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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda

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

Tenth Session

22 - 24 June 2021

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

1. Election of the Chair, the Vice-Chair(s) and the *Rapporteur*

In accordance with its Statutes, “the Working Group shall elect its Chairperson and one or more Vice-Chairpersons from among the representatives of Members of the Working Group at the beginning of each session. These officers shall remain in office until the next session of the Working Group and shall be eligible for re-election” (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/1/Inf.1). The Working Group may also wish to appoint a *Rapporteur*.

2. Adoption of the agenda and timetable

The provisional agenda is contained in document CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/1. A provisional timetable is given in *Appendix I* to the present document, which provides annotations to the provisional agenda. The Tenth Session will be held as a virtual meeting. *Appendix II* outlines the special procedures proposed for virtual meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) in 2021.

3. Implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

FAO activities in support of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

At its Seventeenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to continue supporting countries in strengthening their crop improvement capacities, and, in particular, in support of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA) and Article 6 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Treaty). The document, *FAO activities in support of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2), provides a summary of the work undertaken since the last session of the Commission in support of the implementation of the Second GPA, for consideration by the

Working Group. FAO continues to monitor the implementation of SDG Target 2.5 as UN custodian. As requested by the Commission, FAO also prepared a report clarifying the specific roles of relevant information systems, which is contained in the document, *Strengthening cooperation among global information systems on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2/Inf.1).

3.1 *In situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*

At its Seventeenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to hold two international symposia on: (i) *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants; and (ii) on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces.

Upon consultation with the Bureau of the Commission, FAO held on 29 and 30 March 2021, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Treaty and the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture - Technical Consultation on on-farm management and *in situ* conservation.

The document *Towards a global framework for in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.1), summarizes the outputs of the symposium. A summary report of the symposium is provided in document CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.1/Inf.1.

3.2 *Implementation of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

At its Seventeenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to prepare practical guides for the use of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, for consideration by the Working Group and the Commission, at their next sessions.¹

With a view to increasing the use of the Genebank Standards, FAO developed three standalone *Draft Practical Guides for the Application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Draft Practical Guides) for the: (i) conservation of orthodox seeds; (ii) conservation in field genebanks; and (iii) conservation via *in vitro* culture. Primarily addressed to technical staff of genebanks, each of the Draft Practical Guides details the step-by-step routine genebank operations for the relevant conservation approaches. The document *Implementation of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.2) provides an overview of the Draft Practical Guides, which are contained in the document *Draft Practical Guides for the Application of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.2/Inf.1).

4. Status and trends of seed policies

At its Seventeenth Regular Session, the Commission considered the status and trends of seed policies and laws and requested FAO to undertake in-depth case studies for consideration by its Working Group.²

In response, FAO prepared a survey exploring the *Impact of implementation of seed legislation on diversity of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/3/Inf.1). The results of the survey have been summarized in the document *Effects of seed policies, laws and regulations* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/3), for consideration by the Working Group.

5. Preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

The Commission, at its last session, endorsed the approach proposed for the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report).

¹ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 65.

² CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 67.

It invited countries to submit information, as agreed, through the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WIEWS) Reporting Tool by the end of 2020.³ The Commission also requested FAO to revise the proposed thematic background studies, which would complement the information for the preparation of the Third Report. The document *Preparing the Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/4)* summarizes progress made in the preparation of the Third Report, including activities undertaken by FAO to support countries in collecting and submitting relevant information in line with the guidance contained in the document *Preparation of Country Reports for The Third Report on the State of The World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/4/Inf.1)*. The document also contains a revised list of thematic background studies for consideration by the Working Group.

6. Access and benefit-sharing for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

The Commission recalled that its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) foresees a review of its work on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) for its Eighteenth Regular Session and requested its Secretary to prepare, for review by the Commission's Working Groups:

- (i) a review of the Commission's work on ABS for genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA);
- (ii) an overview of developments under other international agreements and instruments relevant to ABS for GRFA;
- (iii) an up-to-date survey of existing legislative, administrative and policy approaches, including best practices, for ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA and traditional knowledge associated with GRFA held by indigenous peoples and local communities, with the aim of identifying typical approaches and lessons learned from their implementation, as well as challenges and possible solutions; and
- (iv) a proposal for options for future work of the Commission on ABS for the different subsectors of GRFA.⁴

The document *Access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture: Review and outlook (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/5)* responds to the above requests. Inputs by Members on the above deliverables are contained in the document *Inputs by Members on access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/5/Inf.1)*. The *Draft survey of access and benefit-sharing country measures accommodating the distinctive features of genetic resources for food and agriculture and associated traditional knowledge* is made available as document **CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/5/Inf.2**.

7. "Digital sequence information" on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

The Commission agreed that there is a need for further review of "digital sequence information" ("DSI") on GRFA. It agreed to address, at its next session, the innovation opportunities "DSI" on GRFA offers, the challenges of capacity to access and make use of it and its implications for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA and the sharing of benefits derived from GRFA. It requested its Working Groups to consider these matters with regard to existing subsector-specific examples related to conservation, sustainable use and development of genetic resources, food security and nutrition, food safety, and efforts to combat crop and animal pests and diseases.⁵

In response to the Commission's request, the document *"Digital sequence information" on genetic resources for food and agriculture: Innovation opportunities, challenges and policy implications (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/6)*, reviews the innovation opportunities "DSI" on GRFA offers, and identifies challenges associated with the capacity to access and make use of it and its implications for

³ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 66.

⁴ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 19.

⁵ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 23.

the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA and the sharing of benefits derived from GRFA. The Working Group is invited to provide guidance with regard to future work on “DSI”.

8. The role of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

The Commission requested FAO to prepare a scoping study on the role of GRFA in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, including knowledge gaps, taking into account the special reports on terrestrial and marine systems by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other available relevant sources, including examples from different regions and subsectors. The Commission requested its Working Groups to review the study and, if a global assessment of the role of GRFA is considered pertinent, to provide guidance to the Commission on its preparation.⁶

In response to the Commission’s request, the Secretariat updated, in collaboration with relevant units of FAO and partners, the study *Coping with climate change – The roles of genetic resources for food and agriculture*,⁷ prepared in 2015 on the basis of thematic studies commissioned by the Secretariat in preparation of the Commission’s Thirteenth Regular Session in 2013.⁸ The updated study *The role of genetic resources for food and agriculture in climate change adaptation and mitigation* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/7/Inf.1) has been prepared for review by the Working Groups.

In addition, the Commission requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft work plan, including for the preparation of a global country-driven assessment, for review by its Working Groups at their next sessions.⁹ The draft work plan can be found in the document *Climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/7). The document *FAO activities on climate change* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/7/Inf.2) gives an overview of FAO activities on climate change, in the context of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change.¹⁰

9. Review of the work on biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture

The Commission’s MYPOW foresees for its next session a review of the work on biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA.¹¹

In response to the Commission’s request, the Secretariat updated the document *Application and integration of biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture*¹² that was provided to the Commission’s Fifteenth Regular Session. The document *Review of the work on biotechnologies for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/8) summarizes FAO’s technical activities specifically related to biotechnology and reviews relevant work of FAO and the Commission’s Working Groups on the application and integration of biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable utilization of GRFA, for review by the Working Group. The reporting period spans from July 2014 to October 2020 and thus comprises the period of the last six years that was not covered by the previous report.

Technical developments are reported in the document *Recent developments in biotechnologies relevant to the characterization, sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture* (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/8/Inf.1).

10. Options for the organization of the Commission’s future intersessional work

⁶ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 29.

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3866e.pdf>

⁸ See Background Study Papers Nos. 53–57.

⁹ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 30.

¹⁰ <http://www.fao.org/3/i7175en/I7175EN.pdf>

¹¹ CGRFA-17/19/Report, Appendix F, Annex 1.

¹² CGRFA-15/15/7.

The Commission requested its Secretary to prepare an options paper setting out different options (and their financial implications) for the future organization of the Commission's intersessional work, for consideration by the Working Groups and the Commission at their next sessions,¹³ to:

- (i) address in a coherent, integrated and consistent way, biodiversity for food and agriculture, including micro-organism and invertebrate genetic resources; and
- (ii) consider how to enhance coordination and communication among the Commission's Working Groups, to raise awareness on subsectoral issues and strengthen coherence on cross-sectoral matters to effectively address the Commission's mission and goals.¹⁴

The document *Possible re-organization of the Commission's future intersessional work (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/9)* presents an overview of options for consideration by the Working Group.

11. Reports from international organizations and instruments

The document *Cooperation with international organizations and instruments (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/10)*, addresses the cooperation of the Working Group with its partners. The document *Submissions from international organizations and instruments (CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/10/Inf.1)*, contains reports from international organizations and instruments.

¹³ CGRFA-17/19/Report, paragraph 97.

¹⁴ <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/overview/vision-mission/en/>

APPENDIX I
PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

Date and Time	Agenda Item	Title	Working Documents
Tuesday, 22 June 2021, morning			
10:00 – 13:00	1	Election of the Chair, the Vice-Chair(s) and the <i>Rapporteur</i>	
	2	Adoption of the agenda and timetable	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/1 CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/1 Add.1 Rev.1
	3	Implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2
	3.1	<i>In situ</i> conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.1
	3.2	Implementation of the Genebank Standards for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/2.2
Tuesday, 22 June 2021, afternoon			
14:30 – 17:30	4	Status and trends of seed policies	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/3
	5	Preparation of <i>The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</i>	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/4
Wednesday, 23 June 2021, morning			
10:00 – 13:00	6	Access and benefit-sharing for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/5
	7	“Digital sequence information” on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/6
	8	The role of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/7
Wednesday, 23 June 2021, afternoon			
14:30 – 17:30	9	Review of the work on biotechnologies for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/8
	10	Options for the organization of the Commission's future intersessional work	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/9
	11	Reports from international organizations and instruments	CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/10
	12	Other business	
Thursday, 24 June 2021, afternoon			
14:30 – 17:30	12	Adoption of the Report	

APPENDIX II

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE EXCEPTIONAL TO ITS TENTH SESSION

1. The procedures outlined in this document apply on an exceptional basis to the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) in light of the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting virtual modality of this Session. The adoption of such procedures shall not create a precedent for the working methods of the Working Group or any other subsidiary body of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) for their future meetings.

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

2. The Working Group, as laid down in its Statutes, shall:
- review the situation and issues related to agrobiodiversity in the area of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters;
 - consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as any other matters referred to the Working Group by the Commission; and
 - report to the Commission on its activities.
3. In order for the Working Group to carry out this mandate, the Commission assigns specific tasks to the Working Group.
4. The virtual modality of the Tenth Session of the Working Group does not alter any of the functions of the Working Group outlined above.

CONDUCT OF SESSIONS

5. All plenary meetings of the Tenth Session of the Working Group will be conducted through the **Zoom platform**. Members and observers of the Working Group will be granted equal accessibility and capability inside the Zoom platform, ensuring their ability to be seen, and to view who is in attendance in the virtual meeting, and to address the Working Group.
6. Participants may **request the floor** by using the 'raise hand' function in the Zoom platform. This will draw up a list of speakers that the Chairperson will use to call participants to take the floor.
7. The **Members of the Working Group** are listed in the document CGRFA/WG-PGR-10/21/1/Inf.1.
8. **Simultaneous interpretation** in all six languages of the Organization will be provided during the Tenth Session of the Working Group.
9. Given the virtual modality of the Tenth Session of the Working Group and the need to streamline the proceedings to ensure sufficient time during the session to complete all agenda items, participants are encouraged to **limit interventions** to three minutes, and regional interventions to five minutes. Regional statements are particularly encouraged to maximize the efficiency of the proceedings.
10. To facilitate interpretation and reporting, all participants are requested to provide written copies of their statements to the Secretariat of the Group prior to the Tenth Session or as early as possible thereafter. Statements should be sent to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org.

11. Participants may use the **chat function of the Zoom platform** for exchanging information. However, views that should be taken into account in the preparation of the meeting report need to be orally expressed during the session.

AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND DOCUMENTATION

12. All the **documents** for the session are prepared and made available as per established practice on the website of the Working Group.¹⁵

13. The **time zone applicable** to the Tenth Session of the Working Group will be Central European Summer Time (CEST = UTC+2). This is the time zone of the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the location of the Session as if it were held as a physical meeting.

14. The **meeting** of the Tenth Session of the Working Group will be scheduled from 10.00 to 13.00 hours and from 14.30 to 17:30 hours on days 1 and 2 of the session. On day 3, the afternoon session will run from 14:30 to 17:30 hours, unless it is decided otherwise.

15. The Chairperson of the Working Group may call for a **short break** of up to ten minutes at any time during the session.

16. All other **working methods** of the Working Group outlined in this Note, in relation to the agenda, timetable and documentation, will be applied to the Tenth Session of the Working Group in accordance with established practice.

REPORTS AND RECORDS

17. The draft meeting report will be prepared by the *Rapporteur* of the Working Group, circulated by email to all participants and made available on the webpage of the Working Group on day 3 at 13:30 hours. The Report will record the Working Group's consensus on the amended modalities for the session outlined in this Note.

18. All other working methods of the Working Group outlined in this Note, in relation to Reports and records of the session, will be applied to the Tenth Session of the Working Group in line with established practice.

¹⁵ <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/seeds-pgr/itwg/10th/en/>