



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



**International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture**

**Item 16.4 of the Provisional Agenda**

**TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023**

**Report on Cooperation with Other International Bodies and Organizations**

**Executive Summary**

The Governing Body has repeatedly emphasized the need to continue efforts to promote the objectives of the International Treaty and its role in the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), as well as to ensure that these are recognized and supported by relevant international institutions, organizations and processes.

This document provides a summary report, with a focus on the major developments since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, on cooperation and partnerships with other international bodies and organizations, as well as with other relevant stakeholder groups.

**Guidance Sought**

The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and give any further guidance it considers appropriate regarding continued and effective cooperation with relevant organizations and treaty bodies, taking into account the draft elements for a Resolution provided for its consideration in the Annex to this document.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body “reaffirm[ed] the need to continue the efforts necessary to ensure that the International Treaty’s objectives and role in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA are recognized and supported by relevant international institutions, organizations and processes.”<sup>1</sup>

2. This document provides a summary report, with a focus on the major developments since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, on cooperation and partnerships with other international bodies and organizations, as well as with other relevant stakeholder groups. Cooperation and collaboration with partner organizations and relevant stakeholder groups have taken place in various forms and at different levels, to support and advance implementation of the International Treaty and achieve its objectives.

## II. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

### A. African Union Commission

3. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body welcomed “the continued support and coordination provided by the African Union Commission for Contracting Parties from the African Region in implementation of the International Treaty, and requests the Secretary to continue strengthening this collaboration...”.

4. The Secretary has continued to collaborate with the African Union Commission (AUC) in providing support to and facilitating coordination among the Contracting Parties and stakeholders from the Africa Region, including through the organisation of regional preparatory meetings and mobilising resources to promote the implementation of the International Treaty.

5. The AUC has reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating the development of the capacity of African National Focal Points of the International Treaty and Legal Advisors, as well as to the promotion of the implementation of the Treaty in the Region.

### B. Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture

6. The Secretary and the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) (the Alliance) have continued collaboration in various activities, including the Joint Capacity Building Programme.

7. The Secretariat participated in capacity development workshops, organized by the Alliance, on implementation of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing at national level in Lomé (Togo), Harare (Zimbabwe), Georgetown (Guyana), and remotely in Montevideo (Uruguay). All workshops were attended by participants from various stakeholder groups, including government officials, farmers, researchers, breeders, the private sector and civil society, and included a segment on the mutually supportive implementation of the International Treaty and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol.

8. As a follow-up to earlier collaboration on the study regarding countries’ interdependence on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture<sup>2</sup> and the mapping of available information,<sup>3</sup> the Secretary, the Alliance and the Crop Trust initiated the next phase during the last biennium, aiming to add more data, finalize the methodology, and make both data and methodology available and accessible.

9. A pre-publication of the study, *The plants that feed the world: Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*, was made available to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body as an information document [IT/GB-9/22/16.2/Inf.1](#).

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<sup>1</sup> [Resolution 14/2022 Cooperation with Other International Bodies and Organizations](#)

<sup>2</sup> Khoury, C.K., Achicanoy, H. A., Bjorkman, A. D. *et al.* 2015. *Estimation of countries’ interdependence in plant genetic resources provisioning national food supplies and production systems*. The International Treaty Research Paper 8. Rome, ITPGRFA, FAO. [www.fao.org/3/a-bq533e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-bq533e.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> IT/GB-8/19/15.2, Cooperation with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, paras. 18–21.

10. During 2023, the Secretariat has been working on the official publication of the study, as well as on visibility products, including a dedicated webpage facilitating user-friendly access to the vast amount of data produced in the project, a podcast featuring the publication, and an FAO interactive story. All products will be finalized during the second half of 2023 and the official publication is planned to be made available to the Tenth Session of the Governing Body.

11. Representatives of the Alliance have continued their active participation in the process to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System.

### **C. European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources**

12. The Secretariat has continued cooperating with the Secretariat of the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR) and initiated consultations for renewal of the memorandum of understanding. The collaboration would focus on PGRFA documentation, provision of inputs for strategic documents, and participation in training workshops. In this context, the Secretariat of the International Treaty has continued participating actively in different meetings of ECPGR, such as the Cryopreservation Working Group, which met for the first time in May 2023, the Avena Working Group to support the update of the Oat descriptors, and the Steering Committee of the ECPGR.

### **D. International Organization of Vine and Wine**

13. Through Resolution 8/2011, the Governing Body requested the Secretary “to foster cooperation with other international organizations and regional initiatives, including on agrobiodiversity programmes, such as the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV)...”.

14. Consequently, the Secretary participated in a meeting between Secretariats of International Treaty and the OIV to discuss a future partnership between the OIV and the International Treaty. The meeting was in response to the request of Governing Body, and follows up on initial contacts with the OIV, and was hosted by the Viticulture and Oenology Research Center of the Italian Council for Agricultural Research (CREA), in Conegliano Veneto, Italy. Participants from the Secretariats of both organisations, including the Deputy Director General and senior officials of OIV, were in attendance.

15. The participants discussed technical cooperation, the possible use of Digital Object Identifiers as Permanent Unique Identifiers for further digital database on ‘OIV grapevine collections’, and for the already published *OIV international list of grapevine varieties and their synonyms* and the *OIV ampelographic descriptors*, and possible inclusion of *Vitis* spp. in the Multilateral System of the International Treaty.

16. The discussions between the Secretariats of the Treaty and OIV are expected to continue in the following months to further define the details of their collaboration. Possible mechanisms for collaborating include preparing a memorandum of understanding.

### **E. International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants**

17. Collaboration with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) during this biennium has focused on UPOV’s frequently asked questions (FAQ) on interrelations between the International Treaty, the CBD and UPOV.

18. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body “request[ed] the Secretary to finalize the work requested in para. 10 of Resolution 12/2019 as soon as possible and report to the Governing Body at its Tenth Session.”<sup>4</sup>

19. Since the Ninth Session, the Secretary has continued interactions with the Secretariat of UPOV, with inputs from the Bureau, and at the time of preparing this document, discussions for finalizing the FAQ are still ongoing under the relevant processes of UPOV.

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 10 of Resolution 12/2019 reads: “Requests the Secretary of the International Treaty to continue cooperating with the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Vice-Secretary General of UPOV on the review of the FAQ on the interrelations between the International Treaty, the Convention on Biological Diversity and UPOV as a basis to explore means to facilitate exchanges of experiences and information on the implementation of the UPOV Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Treaty.”

## F. Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

20. The Ninth Session of the Governing Body encouraged members of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) to continue their collaboration in accordance with their respective mandates and, subject to the availability of financial resources, requested the Secretary to continue to participate actively in the relevant activities of the BLG, particularly in coordinating for implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

21. The Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to CBD, through decision 15/13, invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to build on the ‘Bern Process’ and continue to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among biodiversity-related conventions, contributing to the effective and efficient implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by facilitating a process for cooperation among Parties to the relevant biodiversity-related conventions.<sup>5</sup>

22. In this context, the Secretariat participated in a workshop organized by UNEP in June 2023 to prepare a third conference in Bern, which is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2024. UNEP has said that it intends to invite representatives from the respective Bureaus of the BLG members and from other relevant international organizations and stakeholders to the third conference.

## G. United Nations Environment Programme

23. The Secretariat has continued its participation in technical meetings of the United Nations Information Portal on the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA) Initiative and its Steering Committee, which are coordinated by UNEP.<sup>6</sup> The aim of InforMEA is to facilitate a greater understanding of environmental law by offering users intuitive access to information resources related to key topics such as ‘Biodiversity’, ‘Climate change’ and ‘Land and agriculture’. The Portal facilitates access to relevant information and key content provided by the International Treaty Secretariat, including the latest membership, the decisions of the Governing Body, and two training courses.<sup>7</sup>

24. The Secretariat has been collaborating with the World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC) for the development of a new version of the Online Reporting System, which could benefit the third reporting cycle under the Compliance Procedures in 2024.

## H. World Intellectual Property Organization

25. The Secretary has continued to participate in sessions of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (WIPO-IGC), held during this biennium.

26. At its Forty-seventh Session in June 2023, the WIPO-IGC recommended to the WIPO General Assembly the renewal of its mandate for the 2024–2025 biennium and proposed a work programme. The proposed schedule of meetings includes three full WIPO-IGC sessions on traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as a one-day WIPO-IGC session on genetic resources, to take stock of the progress made on genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and to discuss any issues arising from the Diplomatic Conference.

27. A Special Session of the WIPO-IGC is scheduled to take place from 4 to 8 September 2023 to consider the Chair’s Text of a Draft International Legal Instrument<sup>8</sup> and any other contributions by WIPO Member States, with the aim of further closing any existing gaps to a sufficient level.

28. Subsequently, the “Preparatory Committee of the Diplomatic Conference to Conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources” will take place from 11 to 13 September 2023 to establish the necessary modalities of the Diplomatic Conference, including dates, venue, and the list of countries and

<sup>5</sup> [www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-13-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-13-en.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.informea.org/en/process-governance](http://www.informea.org/en/process-governance)

<sup>7</sup> [www.informea.org/en/treaties/international-treaty-plant-genetic-resources-food-and-agriculture](http://www.informea.org/en/treaties/international-treaty-plant-genetic-resources-food-and-agriculture)

<sup>8</sup> WIPO/GRTKF/IC/43/5, Chair’s Text of a Draft International Legal Instrument relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge associated with Genetic Resources.  
[www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo\\_grtkf\\_ic\\_43/wipo\\_grtkf\\_ic\\_43\\_5.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/tk/en/wipo_grtkf_ic_43/wipo_grtkf_ic_43_5.pdf)

observers to be invited. The Secretary will provide relevant report on the outcome of these two meetings, as necessary, at the Tenth Session.

### III. COOPERATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

#### A. Civil Society and Farmers' Organizations

29. Civil society and farmers' organizations have continued to participate in the various intersessional committees of the International Treaty. The Secretariat has also invited these organizations to other events, providing a space for dialogue and information exchange.<sup>9</sup> These have included the Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights,<sup>10</sup> the process for the enhancement of the Multilateral System and broader events organized by FAO.<sup>11</sup>

30. The Secretariat has also continued to play an active role in the meetings, training activities and workshops organized by civil society organizations, and has updated them about relevant activities of the Governing Body. These include promoting the use and dissemination of the information database and tools,<sup>12</sup> guides and other capacity-building materials for the conservation and management of PGRFA, information resources on Farmers' Rights,<sup>13</sup> and other thematic areas of the International Treaty.

#### B. Private Sector

31. The Secretary has continued direct interaction and the exchange of information with representatives of the seed industry to advance implementation of the International Treaty, including attending the yearly World Seed Congress of the International Seed Federation during the current biennium.

32. Representatives of the private sector have continued to participate actively in the process of enhancing the functioning of the Multilateral System.

#### C. Academic and Research Institutions

In the last quarter of 2022, the Secretariat contributed to an analysis brief based on the study on *Ownership, Control, and Governance of the Benefits of Data for Food and Agriculture: A Conceptual Analysis and Strategic Framework for Governance*. The study was the result of a partnership with FAO's Legal Office, Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN), and authors from the University of Ottawa and Future Earth Canada.

### IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

33. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and give any further guidance it considers appropriate for continued and effective cooperation with relevant organizations and treaty bodies, taking into account the draft elements for a Resolution provided for its consideration in the Annex to this document.

<sup>9</sup> Through meetings and field visits, such as:

- Conservazione, uso sostenibile dell'agrobiodiversità e diritti degli agricoltori, 11 November 2022;
- International Conference GENUINE 2023: Global Strategy for the Conservation and Use of Fruit Tree Genetic Resources, 30 January 2023;
- Field visit to Benefit-sharing Fund project recipients in Zimbabwe, 20–25 March 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Hosted by the Government of India, held in New Delhi, from 12 to 15 September 2023.

<sup>11</sup> A hybrid event on "Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP): a path to overcome food crisis", Session 5: Panel Discussion on Right to Seeds. The date of the event shall be announced.

<sup>12</sup> For example, [Global Information System](#); [Toolbox for sustainable use of PGRFA](#), and many other capacity development materials, available at: [www.fao.org/plant-treaty/tools/training/en/](http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/tools/training/en/)

<sup>13</sup> Promote the use of the [Inventory](#), Options for encouraging, guiding and promoting the realization on Farmers' Rights.

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**DRAFT RESOLUTION \*\*/2023**

**COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**PART I: INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

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**THE GOVERNING BODY,**

**Recalling** Resolution 14/2022 and other previous Resolutions on the Cooperation with Other International Bodies and Organizations;

**Reaffirming** that the International Treaty is the lead intergovernmental agreement for international cooperation on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA);

**Noting with appreciation** the new and continued cooperation, collaboration and support provided by relevant international organizations and other stakeholder groups, in order to advance the objectives and implementation of the International Treaty;

**Cognizant** of the importance of harmonious and mutually supportive implementation of the International Treaty with relevant instruments and processes, especially at national level, and noting the continued importance of assisting developing country Contracting Parties in this regard;

1. **Reaffirms** the need to continue the efforts necessary to ensure that the International Treaty's objectives and role in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA are recognized and supported by relevant international institutions, organizations and processes;
2. **Encourages** Contracting Parties to take initiatives to strengthen the harmonious and mutually supportive implementation of the International Treaty and other relevant international instruments and their various goals and commitments in a coherent and mutually supportive manner, and *requests* the Secretary to facilitate such initiatives and in collaboration with partner organizations, upon request and subject to the availability of financial resources;
3. **Welcomes** the ongoing discussions between the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the International Organisation of Wine and Vine (OIV), and *requests* the Secretary to continue these discussions with a view to establishing effective cooperation between the two institutions, and to seek practical means and activities to further enhance this cooperation; *further requests* the Secretary to report on these efforts at the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body;
4. **Welcomes** the implementation of the Joint Capacity Building Programme with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and *reaffirms* the need to expand the Programme and to ensure that the Secretary continues to play an active role in the coordination, monitoring and analysis of results and impacts, subject to the availability of financial resources, and *calls upon* Contracting Parties and donors to provide additional funding to support its continuation;
5. **Invites** the Secretary to continue strengthening cooperation and synergies with other Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) members, establishing or renewing cooperation frameworks, as needed, and *encourages* the members of the BLG to continue their collaboration in accordance with their respective mandates, legal authority and responsibilities and, subject to the availability of financial resources;
6. **Requests** the Secretary to continue actively participating in relevant meetings and processes of the BLG to enhance coordination and synergies among the members for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF);
7. **Requests** the Secretary to continue participating in relevant activities of the InforMEA Initiative and collaborating with the World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC) for the development of a new version of the Online Reporting System and other related activities in support of monitoring implementation of the Kunming-Montreal GBF;

8. **Requests** the Secretary to continue participating in relevant meetings of UPOV, as appropriate and subject to the availability of financial resources;
9. **Requests** the Secretary to report to the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body on the status of UPOV's FAQ on the interrelations between the International Treaty, the CBD and UPOV and to consult with the Bureau on relevant collaboration matters that may require the input of Contracting Parties during the intersessional period;
10. **Requests** the Secretary, as appropriate and subject to the availability of financial resources, to continue participating in relevant meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore of WIPO; to attend the 2024 Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources; and to inform the Governing Body, at its Eleventh Session, about the outcomes of these meetings;
11. **Encourages** other relevant stakeholder groups, in particular civil society organizations, farmers' organizations and the seed industry, to continue strengthening their engagement and cooperation to advance implementation of the International Treaty;
12. **Requests** the Secretary to continue fostering cooperation with other international organizations, regional initiatives and relevant stakeholders, and strengthen existing cooperative arrangements with a view to developing synergies consistent with their respective mandates, governance structures and agreed programmes, and subject to the availability of financial resources;
13. **Requests** the Secretary to continue to report to the Governing Body on cooperation with other relevant international bodies and organizations, and related collaborative activities.