



COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Eighteenth Regular Session, considered FAO's activities in support of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA)¹ and formulated several requests.

- It requested FAO to support countries, in particular developing countries, in: (i) the development or revision of their national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of farmers' varieties/landraces, as well as crop wild relatives and wild food plants; (ii) the development of national inventories of crop wild relatives and wild food plants conserved *in situ* and of farmers' varieties/landraces managed on farm; and (iii) efforts to conserve plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) *in situ* and on-farm and to strengthen the links and complementarity between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation.²
- The Commission requested FAO to continue providing support to countries in their efforts to maintain genebanks, including community seed banks, for the continued collection, conservation, characterization, evaluation and distribution of crop germplasm and associated information.³
- It requested FAO to continue assisting countries in strengthening national seed systems, including plant breeding, for the delivery of diverse and high-quality seeds and planting materials, in particular to meet the needs and priorities of smallholder farmers.⁴
- It also requested FAO to continue supporting countries in building sustainable institutional and human capacities, including capacity in crop improvement and called for extra-budgetary funds to support countries in the implementation of the Second GPA, including through the development and implementation of national strategies for PGRFA, in close coordination with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty) and its Funding Strategy.⁵
- The Commission further requested FAO to continue reporting on the status of implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 2.5 and sharing the results with the Working Group and the Commission.⁶

2. Since the last session of the Commission, FAO, in close collaboration with its partners, continued to support countries in implementing the Second GPA. This document provides information on action taken by FAO in response to the Commission's requests and on other relevant work initiated or completed since its last session, for consideration by the Working Group. It also requests the guidance of the Working Group on further work in these areas.

II. BACKGROUND

3. The Second GPA was adopted by the FAO Council at its 143rd Session in November 2011.⁷ It provides an internationally agreed framework for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The Second GPA is a supporting component of the Treaty as per its Article 14. The implementation of the Second GPA is therefore an essential contribution to achieving the objectives of the Treaty⁸ and will also facilitate the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the area of agricultural biodiversity and help reach the targets of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.⁹

¹ FAO. 2011. Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Rome.

² CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraphs 98-99.

³ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraphs 100-101.

⁴ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 102.

⁵ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraphs 102-103.

⁶ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 104.

⁷ CL 143/REP, paragraph 43.

⁸ Second GPA, paragraph 313.

⁹ CBD/COP/DEC/15/4.

4. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the inter-related global challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change and health crises. The implementation of the 18 Priority Activities (PAs) of the Second GPA contributes to addressing this nexus as it results ultimately in the enhanced access of farmers to a diverse suite of resilient, well-adapted, productive and nutrient-dense crops and varieties. The implementation of the Second GPA is also aligned with the aims of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031,¹⁰ the Vision and Strategy for FAO’s Work in Nutrition,¹¹ as adopted by the Council in 2021¹² and the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31,¹³ as endorsed by the Conference in 2021,¹⁴ which seeks the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable, agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

III. *IN SITU* CONSERVATION AND ON-FARM MANAGEMENT

A. Proceedings of the First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

5. As requested by the Commission,¹⁵ FAO published the proceedings of the First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, held virtually in March 2021.¹⁶ The symposium focused on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA and video recordings of all presentations are also available online.¹⁷ The outcomes of the event were presented at the Ninth Session of the Treaty’s Governing Body.¹⁸

6. The Commission also requested FAO to organize, subject to the availability of the necessary extra-budgetary resources, symposia (which may be held virtually) and webinars on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA, at regular intervals, in collaboration with the Treaty and other relevant international instruments or organizations.¹⁹ In response, a webinar on the role of crop wild relatives in improving the adaptive capacity of agricultural systems will be organized, in collaboration with the Treaty on 28 February 2023.²⁰ Webinars on on-farm management of PGRFA are planned for later in 2023.

B. Conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives/wild food plants and farmers’ varieties/landraces

7. In 2017 and 2019, respectively the Commission endorsed the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*²¹ and the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers’ Varieties/Landraces*²² and encouraged countries to use them.²³ At its last session, the Commission requested FAO to support countries, in particular developing countries, in the development or revision of their national plans for the

¹⁰ FAO. 2022. FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022–2031. Rome.

¹¹ PC 130/5 Rev.1 (English only).

¹² CL 166/REP, paragraph 24(b).

¹³ FAO. 2021. Strategic Framework 2022-31. Rome.

¹⁴ C 2021/REP, paragraph 64.

¹⁵ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 98.

¹⁶ FAO. 2022. Proceedings 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 plant genetic resources for food and agriculture – 29–30 March 2021, Rome, Italy. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3716en>

¹⁷ See <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-symposium-on-pgrfa/en/>

¹⁸ IT/GB-9/22/12/Inf.3.

¹⁹ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 98.

²⁰ <https://www.fao.org/cgrfa/resources/news/detail-events/en/c/1629970/>

²¹ FAO. 2017. *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*. Rome.

²² FAO. 2019. *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers’ Varieties/Landraces*. Rome.

²³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 62; CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 64.

conservation and sustainable use of farmers' varieties/landraces, crop wild relatives and wild food plants, taking into account the two guidelines. It further requested FAO to compile examples of the use of the two voluntary guidelines with a view to improving their relevance and widening their use.

8. The voluntary guidelines have been used in FAO's work on the respective themes and, in particular, for guiding countries in developing projects for the Eight Replenishment Cycle of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).²⁴ The Guidelines have also served as reference resources for the implementation of GEF projects, specifically in China,²⁵ India,²⁶ Indonesia,²⁷ Mexico²⁸ and Tajikistan²⁹ with FAO acting as GEF implementing agency. As requested by the Commission,³⁰ FAO also supported countries in the development of national inventories of crop wild relatives and wild food plants conserved *in situ* and of farmers' varieties/landraces managed on-farm. Such national inventories are being developed under the auspices of the aforementioned GEF-funded projects in China, India and Indonesia.

C. Direct support to Members

9. During the reporting period, FAO, in collaboration with international and local partners, supported several activities on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA, in particular through the above-mentioned projects and other GEF-funded projects in Cuba,³¹ Ecuador,³² Mauritania³³ and Peru³⁴ with FAO acting as the GEF implementing agency.³⁵ FAO also supported the conservation and use of local crops and varieties in Senegal (maize, horticultural species)³⁶ and Algeria, (medicinal and aromatic plants),³⁷ including the elaboration of an action plan to promote the sustainability of the initiatives.

²⁴<https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/funding/gef-8-replenishment>

²⁵ GCP /CPR/061/GFF: On-farm Conservation and Sustainable Use of Genetic Diversity of Crops originated in China (FSP)

²⁶ GCP /IND/183/GFF: Green-Agriculture: Transforming Indian agriculture for global environmental benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes (FSP)

²⁷ GCP /INS/804/GFF: Crop Diversity Conservation for Sustainable Use in Indonesia (PPG)

²⁸ GCP /MEX/305/GFF: Securing the Future of Global Agriculture in the face of climate change by conserving the Genetic Diversity of the Traditional Agroecosystems of Mexico (FSP)

²⁹ GCP /TAJ/021/GFF: Facilitating agrobiodiversity (ABD) conservation and sustainable use to promote food and nutritional resilience in Tajikistan.

³⁰ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 99.

³¹ GCP /CUB/017/GFF: Introduction of new farming methods for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including plant and animal genetic resources, in production landscapes in selected areas of Cuba (FSP)

³² GCP /ECU/105P/GFF: Conservación y uso sostenible de parientes silvestres de cultivos (PSC) y especies silvestres comestibles (ESC), bajo un marco institucional y desarrollo de iniciativas comunitarias rurales en Ecuador. (PPG)

³³ GCP /MAU/001/GFF: Integrated ecosystem management program for the sustainable human development in Mauritania (FSP)

³⁴ GCP /PER/045/GFF: Sustainable management of agro-biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems recuperation in Peruvian Andean regions through Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) approach

³⁵ GCP /TAJ/021/GFF: Facilitating agrobiodiversity (ABD) conservation and sustainable use to promote food and nutritional resilience in Tajikistan.

³⁶ GCP /SEN/803P/GFF: Land Degradation Neutrality for biodiversity conservation, food security and resilient livelihoods in the Peanut Basin and Eastern Senegal (Dékil Souf) (PPG).

³⁷ TCP/ALG/3802 : Gestion durable des zones d'intérêts pour les plantes aromatiques et médicinales (ZIPAMs) dans les zones présahariennes et sahariennes.

IV. *EX SITU* CONSERVATION

A. Application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

10. In 2013, the Commission endorsed the *Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*³⁸ and requested FAO to survey their application and report on their impact, relevance and efficacy.³⁹ At its Eighteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to continue providing support, including capacity development, to countries in their efforts to maintain genebanks, including community seed banks, for the continued collection, conservation, characterization, evaluation and distribution of crop germplasm and associated information.⁴⁰

11. As requested by the Commission at its last Session,⁴¹ FAO finalised and published in 2022 three Practical Guides for the Application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture covering: conservation of orthodox seeds in seed genebanks;⁴² conservation in Field Genebanks;⁴³ and conservation via *in vitro* culture.⁴⁴ The Commission also requested FAO to develop additional practical guides, especially for the conservation in genebanks of species producing recalcitrant seeds, and for cryopreservation, in collaboration with relevant international and national partners, including the CGIAR and the Global Crop Diversity Trust. More information on the status of development of these practical guides is provided in the document *Application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.⁴⁵

12. FAO contributed to the CGIAR Genebank Platform in the development of the *Guidance note for CGIAR Genebanks on improving accession management*,⁴⁶ which aims to provide guidance for CGIAR Centers to harmonize aspects of their management of international collections of PGRFA, including the vocabulary, form and scheduling of their joint communications concerning their management of those collections, within the context of existing applicable policies. In addition, FAO participated in discussions on future work related to the Global Crop Conservation Strategies.⁴⁷

³⁸ FAO. 2014. *Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Rev. ed. Rome.

³⁹ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraphs 102-103.

⁴⁰ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 100.

⁴¹ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 100.

⁴² FAO. 2022. Practical guide for the application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Conservation of orthodox seeds in seed genebanks. Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0021en>

⁴³ FAO. 2022. Practical guide for the application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Conservation in field genebanks. Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0023en>

⁴⁴ FAO. 2022. Practical guide for the application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: Conservation via *in vitro* culture. Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0025en>

⁴⁵ CGRFA/WG-PGR-11/23/4.1.

⁴⁶ CGIAR Genebank Platform. 2022. [Guidance note for CGIAR Genebanks on improving accession management](#).

⁴⁷ Dulloo E and Khoury CK. 2023. *Towards Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies*. Global Crop Diversity Trust. Bonn, Germany. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7548352

B. Direct support to Members

13. During the reporting period, FAO supported various *ex situ* conservation activities in several countries, including Armenia,⁴⁸ Azerbaijan,⁴⁹ Malawi,⁵⁰ Mongolia,⁵¹ Philippines⁵² Samoa,⁵³ and Venezuela.⁵⁴ For instance, in Malawi, 124 germplasm samples of local crops were collected, characterized and multiplied for conservation in the genebank, and distribution for use in the appropriate agroecological zones of the country.

14. FAO also assisted in strengthening the operation of community seed banks in Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Peru⁵⁵, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe,⁵⁶ under the auspices of GEF's Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program in Southern Africa. These initiatives, *inter alia*, aim to improve capacities of stakeholders in managing local crops and varieties, promote market-based incentive mechanisms, identify platforms for scaling up successes and promote the creation of an enabling policy environment.

V. SUSTAINABLE USE

15. The Commission, at its last session, requested FAO to continue assisting countries in strengthening national seed systems, including plant breeding, for the delivery of diverse and quality seeds and planting materials, in particular to meet the needs and priorities of smallholder farmers.⁵⁷ It requested FAO to continue supporting countries, at their request, in collaboration with the Treaty, in strengthening their capacity in crop improvement, including pre-breeding, in support of the implementation of the Second GPA and Article 6 of the Treaty.

A. Global Conference on Green Development of Seed Industries

16. In November 2021, FAO organized the Global Conference on Green Development of Seed Industries⁵⁸ as a virtual event. Over 2 200 participants from 126 countries participated in the event, which was opened by the Director-General of FAO and included a high-level segment with the participation of senior officials of six FAO members. The thematic areas of the conference were: advanced technologies; conservation of PGRFA; crop varietal development and adoption; and seed systems. The proceedings of the conference, which contain ten recommendations identified by the steering committee of the conference, are available online.⁵⁹ They were launched on the occasion of the First FAO Roundtable Forum on Sustainable Seed Systems Management held in November 2022, which aimed to gather support from all stakeholders for the implementation of the steering committee's recommendations: adopting innovations; strengthening institutional and human capacities; safeguarding

⁴⁸ MDF fund

⁴⁹ UTF/AZE/016/AZE: *Catalysing the efficiency and sustainability of Azerbaijan's hazelnut sector.*

⁵⁰ GCP /MLW/072/EC: KULIMA - Promoting farming in Malawi "Revitalising Agricultural Clusters and Ulimi wa Mbandanda through Farmer Field Schools in Malawi"

⁵¹ TCP/MON/3902: Strengthening food safety and plant health protection systems.

⁵² GCP/PHI/062/GFF: *Dynamic conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to ensure food security and ecosystems services and resiliency.*

⁵³ TCP/SAM/3803: Building capacities on tissue culture to support & sustain biodiversity for food security & nutrition.

⁵⁴ TCP/VEN/3702/C2: *Fortalecimiento de las potencialidades técnico-científica en producción de semillas de leguminosas vinculadas a la agricultura familiar y campesina.*

⁵⁵ GCP /PER/045/GFF: Sustainable management of agro-biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems recuperation in Peruvian Andean regions through Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) approach

⁵⁶ GCP /GLO/980/GFF: Global coordination project for the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program

⁵⁷ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 102.

⁵⁸ <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/global-conference-on-green-development-of-seed-industries/en>. Accessed on 5 December 2022.

⁵⁹ Ruane, J., Mba, C. and Xia, J., eds. 2022. Proceedings of the Global Conference on Green Development of Seed Industries 4–5 November 2021. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc1220en>.

crop genetic resources, including in their natural habitats; breeding a diverse portfolio of well-adapted, progressively superior crop varieties; and developing capacities along the seed value chain.⁶⁰

B. Review of status and trends of seed policies

17. As requested by the Commission at its last session,⁶¹ FAO explored, in collaboration with the Treaty Secretariat, options for further research on the impact of seed policies, laws and regulations, taking into account the variety of factors that may affect, and possibly improve, farmers' ability to access sufficient and affordable seeds and planting materials of diverse, locally adapted varieties, including farmers' varieties/landraces. The document, *Further research on the impact of seed policies, laws and regulations*⁶² provides more details on the topic and introduces a draft concept note on the impact of seed policies, laws and regulations affecting farmers' ability to access seeds.

C. Strengthening seed systems

18. Over the reporting period, FAO continued to support Members in developing robust seed systems that included variety adoption, quality seed production and establishment of community seed enterprises. The aim was to ensure that farmers, in particular small-scale farmers, have sustained access to affordable quality seeds and planting materials of well-adapted, productive, nutritious crop varieties, which are resistant to biotic and abiotic stresses. In this regard, initiatives aimed at strengthening the seed delivery value chain were implemented in 16 countries.⁶³ These interventions entailed the provision of support for the enhanced adoption of crop varieties, including biofortified ones; community-level seed production and delivery systems; pre-basic and basic seed production and supply; capacity development for seed testing laboratories and international accreditation; training and provision of seed processing equipment; and strengthening seed certification systems.

19. In Haiti, FAO supported farmers in accessing clean planting materials of taro from the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT).⁶⁴ In Tajikistan, support was provided for the establishment of demonstration plots, as well as the procurement and distribution of 85 tonnes of potato seeds and 27 tonnes of early generation seeds of two elite varieties.⁶⁵ In Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia and Tajikistan, around 200 farmers were trained in seed multiplication.⁶⁶ FAO also supported Azerbaijan in the evaluation of European potato varieties, and the production and storage of pest and disease-free seed potatoes *in vitro*, greenhouse and field.⁶⁷ *In vitro* potato seed production was also supported in Niger.⁶⁸ In Georgia, a National Seed Producers Association was created and nurseries supported to produce and export fruit trees. FAO supported countries to increase quality seed production, as a crucial means to boost both productivity and revenue, including in Cambodia,⁶⁹ Egypt,⁷⁰ Ethiopia⁷¹ and Sri Lanka^{72,73}.

⁶⁰ <https://www.fao.org/director-general/news/news-article/en/c/1626124/>.

⁶¹ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 105.

⁶² CGRFA/WG-PGR-11/23/4.2.

⁶³ Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan.

⁶⁴ TCP/HAI/3804: Appui au Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et du Développement Rural pour lutter contre le *Phytophthora colocasiae* agent causal du Mildiou du Taro par la production de semences saines en Haïti.

⁶⁵ GCP/TAJ/019/JCA: Developing a potato-seed production system in Tajikistan.

⁶⁶ TCP/RER/3802: Creating enabling environments for enhanced climate resilience in agriculture.

⁶⁷ UTF/AZE/011/AZE: *Establishment of disease-free national seed potato production system in Azerbaijan*

⁶⁸ TCP/NER/3901: Projet d'Appui à la production de semences certifiées de pomme de terre dans la Région d'Agadez.

⁶⁹ TCP/CMB/3804: Support to strengthen the seed management system.

⁷⁰ TCP/EGY/3807: Propagation and Promotion of Local Seeds and Hybrids in Egypt.

⁷¹ GCP/ETH/096/GAF: Technical Assistance to the Second Agricultural Growth Program.

⁷² TCP/SRL/3901: Streamlining of good quality seed and planting material production, quality assurance and marketing system.

⁷³ TCP/SRL/3802: Support capacity development of supply chain of maize hybrid seeds.

20. Seed legislations and regulatory frameworks at national and regional levels are essential for creating a robust enabling environment for efficient and effective seed sectors. FAO continued to respond to the requests of Members and assisted in the development of national seed policies, legislations and regulations in 12 countries across different regions.⁷⁴ For instance, FAO supported Georgia in the development of a legal framework for the certification of fruit tree nursery materials and the establishment of a repository of pest-free propagating materials.⁷⁵ In Sierra Leone, FAO supported the national seed certification agency to review the current seed policy and regulations.⁷⁶ In Mozambique, FAO provided on-going support for the development of a seed law and fostering of policy dialogue.⁷⁷ Similarly, in Nicaragua, FAO supported the development of a seed law, which was awaiting parliamentary approval.⁷⁸

D. Strengthening plant breeding

21. During the reporting period, FAO strengthened capacities for developing well-adapted crop varieties that were most suited to local agro-ecosystems and farming systems and facilitated the adoption of improved varieties in 11 countries.⁷⁹ In this regard, FAO supported the verification of genetic identity of grapevine cultivars using molecular tools in Georgia,⁸⁰ improvement of berries in the Republic of Moldova⁸¹ and the strengthening of the crops' value chains, including improved access to markets. In Afghanistan, FAO supported the strengthening of soya production through enhanced access to early generation seeds and certified seed production.⁸² The production and distribution of certified rice seeds in Côte d'Ivoire was supported while the link between seed producers and research centres for early generation forecasting of seed demand was strengthened.⁸³ Further, FAO provided ongoing support for enhanced cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates on research and development endeavors to use advanced molecular biology approaches to improve abiotic stress tolerance in crops.⁸⁴

22. In Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO strengthened the capacities of technical staff and farmers in the production of quality seeds of different legumes in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).⁸⁵ FAO also facilitated farmers' access to new cassava varieties (three per country), which were introduced as disease-free plantlets in Dominica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.⁸⁶

23. FAO, enabled by funding provided by the GEF, supported Sri Lanka to implement its National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the CBD.⁸⁷ In particular, the drafts of the 'Biosafety Regulation of Sri Lanka for LMOs/GMOs' and the 'National Biosafety Master Plan for Sri Lanka' were developed. Furthermore, guidelines, manuals and strategies were created, including for the assessment, management and communication of risks. Personnel of the National and Sectoral Competent Authorities were trained in the management of the biosafety workflow

⁷⁴ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Rwanda, Sudan, Tajikistan and the Gambia.

⁷⁵ UNJP/GEO/013/EC: EU/UN innovative action for private sector competitiveness in Georgia

⁷⁶ TCP/SIL/3807: Strengthening of the Seed Certification and Regulatory Agency in Sierra Leone.

⁷⁷ GCP/MOZ/127/EC: PROMOVE Agribiz

⁷⁸ GCP/SLM/001/MexBaby7

⁷⁹ Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominica, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Niger, North Macedonia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

⁸⁰ GCP/GEO/011/EC: FAO support to the Georgian agricultural sector (ENPARD III).

⁸¹ TCP/MOL/3608: Strengthening the capacity of smallholders in berry production.

⁸² OSRO/AFG/009: Strengthening Soya Production and Food Systems in Afghanistan.

⁸³ TCP/IVC/3801 (21/II/IVC/231): Appui à la revitalisation du système semencier de Côte d'Ivoire (riz).

⁸⁴ UTF/UAE/009/UAE –Baby 1: Strengthening Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI).

⁸⁵ TCP/VEN/3702/C2: Fortalecimiento de las potencialidades técnico-científica en producción de semillas de leguminosas vinculadas a la agricultura familiar y campesina.

⁸⁶ GCP/SLC/010/CDB: Cassava industry development - market assessment and technology validation and dissemination.

⁸⁷ GCP/SRL/066/GFF: Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

while four laboratories were provided with equipment and supplies for, and their staff trained in, the detection of living modified organisms.

24. The Joint Centre of FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (CJN) supported the design and implementation of 79 crop improvement related national and regional Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) in over 100 countries. The outputs encompassed human capacity building, technology transfer, infrastructure upgrade and technical advice for the efficient use of mutation breeding in crop improvement. Through these TCPs and CJN's continuing support to countries, 72 new crop varieties were released in Member States during 2021-22. Additionally, through the Coordinated Research Projects mechanism of the IAEA, CJN fostered the collaboration among researchers from more than 50 institutions, and across 39 different countries, through five crop improvement themed collaborative projects. As at December 2022, the FAO/IAEA Mutant Variety Database held records of 3 400 mutant varieties of 228 crop species that had been released for cultivation in 72 countries.

25. The Plant Breeding and Genetics sub-programme (PBG) provided technical leadership for the Global Research Symposium in the Management of Banana Fusarium Wilt TR4,⁸⁸ held in Ecuador in March 2022. It brought together international researchers who delivered research status updates on different facets of Tropical Race 4 (TR4) management. An inter-regional TCP on strengthening member state capacities to combat TR4 through early detection was recently approved.⁸⁹

26. The PBG also provided irradiation services for 53 requests covering 489 crop accessions/varieties, which were received from 28 Members during 2022. In 2022, the PBG launched a feasibility study on seed irradiation in space, which is carried out and hosted at the International Space Station in order to increase understanding of induced genetic diversity and plant mutation breeding.

E. Rehabilitation of seed systems

27. FAO supports countries in the re-building of agricultural production systems following disasters and strife, including through the provision of emergency seed relief. In this regard, FAO in collaboration with other partners, carries out seed security assessments in countries that require assistance with resuming crop production after crises.

28. Over the reporting period, FAO, in collaboration with national and international partners, designed and implemented seed security assessments to guide better disaster response and resilience-building activities in five countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic)⁹⁰.

29. Compared to previous years, an increased number of farmers from a wide range of countries, including in Europe, received assistance with quality seeds and planting materials as emergency relief. FAO provided emergency seed assistance to several countries affected by the Ukraine conflict, such as Armenia⁹¹ and Lebanon,⁹² where vulnerable farming households were provided with quality seeds of improved varieties of winter wheat and the Republic of Moldova⁹³ and Ukraine, where the seeds of improved varieties of cereals and vegetables were distributed.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc2154en/cc2154en.pdf>

⁸⁹ INT5158: Strengthening Member State Capacities to Combat Banana Fusarium Wilt (TR4) through Early Detection, New Resistant Varieties, and Integrated Management.

⁹⁰ OSRO/AFG/114/SWE; OSRO/BKF/801/SWE; TCP/SUD/3804/C2; GCP /SYR/023/EC.

⁹¹ TCP/ARM/3901: Emergency agricultural inputs support to the most vulnerable smallholder farmers affected by the Ukraine conflict.

⁹² TCP/LEB/3902: Emergency support to vulnerable smallholder farming households affected by the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon

⁹³ TCP/MOL/3901: Emergency support to vulnerable smallholder farming households in Moldova caused by the Ukraine conflict.

⁹⁴ TCP/UKR/3901: Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Assistance to Conflict Affected Households in Ukraine; OSRO/UKR/208/CHA Scaling Up Critical Seasonal Support to Agriculture Producers Ukraine;

30. During the reporting period, FAO assisted vulnerable smallholder farmers affected by diverse crises to access quality seeds and planting materials of food crops in over 70 Member Nations. These crises included drought, civil unrest, floods, tropical storms, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Farmers in areas affected by a combination of drought and desert locust invasion, such as Afghanistan,⁹⁵ the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda)⁹⁶ and Nigeria,⁹⁷ were provided with quality seeds. Displaced people and their host communities in countries hosting refugee populations, such as Mozambique⁹⁸, Cameroon⁹⁹, Papua New Guinea¹⁰⁰ and Uganda¹⁰¹, were also assisted to resume crop production with seed relief interventions. Seeds and planting materials for a total value of USD 42 million were procured in 2020, 50 million in 2021, and 83 million in 2022, showing the extraordinary increase in scale and scope of emergency seed response.

31. In multiple countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo,¹⁰² Haiti,¹⁰³ Madagascar,¹⁰⁴ and South Sudan,¹⁰⁵ seed quality assurance systems were strengthened and decentralized farmer-led seed production groups established to rehabilitate crisis-affected national seed systems and improve farmers' access to quality seeds. In Venezuela, demonstration plots were set up to enhance variety adoption and seed multiplication as part of the efforts to rehabilitate the national seed system.¹⁰⁶

VI. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

32. In response to the Commission's request¹⁰⁷, FAO continued to support the strengthening of human and institutional capacities for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, especially in developing countries. The strengthening of partnerships and linkages was a critical delivery mechanism for FAO's work in this regard. Work in countries was facilitated through collaboration with various partners, including the United Nations system, especially World Food Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Meteorological Organization, in addition to the CGIAR Centres, Global Crop Diversity Trust, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development, International Seed Federation and International Seed Testing Association (ISTA).

33. Networks were also key to effective collaborations among partners for implementing the Second GPA with enhanced efficiencies. Over the reporting period, FAO provided support to various

OSRO/UKR/201/BEL Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Assistance to Conflict Affected People in Ukraine.

⁹⁵ GCP/AFG/106/USA: Strengthening rural livelihoods and food security program in Afghanistan.

⁹⁶ OSRO/GLO/115/GER: Phase 3: Livelihood response to mitigate impacts of drought on food security and livelihoods, and OSRO/GLO/006/GER: Emergency livelihoods assistance to vulnerable farmers, agropastoralists and pastoralists affected by desert locust in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

⁹⁷ OSRO/NIR/805/NOR: Building resilient livelihoods in northeast States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe through climate change.

⁹⁸ TCP/MOZ/3804: Emergency agriculture livelihoods support for displaced people and host communities in the Province of Cabo Delgado, Northern Mozambique

⁹⁹ TCP.CMR/3901: Appui d'urgence pour améliorer la sécurité alimentaire des ménages les plus vulnérables (déplacés, retournés et communautés d'accueil) à Logone-Birni, Cameroun

¹⁰⁰ TCP/PNG/3903: Emergency response to restore food security of conflict-affected population in the highlands of Papua New Guinea

¹⁰¹ TCP/UGA/3901: Emergency agricultural and livelihoods support to new arrivals of refugees in Southwestern Uganda

¹⁰² GCP/DRC/076/GER: Strengthening socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

¹⁰³ GCP/HAI/040/EC: Amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et renforcement de la résilience des populations vulnérables du département du Nord-Est (PROACT 2020-Haïti).

¹⁰⁴ UTF/MAG/102/MAG: Réponse d'urgence face à la crise d'insécurité alimentaire et sécheresse dans le Sud de Madagascar.

¹⁰⁵ UTF/SSD/020/SSD: South Sudan Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods Project- RALP.

¹⁰⁶ TCP/VEN/3801: Apoyo a la rehabilitación del sistema nacional de semilla de maíz para la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (SAN) en el contexto post COVID-19.

¹⁰⁷ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 102.

networks and bodies, including the Coconut Genetic Resources Network, Global Food Security Cluster, and Standards for Supporting Agricultural Livelihoods in Emergencies.

A. Capacity-building activities

34. FAO implemented several field activities to strengthen capacities in countries. In the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, capacity building initiatives were carried out to mainstream biodiversity into the agriculture sector. Activities included the training of agricultural extension officers, the implementation of farmer field schools (FFS) to promote ecosystem-based practices that enable the conservation of biodiversity, overall increased environmental sustainability and productivity of crop production systems and food security and nutrition. In Haiti, FAO strengthened capacities for *in vitro* propagation of disease-free taro germplasm.¹⁰⁸

35. In CJN, capacity building activities resumed in 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic, during which 33 training courses were delivered to 704 researchers, of which 317 were women and 387 men. Also, five fellows were given plant breeding training in the PBG laboratory for varying durations in 2022.

36. Assistance was provided to Azerbaijan and Pakistan to join the OECD seed certification scheme.^{109,110} Similarly, ISTA accreditation of seed laboratories was supported in Azerbaijan¹¹¹ and Mozambique.¹¹² In Tajikistan, capacity building was provided for variety maintenance, evaluation and registration,¹¹³ targeting among others 385 farmers, as well as national experts. Additionally, through training courses and FFS¹¹⁴, farmers were trained on techniques for producing quality seeds of potato, integrated pest management and promoting horticulture¹¹⁵. In Mauritania, the rice sector was strengthened through the training of experts, trainers and producers, including women producers, on sustainable rice production.¹¹⁶

37. Capacity building of national experts and farmers in using improved varieties was also supported through pilot demonstrations and trainings in Georgia,¹¹⁷ Moldova,¹¹⁸ North Macedonia¹¹⁹ and Uzbekistan.¹²⁰ Building capacity at the national level for varietal maintenance and seed production was undertaken in Venezuela,¹²¹ while in the Niger, FAO strengthened the capacity in the national laboratory for *in vitro* potato production.¹²² FAO strengthened the capacities of different institutions and experts in Mali, Mauritania and Niger in quality control, seed testing, seed certification as means to

¹⁰⁸ TCP/HAI/3804: Appui au Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et du Développement Rural pour lutter contre le *Phytophthora colocasiae* agent causal du Mildiou du Taro par la production de semences saines en Haïti.

¹⁰⁹ UTF /AZE/021/AZE: Improvement of Seed and Agro-Chemical Lab and Certification Services under Agrarian Services Agency.

¹¹⁰ TCP/PAK/3802/C1: Strengthening of Seed Quality Assurance System.

¹¹¹ UTF /AZE/021/AZE: Improvement of Seed and Agro-Chemical Lab and Certification Services under Agrarian Services Agency.

¹¹² GCP /MOZ/127/EC: PROMOVE Agribiz.

¹¹³ UTF /TAJ/023/TAJ: Strengthening Resilience of the Agriculture Sector.

¹¹⁴ TCP/TAJ/3804: TCPF: Support to improve sustainable potato production and management.

¹¹⁵ GCP/TAJ/019/JCA: Developing a potato-seed production system in Tajikistan.

¹¹⁶ TCP/MAU/3707: Reconstitution des stocks rizicoles et à la lutte contre les ennemis des cultures dans le Sud-RIM.

¹¹⁷ GCP /GEO/023/SWI: Sustainable management of grape genetic resources in Abkhazia.

¹¹⁸ TCP/MOL/3801: Strengthening the capacity of smallholders in berry production - Phase II of TCP/MOL/3608.

¹¹⁹ TCP/MCD/3705: Increased resilience of agriculture sector through promotion of climate smart agriculture practices.

¹²⁰ TCP/UZB/3803/C3: TCPF: Rice Crop Production and Management Support.

¹²¹ GCP /VEN/019/EC: Promoción de la SAN para el Desarrollo de la Cadena de Valor de Semillas de Cereales y Leguminosas.

¹²² TCP/NER/3901: Projet d'Appui à la production de semences certifiées de pomme de terre dans la Région d'Agadez.

sustainable quality seed production. Capacities were also strengthened for the adoption of new crop varieties in the Niger.

38. FAO supported the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the review of its Regional Biodiversity Strategy. In collaboration with the Secretariats of the CBD and the Treaty, a preparatory webinar was held to prepare SADC Member countries for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.¹²³

B. National Focal Points

39. The Commission's National Focal Points on PGRFA continue to play an important role in the work of the Commission, including capacity-development and building of sustainable institutions. To date, 135 countries have nominated National Focal Points (NFPs). This reflects the high level of commitment for reporting on the state of conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The NFPs indeed play a critical role in reporting on the implementation of the Second GPA and on SDG indicator 2.5.1, which contribute to periodic global assessments.

C. World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

40. As requested by the Commission¹²⁴, FAO continued reporting, on an annual basis, on the status of the implementation of SDG Target 2.5. In 2022, for the sixth consecutive year, data on indicator SDG 2.5.1.a¹²⁵, which measure progress in the implementation of the plant component of SDG Target 2.5, were published in WIEWS.¹²⁶ Data as reported by 846 national, regional and international genebanks in 120 countries included detailed records of over 5.8 million accessions of 7 333 genera, which were conserved *ex situ* as at December 2021. Metadata results and narratives for the 2021 report on all the SDG indicators under FAO custodianship, including 2.5.1.a, were also made available through the FAO portal.¹²⁷

41. WIEWS data are being used to report on the implementation of the Second GPA and for the preparation of the reports on the state of the world's PGRFA.¹²⁸

VII. REVIEW OF THE SECOND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

42. The Second GPA was developed under the aegis of the Commission, in response to *The Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.¹²⁹ It is intended as a framework, guide and catalyst for action at community, national, regional and international levels and seeks to create an efficient system for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, through better cooperation, coordination and planning and through the strengthening of capacities.

43. The Second GPA is a rolling plan of action.¹³⁰ Overall progress on its implementation has been monitored and guided through the Commission. In order to discharge this function, the Commission planned the review of the implementation of the Second GPA as well as the review of the Second GPA itself within its Multi-Year Programme of Work, in close cooperation with the Governing Body of the

¹²³ <https://www.fao.org/in-action/building-capacity-environmental-agreements/resources-news/news/news-details/en/c/1460014/>

¹²⁴ CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 104.

¹²⁵ 2.5.1a is a Tier I indicator, i.e. an indicator with internationally agreed methodology and a global reporting rate equal to or higher than 50 percent, which is part of the SDG Monitoring Framework adopted by UNGA in July 2017.

¹²⁶ <http://www.fao.org/wiews/data/ex-situ-sdg-251/overview/en/>

¹²⁷ <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/en/>

¹²⁸ CGRFA/WG-PGR-11/23/3; CGRFA/WG-PGR-11/23/3/Inf.1.

¹²⁹ FAO 2010. *The Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Rome.

¹³⁰ Second GPA, paragraph 315.

International Treaty. As stated in the Second GPA, “[t]he review should deal with the progress made at the national, regional and international levels in the implementation, elaboration, and adjustment, as appropriate, of the Second GPA.”¹³¹

44. A first assessment of the implementation of the Second GPA between January 2012 and June 2014 was presented to the Commission at its Sixteenth Regular Session, including an assessment of its achievements, as well as gaps and needs for its implementation.¹³² The second assessment covering the period of July 2014 to December 2019, together with a summative narrative of the progress made in implementation between January 2012 and December 2019, provides the basis for *The Third Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report).

45. The Third Report will offer a solid foundation for updating the Second GPA, as appropriate. Table 1 provides a tentative timetable of the process proposed for the review and update of the Second GPA. The process mirrors that which led to the adoption of the Second GPA by the Council at its 143rd Session in November 2011.

Table 1. Updating the Second GPA: Indicative processes and timeline, based on the review of the first GPA.

Timeline	Process
2023	<p>CGRFA-19 Presentation of the draft Third Report on the State of the World’s PGRFA</p> <p>ITPGR/GB-10 Presentation of the draft Third Report on the State of the World’s PGRFA</p>
2023/2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional meetings: Review and updating of the Second GPA • Preparation of revised Second GPA • Joint meeting of the Bureaus of the Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty to review the draft revised Second GPA <p>ITWG PGR-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the draft revised Second GPA
2025	<p>CGRFA-20 C-44</p>

46. The proposed timeline for updating the Second GPA covers the period from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Session of the Commission. It foresees convening five regional meetings in 2024 to review the status of PGRFA at regional levels and identify gaps, needs and priority activities. Regional consultations should involve the National Focal Points for PGRFA of the Commission, as well as the National Focal Points of the Treaty. Representatives from international and regional organizations should be invited to attend and contribute to the regional consultations. The details of the estimated budget of USD 314 500 for holding the five regional consultations are provided in Table 2.

47. It is proposed that the first draft revised Second GPA be reviewed at a joint meeting of the Bureaus of the Commission and of the Governing Body of the Treaty prior to the meeting of the Working Group, in 2024. Subsequently, the draft revised Second GPA would be submitted to the Working Group at its Twelfth Session. The document would then be presented to the Commission for consideration at its Twentieth Regular Session.

¹³¹ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.1; CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.2.

¹³² CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.2.

Table 2. Estimate for convening regional two-day consultations in each of the regions, Africa (RAF), Asia (RAP), Europe (REU), Near East and North Africa (RNE), and Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC).

Item	Cost Calculation (USD)	Cost Estimate (in USD)
Travel costs for 25 participants* to attend each Regional Consultation (in RAF, RAP, REU, RNE and RLC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airfare @ 1 000 x 25 participants = 25 000 • DSA @ 250 x 3 days x 25 participants = 18 750 <p>Total per Regional Consultation = 43 750</p>	218 750
Meeting Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue costs (including equipment rental and catering services) = 6 000 • Interpretation = 2 000 <p>Total per Regional Consultation = 8 000</p>	40 000
Technical consultancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 x 20 days = 7 000 	7 000
Staff Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airfare @ USD 1500 x 3 staff = 4 500 • DSA @ USD 250 x 3 days x 3 staff = 2 250 <p>Total per Regional Consultation = 6 750</p>	33 750
TOTAL		299 500

*Participants from 25 countries (with NFPs nominated)

VIII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

48. The Working Group may wish to recommend that the Commission:

CONSERVATION AND ON-FARM MANAGEMENT OF PGRFA

(i) Invite countries to strengthen their efforts to conserve PGRFA *in situ*, to maintain them on-farm and to strengthen the links and complementarity between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation;

(ii) Request FAO to provide support to countries, including in the development or revision of their national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives /wild food plants and farmers' varieties/landraces, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants*¹³³ and the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces*;¹³⁴

(iii) Request FAO to continue providing support to countries in their efforts to conserve PGRFA *in situ* and *ex situ*, and to manage them on-farm, including for the continued surveying, collecting, preservation, characterization and evaluation of crop germplasm;

¹³³ FAO. 2017. [Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants](#). Rome.

¹³⁴ FAO. 2019. [Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers' Varieties/Landraces](#). Rome.

SUSTAINABLE USE

- (iv) Request FAO to continue assisting countries in strengthening national seed systems for the delivery of quality seeds and planting materials, in particular to smallholder farmers;
- (v) Invite countries to develop or revise their national seed policies and legislations, taking into account the Commission's *Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation*;
- (vi) Call upon donors to support countries, in their review, development and implementation of national seed policies and legislations;
- (vii) Invite countries to strengthen their crop breeding systems, including for underutilized crops;
- (viii) Request FAO to continue supporting countries, in close coordination with the Treaty, in strengthening their crop improvement capacity, including through the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre and, in particular, in support of the implementation of the Second GPA and Article 6 of the Treaty;

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS AND HUMAN CAPACITIES

- (ix) Invite countries to strengthen their PGRFA-related human and institutional capacities for research and development;
- (x) Call for extrabudgetary funds to support countries in the implementation of the Second GPA, including through the development and implementation of national strategies for PGRFA, in close coordination with the Treaty and in line with its Funding Strategy;
- (xi) Request FAO to continue providing, on an annual basis, the status of implementation of SDG Target 2.5 and share results with the Working Group and the Commission;
- (xii) Request FAO to continue operating and further developing the WIEWS portal and strengthening cooperation with GLIS and Genesys to avoid duplication of efforts;

UPDATING THE SECOND GPA

- (xiii) Review the proposed plan for updating the Second GPA as provided in Table 1;
- (xiv) Invite the Governing Body of the Treaty to participate actively in the process of updating the Second GPA so that specific issues of relevance to the Treaty are taken into account and the provisions of the Treaty are adequately reflected in the updated GPA;
- (xv) Request FAO to revise the Second GPA, based on the findings of the Third Report, and in particular gaps, needs and priority activities identified through the regional consultations; and
- (xvi) Invite governments and international organizations to make the necessary financial resources available for updating the rolling global plan of action in a timely manner, including resources to enable regional and other meetings.