as an important contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and to provide financial resources for its promotion and implementation, and *requests* the Secretary to engage with relevant partners and stakeholders to foster the implementation of the Joint Programme;

7. **Welcomes** the *Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty*, **requests** the Secretary to continue to analyze and monitor the gaps and needs in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and **calls upon** Contracting Parties to share information on the difficulties and challenges encountered in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the Treaty, as well as possible new initiatives, activities, and approaches that could be undertaken to address the challenges identified;
8. **Takes note** of the future work areas on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, **requests** the Secretary to facilitate their implementation and **encourages** Contracting Parties to consider these work areas, as appropriate, for advancing the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
9. **Requests** the Secretary, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, and subject to the availability of financial resources, to:
- organize regional briefings on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6, to update Contracting Parties and stakeholders on progress and relevant developments;
 - support country/region-specific studies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6;
 - facilitate and monitor the activities carried out by Contracting Parties, stakeholders, and international organizations in support of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
 - continue to facilitate training and capacity building aimed at advancing characterization and sustainable use of PGRFA, including the assessment of needs of local farmers and other relevant local stakeholders and the identification of possible means to address those needs;
 - support national programmes in policy development for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and in building partnerships and mobilizing resources;
 - continue to cooperate with relevant units within FAO, other entities and institutions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and national and international agricultural research centres, as well as the public and private sector and civil society, in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;
 - continue to collaborate with other relevant initiatives, in particular with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on the interaction between genetic resources, community- and farmer-led system activities, and protected area systems; and
 - develop a series of training materials for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, including on cryopreservation;
10. **Calls upon** Contracting Parties to support the activities outlined in this Resolution, including through the provision of financial resources;
11. **Thanks** the Government of Italy for the generous financial and in-kind support it has continued to provide towards the implementation of the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and **calls on** Contracting Parties and other donors to provide additional financial resources for the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

Annex 1 to the Appendix

Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

1. The Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will:
 - i. monitor the continuous updating and continuous collection of information resources for the Toolbox to better support and assist Contracting Parties and stakeholders in enhancing and further developing the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA;
 - ii. provide advice on the implementation of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA;
 - iii. monitor and assess the gaps and needs in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and prepare further concrete recommendations on how to address these gaps and needs, with a primary focus on policy and institutional issues; and
 - iv. based on the above, recommend further steps on how the Governing Body can assist Contracting Parties in advancing the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, for consideration of the Governing Body at its Tenth Session.
2. The Committee will comprise up to three members from each FAO Region, and seven technical experts designated by the Bureau, upon proposal by the FAO Regions and relevant stakeholders, in particular farmers' organizations, taking into account the required range of technical expertise, and regional and gender balance. Two Co-Chairpersons from Contracting Parties to the International Treaty will form part of the Committee – one from a developing country and one from a developed country. The Co-Chairpersons will be elected by members of the Committee designated by the Regions.
3. The Secretary will continue to maintain and update the list of experts for future reference. This will be made available to Contracting Parties, with a possible view to expanding the pool of experts on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.
4. The Committee may hold up to two meetings in the biennium 2023–2024, subject to the availability of financial resources. The Secretary will facilitate the process and assist the Committee in its work.
5. The Committee will report to the Governing Body on its work, for further consideration at the Tenth Session.

Annex 2 to the Appendix

Concept Note**THE JOINT PROGRAMME ON BIODIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****A. Rationale**

The world's population continues to grow, and the increasing demand for food places unprecedented pressure on natural resources. It is estimated that by 2050, a global population of 9.7 billion will demand 7 percent more food than that consumed today.³⁰ The benefits of a more diverse diet are widely recognized. Dietary diversity, founded on diverse farming systems and growing nutrient-dense foods, delivers better nutrition and greater health, with additional benefits for human productivity and potential contributions to increasing livelihoods.

However, biodiversity for food and agriculture is declining globally, threatening future agricultural production, food security, and overall ecological integrity. In the last century, parts of the world's food crop diversity disappeared forever, thereby reducing coping strategies and resources needed to grow more resilient, more productive, and nutritious crops. The loss of diversity depletes the very resources that are the foundation of our ability to adapt to ongoing global environmental changes. In addition, most of the current food production practices have had, and continue to have, adverse ecological and environmental impacts, including biodiversity loss, land degradation and food systems that contribute significantly to climate change.

In this context, the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was convened to address the issue of improving food production systems and consumption, to take into account the environmental and socio-economic perspectives. The international community called for bold new actions to transform the world's food systems and deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each of which relies on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems.

Given the inherent interlinkages among biodiversity, climate change, livelihood and nutrition, PGRFA are key to enhancing food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, improving rural livelihoods, and supporting the maintenance of biodiversity in production landscapes, as well as adjacent and distant ecosystems by reducing pressures on them and meeting the challenges of adapting to climate change. Consequently, the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA are crucial to making our food systems more sustainable.

Knowledge and decisions related to the genetic diversity of crops are undoubtedly an essential service not only for nutrition but also in environmental and social terms. Transgenerational practices and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities still allow the preservation of varietal diversity. Still, knowledge is also seriously threatened in today's world, to a similar degree as biological diversity. . Moreover, the benefits and contribution of this knowledge to the soil, water and environmental health have not yet been fully measured. This joint effort among agencies is fundamental to a better understanding the links between genetic, cultural and environmental diversity and to establishing a solid framework for cooperation between *in situ* and *ex situ* strategies.

³⁰ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. 2018. *The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition*. FAO, Rome.

B. A food-system approach to food and nutrition security and ensuring resilience to climate change and other emerging challenges

To address the interconnected challenges of biodiversity loss, food and nutrition insecurity and climate change, food production requires sustainable food systems that are based on diversified, innovative, dynamic and resilient agricultural systems.³¹

In this context, the proposed Joint Programme is expected to respond to the call for a transformation of contemporary food systems so that they become more sustainable, equitable and resilient, and to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), once adopted. It is expected that the proposed Joint Programme will contribute specifically to SDGs 2 and 15 and all the relevant goals, as well as to the proposed Action Targets of the GBF aimed at:

- (i) reducing threats to biodiversity;
- (ii) meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit-sharing; and
- (iii) adopting tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming.

Therefore, the Joint Programme will work towards agricultural and food production that is nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive while promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

C. General objective of the Joint Programme

The general objective of the Joint Programme is to strengthen the capacities of different actors in the following key areas:

- study, disseminate and exchange knowledge and information;
- raise awareness, conserve, use and manage biodiversity for food and agriculture; and
- promote healthy diets and sustainable food systems while strengthening agricultural systems' resilience to climate change and other emerging challenges.

D. Specific objectives of the Joint Programme

The specific objectives of the Joint Programme are to:

- boost conservation activities of crop diversity, crop wild relatives and wild edible species on the ground through an integrated approach to in situ, on-farm and ex situ conservation strategies, including/adopting ecosystem approaches;
- foster the sustainable use of crop diversity to support an ecological transition toward sustainable and resilient food systems that ensure food security, health and nutrition and improved livelihoods, as well as sustainable production and consumption, and resilience to climate change and other emerging challenges;
- raise awareness about the importance of promoting the sustainable use of PGRFA and build capacity at all levels and across scales to promote the exchange of experiences, technical advice and support, set up strategies and action plans, and establish a supportive and enabling legal and policy environment; and
- identify financial instruments for implementation of the Joint Programme.

³¹ FAO. 2019. *The state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture*. J. Bélanger & D. Pilling (eds.). Rome. www.fao.org/3/CA3129EN/CA3129EN.pdf

E. Strategy and approach

The Joint Programme will be a collaboration between and among relevant international organizations, governments and interested stakeholders committed to working together with the shared ambition and goal of transforming our food systems and improving livelihoods in a sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive manner. This will be achieved by promoting multistakeholder, multisectoral collaboration and partnerships to tap into the wealth and diversity of knowledge, information, competencies and expertise.

The Joint Programme will be developed in close collaboration with potential partners and build on their respective programmes, projects, partnerships and experiences. It will strategically address existing gaps and identify drivers of biodiversity loss as far as they relate to agriculture and food systems.

Joint actions/activities can be promoted at three levels of intervention:

1. global and regional level – advocacy, awareness-raising, promotion of South-South/North-South cooperation for sustainable use of PGRFA;
2. national level – advocacy, promotion of an enabling policy environment and identification of financial instruments; and
3. local level – capacity development and community empowerment.

By addressing these levels in an integrated manner and actively fostering linkages between them, the Joint Programme is expected to deliver broad impacts that contribute to the above-mentioned objectives. Some pilot areas could be selected to develop projects on local/academic knowledge co-production regarding the varietal diversity of crops capable of combating desertification, salinity and high temperatures.

The Joint Programme will be reviewed four years from its commencement, expected to be in 2026, with regular progress reports at each session of the Governing Body. The next biennium, 2023–2024 will mainly be focused on a communication and advocacy campaign to highlight the experiences, lessons learned and results achieved by the different partners and interested stakeholders on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

F. Areas of collaboration

- awareness-raising on the importance of sustainable food systems and the role of sustainable use of PGRFA in achieving the SDGs;
- aligning policies and metrics to support nutrition-sensitive production and consumption where PGRFA are an integral factor;
- strengthening rural-urban linkages – including physical, economic, socio-cultural and political connections – linking in particular to farmers who manage and sustainably use PGRFA;
- developing incentive mechanisms for the use of local crops (e.g. payment schemes or public procurement programmes) and value chains for local crops;
- knowledge management – facilitating coordination, synergy and management of scientific and traditional knowledge for sustainable use and documentation and dissemination of good practices and sustainable approaches;
- developing a compendium of case studies: Youth knowledge and transfer of crop varietal diversity; and
- identify financial instruments to unlock private and public funding for biodiversity and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

G. Potential partners

The initial partners include:

- Secretariat of the International Treaty
- CGIAR - Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
- CIHEAM - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari
- SCBD - Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and other relevant units of FAO

The Secretariat of the International Treaty will lead the Joint Programme and work with actual and potential partners to promote the areas of collaboration listed in section F.

The Joint Programme will be inclusive of partners and collaborators, with broad participation at all levels. In order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, it would be envisaged as a multisector, multistakeholder partnership that brings together international and intergovernmental organizations, governments, technical development cooperation/funding institutions, civil society organizations, research and academia, and farmers' organizations whose work is relevant to PGRFA recognize the fundamental importance of crop genetic diversity and sustainable use of PGRFA.

All interested stakeholders can become a donor to the Joint Programme. In addition, partners will undertake joint resource mobilization to carry out relevant activities, as necessary and appropriate.