

Summary of the Nineteenth Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: 17-21 July 2023

Biodiversity is the basis of all agriculture. It has enabled the evolution of farming systems for thousands of years. The conservation of biological diversity has been at the top of the environmental agenda for several decades as society continues to grapple with the impacts of biodiversity loss, coupled with climate change and pollution.

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) plays an important role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the genetic resources that are the building blocks of all known plant and animal food varieties. Indeed, it is the only permanent intergovernmental body focused on all types of biodiversity for agriculture and food production. The CGRFA meets regularly to address policies on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) and to assess progress in the implementation of its Global Plans of Actions for plants, animals, and aquatic genetic resources.

The nineteenth meeting of the CGRFA opened seven months after parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the landmark Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This Framework, negotiated over a four-year period, is regarded as the world's compass for conservation of biological diversity, that will hopefully guide humanity towards living in harmony with nature. The timely adoption of the GBF was therefore top of the agenda of the 19th meeting of the CGRFA as delegates discussed the implementation of the GBF alongside the Commission's Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (FA BFA).

As the CGRFA's role continues to grow beyond its well-honed expertise in animal, plant, forest and aquatic GRFA, the Commission is making progress in tackling new cross-cutting issues such as the role of GRFA in mitigating and adapting to climate change. As FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu remarked at the 2023 G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting earlier this year, "Agrifood systems must be part of the solution to the loss of biodiversity and the climate crisis facing our planet."

Heralding a new era, the Commission is also stepping up its work in a relatively new field—microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources (MIGR), including pollinator and biological control agents. As FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo said, this is the "biodiversity that does not end up on our plates,"

as she highlighted the important role these tiny creatures play for sustainable agriculture.

Delegates remarked that the two-year intersessional period before CGRFA 20 is a critical time for Commission members to deepen their expertise in MIGR and embark on GBF implementation. The establishing of an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on MIGR and an *Ad Hoc* Expert Team on BFA were therefore considered major outcomes of the meeting.

CGRFA 19 also provided guidance for reviewing several of the globally renowned State of the World (SOW) reports on different sectors of GRFA. Delegates endorsed the preparation of the third SOW on Animal Genetic Resources, including a proposed outline and subsections. They also cleared the way for the second SOW on Forest Genetic Resources and the third SOW on Plant Genetic Resources to be finalized and published during the intersessional period.

CGRFA 19 was convened at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 17-21 July 2023. Over 250 participants attended the meeting, including members from all FAO regions, namely Europe, Asia,

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Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Africa, Southwest Pacific, and Near East, as well as some environmental treaty secretariats, and other stakeholders.

CGRFA 19 was preceded by a celebration of the Commission's 40th anniversary, at a [special event](#) held on Saturday, 15 July 2023. The theme of the 40-year commemorative event, "Connecting the Dots," examined the linkages required to enhance the CGRFA's role in conserving BFA, but also featured FAO's technical work on fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, plant production and protection, animal production, and health and nutrition.

A Brief History of the CGRFA

The CGRFA is an intergovernmental body focusing on the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use. Originally established by FAO in 1983 as the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Commission was renamed in 1995 to reflect its broadened mandate to encompass all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including plant, animal, forest, aquatic, and microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources. The CGRFA currently comprises 178 countries and the European Union (EU).

The Commission produces regular global scientific assessments (SOW reports) of GRFA in agricultural subsectors, as well as cross-sectoral assessments. Based on the trends, gaps, and challenges identified in the SOWs, the Commission aims to develop consensus on policy measures that are summarized in Global Plans of Action (GPAs) and other documents through which governments commit to take action to conserve and sustainably use GRFA.

The Commission follows a ten-year work cycle that includes assessment, policy development, and review of implementation for each of the GRFA subsectors. The CGRFA also facilitates cooperation between FAO and other relevant bodies on GRFA policy issues, including the CBD. The Commission's regular sessions are held every two years and extraordinary sessions are convened when necessary. Before CGRFA 19, the Commission had four Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups (ITWGs) on plant, animal, forest, and aquatic genetic resources, to address specific issues in these sectors. At CGRFA 19 a new ITWG was established on MIGR, bringing the total to five. Additional intersessional bodies are set up on an *ad hoc* basis as needed.

Key Milestones

Plant Genetic Resources: In 1996, the Commission's work on plant genetic resources (PGR) resulted in the presentation of the first SOW-PGR and the first GPA-PGR, adopted through the Leipzig Declaration at the International Technical Conference on PGR held in Leipzig, Germany. The Declaration comprises a set of activities covering capacity building, as well as *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of PGR. The GPA for the conservation and sustainable utilization of PGR also recognizes the crucial roles played by farmers, seed curators, and breeders in managing these resources. Together with other guidelines, strategies, and codes of conduct, these measures came to be known as the Global System for PGR. In 2011, the Commission adopted the second GPA-PGR.

In 2019, the Commission endorsed the approach for the preparation of the third SOW-PGR.

Access and Benefit-Sharing and the ITPGRFA: In 1983, FAO established the International Undertaking (IU) on PGR, a non-binding instrument aimed at ensuring that PGR are explored,

collected, conserved, evaluated, utilized, and made available for plant breeding and other scientific purposes.

In 1993, the CGRFA considered the implications of the newly-adopted CBD and its objective to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources for its work, especially for the IU. Recognizing that the CBD would play a central role in determining policy on PGR, the Commission agreed that the IU should be revised to be in harmony with the CBD.

This resulted in the adoption of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) in 2001, under the auspices of FAO. The Treaty, which entered into force in 2004, is a legally binding instrument that targets the conservation and sustainable use of PGR and equitable benefit-sharing for sustainable agriculture and food security. The ITPGRFA established a Multilateral System (MLS) of access and benefit-sharing (ABS), which facilitates access to a specified list of PGR, balanced by benefit-sharing in the areas of information exchange, technology transfer, capacity building, and commercial development. This list of crops defines the scope of the MLS and currently includes 35 crop genera and 29 forage species.

In response to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS under the auspices of the CBD in 2010, the Commission developed a set of Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of ABS in the different sub-sectors of GRFA, which were welcomed by the Commission at its fifteenth session in 2015.

Animal Genetic Resources: The Commission's work on animal genetic resources (AnGR) has been guided by the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm AnGR. Initiated by FAO in 1993, the Global Strategy serves as a technical and operational framework for assisting countries. It comprises: an intergovernmental mechanism for policy development; a country-based global infrastructure to help states plan and implement national strategies; a country-level technical support programme; and a reporting and evaluation system to guide the Strategy's implementation and facilitate collaboration. A communication and information tool called the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) assists in the Strategy's implementation.

In 2007, the first International Technical Conference on AnGR presented the first SOW-AnGR and adopted the GPA and the Interlaken Declaration on AnGR. In 2013, the Commission endorsed a set of voluntary guidelines for *in vivo* conservation of AnGR. In 2015, the Commission adopted the second SOW-AnGR.

MYPOW and Strategic Plan: To enable the Commission to fulfill its mandate in the medium and long term, the Commission at each session revises its Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW), a rolling 10-year work plan covering the totality of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including plant, animal, forest, aquatic, and microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources, and major outputs and milestones. The MYPOW also covers a range of cross-sectoral matters relevant to several or all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture. At its twelfth session in 2009, the Commission adopted its Strategic Plan 2010-2017, identifying processes and cooperation needed to achieve the agreed outputs and milestones.

In 2017 and 2019, the Commission overhauled the Strategic Plan, redefined its goals in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and identified new operative principles.

The MYPOW and Strategic Plan outline a 10-year cycle, during which the Commission aims to:

- conduct a global assessment;
- adopt or update a GPA;
- develop guidance for implementation for plant, animal, forest and aquatic GRFA, and microorganisms and invertebrates; and
- publish a global assessment of the SOW-BFA after the completion of each cycle.

Forest Genetic Resources: In 2013, the Commission considered the first SOW-Forest Genetic Resources (FGR) and adopted the first GPA-FGR. In 2019, the Commission endorsed Voluntary Guidelines for Preparing a National Strategy for FGR, and began preparations for the preparation of the second SOW-FGR.

Aquatic Genetic Resources: At its seventeenth session in 2019, the Commission approved the final draft SOW-Aquatic Genetic Resources (AqGR), providing the first comprehensive assessment of the status of AqGR of farmed species and their wild relatives. It was finalized in 2021, when parties also adopted the GPA for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of AqGR.

Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture: In 2019, the Commission launched its first SOW-BFA, which was lauded as a major milestone for FAO and the Commission towards achieving several SDGs, especially SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 15 (Life on land). In 2021 the Commission endorsed its FA BFA, whose implementation is voluntary. The SOW-BFA brought agriculture to the fore in the then-ongoing negotiations of the GBF. The Commission also requested the Group of National Focal Points (NFPs) for BFA, and its Working Groups, to assess the GBF, once approved, and to consider the need for adjustments to the FA BFA.

Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources: The Commission has periodically considered background studies and reports on MIGR since 2007. In 2019, CGRFA 17 adopted a Work Plan for the Sustainable Use and Conservation of MIGR. Although no SOW or GPA has been produced on the topic to date, MIGR was covered by the 2019 SOW-BFA.

CGRFA 19 Report

Chair Deidré Januarie (Namibia) opened CGRFA 19 on [Monday, 17 July](#). Qu Dongyu, Director-General, FAO, spoke of the importance of turning talk into action and connecting the environmental and agricultural sectors. He highlighted the strong political signals sent from the recently endorsed FA BFA, the GPAs, and the recently adopted GBF.

David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, CBD, highlighted interlinkages between work under the CBD and the CGRFA, stressing that nothing is more important for biodiversity than how we manage agricultural production. He underscored that the GBF is founded on a human rights-based and a whole-of-society approach, emphasizing the need for full engagement across sectors and ministries, especially with smallholder farmers and fisher folk as custodians of genetic diversity.

Kent Nnadozie, Secretary, ITPGRFA, said that conserving plant genetic resources is at the heart of achieving the GBF. He encouraged parties to embrace technology, science, and traditional knowledge in order to harness the immense potential of GRFA and address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Delegates then delivered their opening statements and adopted the meeting's agenda and provisional timetable ([CGRFA-19/23/1](#) and [1/Add.1/Rev.1](#)).

Cross-Sectoral Matters

Review of work on biodiversity, nutrition and human health: On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/2](#)), providing an overview of FAO activities on BFA and GRFA in relation to nutrition and human health.

Delegates lamented, among other issues, insufficient recognition of GRFA in the One Health approach and suggested FAO collaborate with relevant organizations. They also called for a rapid and holistic approach to implementing the [Voluntary Guidelines for Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Policies, Programmes and National and Regional Plans of Action on Nutrition](#).

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission invites members to raise awareness of, adopt, and implement the Voluntary Guidelines, and integrate GRFA into their food security and nutrition policies. The Commission further invites members and relevant stakeholders to consider sustainable use of BFA and GRFA across the various work areas of One Health approach.

The Commission requests FAO to continue to strengthen its support to members in promoting food security, healthy diets from sustainable food systems, improved nutrition, and the One Health approach.

Role of GRFA in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change: On [Monday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/3](#)) and a background document on FAO's work on climate change ([CGRFA-19/23/3/Inf.1](#)). Parties took issue with the draft questionnaires on GRFA and climate change, requesting their simplification and merging them into one single questionnaire.

Delegates also supported convening a multi-stakeholder workshop on the topic of GRFA and climate change to facilitate knowledge exchange on climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation. Some also called for swift revision of the [Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning](#).

Chair Januarie forwarded the agenda item to an informal group with the mandate of simplifying the questionnaires. On [Tuesday](#), the group announced an agreement to merge the two questionnaires on the role of GRFA in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to:

- finalize the questionnaire by September 2023 and circulate it for completion by all NFPs;
- prepare a summary of responses to the questionnaire for consideration by the next sessions of the ITWGs and the CGRFA; and
- convene a global multi-stakeholder workshop on climate change and GRFA, with a view to reviewing the Voluntary Guidelines at CGRFA 21.

The Commission invited members to make use of FAO tools and guidance on climate change adaptation and mitigation when developing or updating their National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions, under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

Access and Benefit-Sharing for GRFA: Report of the Sixth Session of the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on ABS: On [Monday](#), Marliese von den Driesch (Germany) presented the report ([CGRFA-19/23/4.1](#)) of the sixth session, which she co-chaired with María Laura Villamayor (Argentina). She noted the team reviewed

and revised the typology of country measures appended to the report. ASIA said the typology of measures is useful for countries as they develop their national measures and highlighted the relevance of digital sequence information (DSI) to this work. AFRICA endorsed the report, but stressed that future work on DSI should ensure consistency with other fora.

ABS country measures: The Secretariat introduced three documents on [Monday](#): an overview of ABS-relevant developments under other international agreements and instruments since CGRFA 18 ([CGRFA-19/23/4.2](#)); a draft typology of ABS country measures ([CGRFA-19/23/4.2/Inf.1](#)); and a draft online questionnaire for the preparation of a study on the effects of ABS measures ([CGRFA-19/23/4.2/Inf.2](#)).

Delegates discussed, among others, regular updates to the draft typology of ABS country measures. An informal group was established to decide whether or not the Secretariat should contribute to GBF indicators when following up on ABS developments in other fora. On [Tuesday](#), delegates noted agreement following the informal consultations and requested the Secretariat to contribute to developing indicators to monitor monetary and non-monetary benefits in the implementation of the GBF, while ensuring the distinctive features of GRFA are taken into account.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to:

- continue monitoring developments on ABS in other fora with a view to considering potential opportunities and challenges;
- finalize the document on the typology of ABS country measures;
- document examples of entire ABS country measures that contain distinctive features of GRFA;
- further simplify and finalize the draft questionnaire and prepare a report on the implications of the implementation of ABS country measures, for review by the ABS Expert Team;
- contribute to the process of developing indicators for the GBF and to monitor monetary and non-monetary benefit-sharing; and
- continue to raise awareness of, and enhance capacity to deal with, matters related to ABS arrangements that accommodate the distinctive features of GRFA.

Digital Sequence Information and GRFA: The Secretariat presented the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/5](#)) on [Monday](#). David Smith, Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI), presented a draft study on the role of DSI for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA ([CGRFA-19/23/5/Inf.1](#)). Chair Januarie established an informal group to discuss whether CGRFA members should submit information on domestic ABS measures relating to DSI.

The group reported to plenary on [Tuesday](#), with agreement on the submission of information on the condition that it builds on previous work, to avoid duplication of efforts.

EUROPE recommended finalizing the document and sharing it with the CBD *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on DSI and the ITPGRFA. Many delegates agreed that the Secretariat should continue monitoring developments on DSI in other fora. AFRICA called for engagement with the CBD and other fora in developing a multilateral mechanism for benefit-sharing from DSI.

Reiterating there is no internationally agreed definition of DSI, the US noted that each organization working on DSI has a different understanding based on the issues they are dealing with. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN cautioned against duplication with work undertaken elsewhere and stressed that any benefits

accruing from DSI must be subject to fair and equitable benefit-sharing. AUSTRALIA presented the opposing view that DSI is not equivalent to a genetic resource and, therefore, does not trigger any benefit-sharing obligations.

ITPGRFA reiterated its willingness to host future workshops on DSI in collaboration with the Commission and drew attention to its open-ended working group on DSI, which is currently conducting a survey on DSI capacity. The CBD reminded parties of the agreement reached on DSI in the GBF, including a time-bound process to develop a multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to:

- finalize the study and bring it to the attention of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI on Genetic Resources and the ITPGRFA *Ad Hoc* Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System;
- invite members to submit information on domestic ABS measures applying to DSI and their implications for GRFA;
- continue monitoring developments on DSI in other fora, and participate where relevant; and
- continue to hold open-ended workshops on DSI for sharing information about gaps in knowledge and technical capacity-building needs.

The Commission requests FAO to assist countries in building the necessary capacities to make use of DSI in research and development related to GRFA, and encourages members to coordinate future work on DSI, including ABS for DSI, to ensure consistency and mutual supportiveness of the ongoing processes.

Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture

Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture: On [Tuesday](#), delegates considered a document on the FA BFA and the GBF ([CGRFA-19/23/6.1](#)), which summarizes key features of the FA BFA and maps them against the GBF, explores the extent to which the two instruments are mutually supportive, and proposes a draft resolution to be considered by the FAO Council.

Delegates discussed, among others, the involvement of NFPs in reviewing the FA BFA against the GBF, and financial and other means of implementation. Several proposals illustrated linkages between the FA BFA and the GPAs to the GBF, and Chair Januarie invited delegates to submit these in writing and she would prepare a compromise text for further consideration.

On [Wednesday](#), delegates considered the Chair's text. On funding, they agreed to request the FAO Council to take into account the Commission's decisions when developing budget allocations.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission:

- welcomes the adoption of the GBF and endorses the appended draft FAO Council resolution inviting FAO to bring the GBF to the attention of the FAO Council for adoption;
- invites members to implement the FA BFA and the Commission's GPAs in harmony with the GBF; and
- requests FAO to contribute to the development of tools and guidelines to support a mutually supportive, coherent, and non-duplicative implementation.

Progress report on the Implementation of the Mainstreaming Strategy: On [Tuesday](#), delegates took note of progress summarized in the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (Mainstreaming Strategy; [CGRFA-19/23/6.2](#)), and provided comments and inputs to a proposed Action Plan 2024-27. Many regions and countries applauded the successful

implementation of the 2021-23 Action Plan. Some called on FAO to secure a bigger share of net budgetary appropriation to implement the FA BFA and the Mainstreaming Strategy. Delegates supported the inclusion of FAO activities that support countries in the implementation of the GPAs and the FA BFA in the 2024-27 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Mainstreaming Strategy.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests FAO to consider the Commission's decisions when developing budget allocations.

Plant Genetic Resources

Report of the Eleventh Session of the ITWG-PGR: On [Tuesday](#), Imke Thormann (Germany), Chair, 11th session of the ITWG-PGR, presented the meeting report ([CGRFA-19/23/7.1](#)), which was met with widespread approval.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission endorses the ITWG report.

Third SOW-PGR: On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the document on the preparation of the third SOW-PGR ([CGRFA-19/23/7.2](#)) and the current draft report ([CGRFA-19/23/7.2/Inf.1](#)). Delegates took note of progress made in the draft, expressing concern that the thematic background studies are still not available, and asking whether this would impact on the finalization of the report. They also lamented the low number of countries submitting data, stressed the need for translation into all UN languages, and underlined the importance of asking farmers to contribute to the third SOW-PGR.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission recommends that:

- the number of reporting countries be made explicit for the different topics;
- a section on key findings be included in each chapter;
- the third finalized report take into account all comments received; and
- the finalized third SOW-PGR be made available to the ITWG-PGR together with an in-brief version in all official UN languages.

Implementation and review of the second GPA-PGR:

On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat presented the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/7.3](#)), summarizing the ongoing implementation and review of the second GPA-PGR. Delegates discussed, among others, the need to address in situ conservation of crop wild relatives, the importance of resource mobilization for implementing the GPA, and assisting countries in strengthening the use of underutilized crops.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission recommends that FAO, subject to availability of the necessary resources, continue to support countries' in situ conservation and on-farm management of PGR; and convene a virtual expert consultation on the draft practical guides for conservation in gene banks and develop them further based on the feedback received for review at CGRFA 20.

Effects of seed policies, laws and regulations: On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document outlining further research on the impact of seed policies, laws and regulations ([CGRFA-19/23/7.4](#)), with an appended draft concept note.

Discussions revolved around the concept note for the study. Delegates suggested, among others, to consider how policies and laws impact small-scale farmers' access to seeds, as well as include references to value chains and gender dimensions. While a clear majority came out in favor of the study, NORTH AMERICA

objected, saying that previous studies had already concluded that policies and laws do not significantly impact farmers' access to seeds. Chair Januarie proposed that parties meet in a contact group to address comments on the concept note. On [Wednesday](#), the contact group reported agreement on the concept note with minor amendments to the proposed methodology.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission recommends that FAO, in collaboration with ITPGRFA, carry out further work on the effects of seed policies, laws and regulations, based on the concept note as revised by CGRFA; and to report at CGRFA 20 on how it followed up a number of requests by CGRFA 18, including a demand-driven bottom-up approach to seed security. The Commission also requests FAO to reach out to all relevant stakeholders and explore the possibility of having the scoping study conducted by appropriate external partners with competence on different seed systems.

Forest Genetic Resources

Report of the Seventh Session of the ITWG-FGR: On [Tuesday](#), Mari Rusanen (Finland) presented the relevant report of the ITWG's seventh session ([CGRFA-19/23/8.1](#)), and the relevant statutes to be considered by the Commission ([CGRFA-19/23/8.1 Inf.1](#)).

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission endorses the ITWG report.

The second SOW-FGR: On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat presented on the preparation of the second report ([CGRFA-19/23/8.2](#)) and underlined that the draft report ([CGRFA-19/23/8.2 Inf.1 Rev.1](#)) will be updated in light of additional responses from parties. Delegates stressed the need to include perspectives and contributions of Indigenous Peoples in conserving FGR, as well as the need for regional balance in the examples mentioned in the report.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission recommends that FAO: prepare a revised draft SOW-FGR, including a more profound analysis of data provided by countries, on the basis of comments to be provided by 30 November 2023; and that it finalize the second SOW-FGR by 2024, taking into account all the comments received.

Implementation and review of the GPA-FGR: On [Tuesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant documentation on implementation and review of the GPA-FGR ([CGRFA-19/23/8.3](#)) and the second report on its implementation ([CGRFA-19/23/8.3/Inf.1](#)). Delegates welcomed the development of an information system to monitor GPA implementation, noted low participation in the second report, urged simplifying the reporting format, and proposed text inviting donors to support GPA implementation.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission:

- requests FAO to continue to support countries to implement the GPA-FGR;
- invites countries to continue implementing the GPA-FGR, taking into account the findings of the Second Implementation Report; and to continue monitoring the status of FGR;
- requests the Secretariat, immediately after the publication of the second report, to consult Commission members, NFPs, and regional networks on FGR to collect views on the need to revise the GPA, and request the FAO to prepare, based on these outcomes, a draft revised GPA, or other document for the eighth session of the ITWG and CGRFA 20; and
- encourages FAO to consider possibilities for revising the reporting requirements for the third report on GPA implementation and the third report on the SOW-FGR.

Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources

Bioremediation and nutrient cycling soil microorganisms and invertebrates: On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/9.1](#)), together with a draft study on the sustainable use and conservation of MIGR that contribute to bioremediation of agricultural pollutants and soil nutrient cycling ([CGRFA-19/23/9.1/Inf.1](#)). Angela Sessitsch, Austrian Institute of Technology, presented the findings, pointing out core functions of the soil and its microorganisms. She also noted successful conservation of soil organisms requires a combination of in situ and ex situ conservation approaches. Delegates acknowledged the need for coordination among researchers to address knowledge gaps, and for members to contribute information on the benefits of sustainable farming practices. Some also called for capacity building and recommended further research on the role of microorganisms in enhancing soil fertility.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission welcomes the draft study and recommended it be finalized. It further recommends that FAO take the findings of the study into consideration in its work in fields relevant to management of soil microorganisms and invertebrates. It requests the Secretariat to collaborate with relevant experts, treaties, and conventions in drafting specific recommendations on soil microorganisms and invertebrates for CGRFA 20.

Microorganisms relevant to ruminant digestion: On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/9.2](#)) as well as a revised draft study on the topic ([CGRFA-19/23/9.2/Inf.1](#)). Chris Creevey, Queen's University Belfast, provided an overview of the draft study. Delegates debated, among others, the impacts of microorganisms on animal diversity and health, the need to assess the geographic context of different microbes, and to collect microbiomes in national and local gene banks.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission welcomes the draft study and recommends it be finalized. It further recommends that FAO take the study's findings into consideration in its work relevant to the sustainable use and conservation of microorganisms of relevance to ruminant digestion. It requests the Secretariat to collaborate with relevant experts, treaties, and conventions, in drafting specific recommendations on microorganisms of relevance to ruminant digestion for CGRFA 20.

Follow up on pollinators and biological control agents and bio-stimulants: On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat presented documents exploring the need for, and potential modalities of, a global pollinator platform ([CGRFA-19/23/9.3.1](#)) as well as on the conservation and sustainable use of biological control agents (BCAs) and bio-stimulants ([CGRFA-19/23/9.3.2](#)). Various delegations lamented the dire state of pollinators across regions and invited countries to implement the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators. Regarding BCAs and bio-stimulants, members widely agreed with the Commission's plan to organize an open-ended workshop on the topic.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission recommends that FAO:

- explore the possible modalities of a global pollinator platform to respond to the priorities and needs identified;
- continue to develop tools and technical guidance documents, including standardized monitoring protocols for pollinators, and environmental risk assessments for biological control agents; and

- hold, subject to the availability of the necessary funds, an open-ended workshop on biological control agents and biostimulants.

Animal Genetic Resources

Report of the Twelfth Session of the ITWG-AnGR: Working Group Vice-Chair Samuel Rezende Paiva (Brazil) gave an overview of the report ([CGRFA-19/23/10.1](#)) on [Wednesday](#). The report contained recommendations on, among others, the status of implementation of the relevant GPA-AnGR, monitoring the diversity of AnGR for food and agriculture, and preparation for the third SOW-AnGR.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission endorses the ITWG report.

Implementation of the GPA-AnGR: Paul Boettcher, Animal Production Officer, FAO, presented the review of implementation of the GPA ([CGRFA-19/23/10.2](#)) on [Wednesday](#). Delegates stressed, among others, the need to support implementation of the GPA, including through building capacity at the national level to support conservation and use of indigenous breeds.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission, among others, requests FAO to:

- continue supporting countries in the implementation of the GPA, and to increase fund-raising efforts for GPA implementation;
- support capacity building, including on topics such as animal identification and recording, genetic improvement, sustainable breeding, and ex situ conservation;
- continue raising awareness of the importance of AnGR and the roles of livestock keepers and of livestock species and breeds and their production systems in the provision of ecosystem services;
- provide technical support to further maintain and develop DAD-IS and to continue to increase its user-friendliness;
- continue developing and/or refining cost-efficient methodologies for estimating the sizes of national breed populations, and technical support to countries with the estimation of breed population sizes and other data relevant to monitoring the diversity of livestock breeds and managed bee populations; and
- perform an analysis of the rate of reporting of breed performance data in DAD-IS for consideration by the next ITWG-AnGR.

Preparation of the third SOW-AnGR: On [Wednesday](#), Paul Boettcher, Animal Production Officer, FAO, presented documents relating to the preparation of the third SOW-AnGR ([CGRFA-19/23/10.3](#) and [/10.3/Inf.1](#)), noting preparations are well under way for the approval of the report at CGRFA 21, but that funding gaps persist. Delegates called on FAO to close the funding gap, and requested financial and technical support for country submissions to the SOW. On the guidance sought, they agreed that members should be "encouraged" rather than "invited" to provide information for the preparation of the third SOW-AnGR.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to:

- finalize the questionnaire and circulate it to countries by September 2023, and invited countries to submit their completed questionnaires for the preparation of the third report by 30 June 2024; and
- invite regional networks on AnGR and relevant international organizations to contribute to the preparation of the third report.

The Commission requests FAO to:

- encourage all relevant organizations to support and contribute to the implementation of the GPA and provide timely information for the third report; and

- encourage all members and relevant international mechanisms, funds and bodies to give immediate and due priority and attention to the effective allocation of predictable and agreed resources for the preparation of the third report.

Aquatic Genetic Resources

Report of the Fourth Session of the ITWG-AqGR: Shauna Baillie (Canada), Chair of the ITWG on AqGR, presented the report of the group's fourth session ([CGRFA-19/23/11.1](#)) on [Wednesday](#). She noted progress on the development of a global information system for AqGR dubbed "AquaGRIS," and stressed its crucial role for implementation. She further reported the ITWG's work on linkages with cross-sectoral matters, most notably in the fields of climate change, access and benefit-sharing, and digital sequence information.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the ITWG to propose resource and process indicators for monitoring the status of AqGR and the implementation of the PGA-AqGR, and to finalize the development of the full version of AquaGRIS.

Implementation of the GPA-AqGR: On [Wednesday](#), the Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([CGRFA-19/23/11.2.1](#)) and a further document on monitoring the implementation of GPA-AqGR ([CGRFA-19/23/11.2.2](#)). Many countries welcomed implementation of the GPA-AqGR and recognized the central role of AquaGRIS, stressing the need for Secretariat assistance and capacity building regarding its use. They called for user guidance for NFPs and urged long-term funding, supporting the development of a full version of the AquaGRIS platform.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report the Commission requests FAO to prepare a manual explaining how data should be entered and provide NFPs support in using and populating AquaGRIS.

Strategic Plan

Progress report and review: The Secretariat introduced the document on the review and update of the CGRFA Strategic Plan ([CGRFA-19/23/12](#)) on [Thursday](#). The document also contains the draft Strategic Plan 2023-2031, and the MYPOW. Many regions and countries welcomed the revisions to the Strategic Plan. Delegates agreed to postpone review of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning to CGRFA 21. The multi-stakeholder workshop on climate change would also be postponed accordingly.

Delegates also agreed to consider the update on DSI discussions in other fora and the review of the FA BFA at CGRFA 20.

Members also concurred in retaining work on health and nutrition as a permanent topic to be reviewed at CGRFA 21.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to propose options for a procedure for the ad hoc identification of new and emerging issues for inclusion in the MYPOW, for review by the ITWGs and the Commission at their next sessions; and to provide, in future progress reports or reviews of the Strategic Plan, an overview of activities to be carried out in preparation for the forthcoming two sessions.

The Commission also invites donors to contribute to the cross-sectoral multi-donor trust fund for the MYPOW.

The Commission's Mode of Operation

Future organization of intersessional work: This item was discussed in plenary and a contact group on [Wednesday](#), [Thursday](#), and Friday.

On Wednesday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documentation ([CGRFA-19/23/13](#)), which provides options for the establishment of additional bodies to conduct intersessional work. After delegates voiced diverging opinions on this matter, Chair Januarie established an open-ended contact group, chaired by Canada and Brazil, to discuss the options and find an acceptable solution.

On Thursday, Benoît Girard (Canada), on behalf of the contact group co-chairs, reported convergence on the establishment of an ITWG-MIGR and an ad hoc expert team on BFA. The contact group continued deliberations on the exact modalities and topics to be tackled by the ITWG and the expert team.

During the closing plenary on Friday, contact group Co-Chair Girard announced agreement on the establishment of two new intersessional bodies: an ITWG-MIGR, and an ad hoc expert team on BFA. Moreover, the contact group settled on statutes for both bodies and their respective initial tasks. Following this announcement, delegates proceeded to elect the members of the new ITWG-MIGR.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission encourages the Secretariat to explore ways of enhancing collaboration and exchanges between the different ITWGs as well as relevant workstreams and initiatives within FAO; and to copy the Commission's NFPs when communicating with the sectoral focal points.

The Commission also establishes the ITWG-MIGR, and tasks it to review, at its first session, the Commission's work on MIGR, including previously identified regional needs and priorities, and review the programme of work, including by identifying current needs and priorities and gaps in knowledge and policies.

The Commission further establishes the Ad Hoc Expert Team on BFA and tasks it to:

- review the FA BFA in light of the GBF to identify gaps and possible work on BFA, including the development of policy tools and guidance;
- advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters, avoiding duplication, in particular with the other ITWGs; and
- develop recommendations to implement the BFA in a mutually supportive way with the GBF, including in updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the CBD.

The Commission requests FAO, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, to convene the Working Group and the Ad Hoc Expert Team before CGRFA 20.

Cooperation with international instruments and organizations:

The Secretariat introduced the document on partnerships and cooperation with international instruments and organizations ([CGRFA-19/23/14.1](#)) on [Thursday](#), and referred to a second document containing submissions from international instruments and organizations ([CGRFA-19/23/14.1/Inf.1](#)).

Kent Nnadozie, Secretary, ITPGRFA, presented the document on the Commission's cooperation with the Treaty ([CGRFA-19/23/14.2](#)), which highlights areas of cooperation in PGRFA. Representatives of several CGRFA-relevant instruments and organizations took the floor to highlight their activities and report on progress in the areas of, as well as linkages to, the CGRFA's workstreams.

Final Outcome: In the meeting report, the Commission requests the Secretariat to continue seeking inputs on prioritized themes of

its regular sessions from international instruments and organizations and to make them available to the Commission for its information.

The Commission also requests the Secretariat to continue strengthening collaboration and coordination with the ITPGRFA to promote coherence in the development and implementation of the two bodies' respective programmes of work.

Other Matters

Date and place GCRFA 20: The Secretariat announced that CGRFA 20 will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, and is tentatively scheduled for 24-28 March 2025.

Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur: Benoît Girard (Canada) was elected Chair of CGRFA 20. Mariana Marshall Parra (Brazil), William Wigmore (Cook Islands), Neveen Abdel Fattah Hassan (Egypt), Melesse Maryo (Ethiopia), Kim van Seeters (Netherlands) and Byeong Yun Han (Republic of Korea) were elected as Vice-Chairs. Mariana Marshall Parra (Brazil) was elected as Rapporteur.

Closing Plenary

In the closing plenary on Friday, CGRFA 19 Rapporteur Kim van Seeters presented the draft meeting report and its appendices (CGRFA-19/23/DR). Delegates suggested some minor textual edits and adopted the report with those amendments.

Regional groups applauded the meeting outcomes, with many celebrating the progress achieved in the diverse SOW reports and in the implementation of GPAs. Several commended the establishment of the ITWG-MIGR and Expert Team on BFA, hopeful that these will fill important gaps in the Commission's work.

Delegates heaped great accolades on Chair Deidré Januarie, the first female chair of the CGRFA in its 40-year history, and thanked the CGRFA Secretariat and Bureau for their effectiveness.

Chair Januarie closed the session at 6:26 pm.

A Brief Analysis of CGRFA 19

After decades of gradual progress, the specter of hunger is making a comeback on the global scene. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of people facing hunger has grown by more than 120 million. This is the disconcerting message of the FAO 2023 report on the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#). While the causes of the global food crisis are diverse, there is little hope of reversing recent trends and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without conserving, sustainably using, and sharing the benefits of biodiversity in the form of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA).

Against this backdrop, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture—which proudly wears the badge of the “only permanent intergovernmental body focused on conserving all types of biodiversity for food and agriculture”—convened its nineteenth session (CGRFA 19) with a clear mandate for ambitious action on GRFA. In addition to combatting global hunger (SDG 2), the CGRFA's work also contributes to SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 15 (life on land).

Indeed, the agenda for CGRFA 19 was ambitious, with various sectoral, cross-sectoral and procedural topics under discussion. The excitement arising from advances under the aegis of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), most notably the Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework (GBF) concluded in December 2022, spilled over into CGRFA 19. And there was another cause for celebration: the CGRFA's 40th anniversary.

This brief analysis reflects on the progress achieved by this international body and ponders its future path. Contemplating its achievements over the past forty years, one question ran through CGRFA 19 discussions like a golden thread: How to increase the visibility of the Commission's globally renowned scientific and technical guidance on biodiversity for food and agriculture, while assuming a more pronounced cross-cutting role in addressing the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution?

The Commission at Forty

The CGRFA was born in 1983 out of the growing recognition that no country is fully self-sufficient when it comes to agricultural resources. For example, the tomato, an essential ingredient of the Commission's host country Italy's cuisine, was only brought to Europe in the mid-1500s from Latin America by Spanish colonizers. Today, tomato species are estimated to have lost most of their genetic diversity. Indeed, the genetic selection for most commercial varieties of food species globally represents lower genetic diversity than vintage varieties of origin. This loss of genetic diversity greatly impacts agricultural production, increases vulnerability to climate change, pests, and diseases, and consequently leads to lower yields.

The Commission takes great pride in its pioneering work on biodiversity for food and agriculture and has a long list of accomplishments. Originally, the Commission's mandate exclusively covered plant genetic resources. With an integrated approach to (agro-)biodiversity coming more into focus during the early 1990s, the Commission's mandate was broadened in 1995.

Before CGRFA 19 kicked off in earnest, the Commission organized a high-level special event on 15 July 2023 to commemorate its fortieth anniversary. Presentations by FAO division heads provided a glimpse of how much the Commission's work has progressed across four sectoral workstreams: plant genetic resources (PGR), forest genetic resources (FGR), animal genetic resources (AnGR) and aquatic genetic resources (AqGR). For each of these sectors, the Commission has produced comprehensive State of the World (SOW) reports, drawn up detailed Global Plans of Action (GPAs), and reviewed their implementation at the country level.

At CGRFA 19, the Commission laid the groundwork for both the third SOW-PGR as well as the second SOW-FGR to be finalized and published in the next two years. It also took important steps towards the preparation of a third SOW-AnGR and reported on the implementation of the SOW-AqGR, including the establishment of a new global information system, AquaGRIS. The speed at which delegates raced through these items with little to no controversy speaks to the efficient set-up of the Commission's work in these areas and how GRFA issues are treated based on technical expertise, which builds trust among its members.

The fortieth anniversary is not only an opportunity to look back, however. It also prompted collective reflection on the CGRFA's future, in particular on its role in the larger scheme of multilateral environmental governance. Delegates debated two pathways that the Commission could chart going forward: expanding its sectoral portfolio and strengthening its cross-sectoral mandate.

Breaking New Ground

Microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources (MIGR) are an incredibly diverse field, spanning microbiomes relevant for ruminant digestion as much as different pollinator species. These (very) small

organisms are crucial to plant, forest, animal, and aquatic resources alike, and have therefore been on the Commission's agenda for a while. At CGRFA 19, there was a real push to formalize work on "biodiversity for food and agriculture that does not end up on a plate" by establishing a new intergovernmental technical working group (ITWG) on MIGR.

This push was not without its opponents, as some parties wondered whether the Commission is taking on more than it can handle. However, parties emphasized that an undeniable wealth of evidence has been presented in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services' Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production, and the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Doubts on the urgency to tackle the issue also dissipated as delegates listened to entomologists' presentations of reports commissioned on this topic. The reports revealed alarming evidence on biodiversity loss due to current agriculture practices such as use of pesticides and fertilizers, and monocultures. In addition, revelations on the known impacts to human health further hit home as delegates called for adapting sustainable agriculture to reverse these adverse impacts and, in turn, improve soil productivity.

Ensuing discussions saw unanimous recognition of MIGR's extreme relevance to the Commission's work, due to their ability to restore soil fertility by means of "bioremediation" and providing important nutrients. Several statements cast MIGR as a promising tool for sustainable agriculture to address the poor state of degraded, often overfertilized, soils around the globe.

Despite speckles of skepticism over the Commission's capacity, delegates ultimately applauded the agreement on the new ITWG. The ITWG-MIGR, as some noted, will have an exciting, but delicate task. MIGR touch upon many different agricultural subsystems from soils to pollination and encompass a wide array of different organisms from microbes to fungi. Exploring this new universe of genetic resources is a task riddled with scientific complexity and political intricacies alike. It will give the Commission another chance to prove itself and showcase what it does best: provide evidence-based information and guidance.

Connecting the Dots

Among all the relevant processes and agreements discussed during the week, one stood out: the GBF. The landmark agreement, adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in cold, snowy Montreal in December 2022, provided a crucial impetus to address GRFA by elevating the importance of biodiversity on the global stage. Indeed, Goal C of the GBF explicitly mentions the sharing of genetic resources, and a number of its targets connect to the CGRFA's work.

The GBF fell on fertile soil at the CGRFA. The Commission's efforts in championing an integrative approach to BFA culminated in the SOW-BFA report launched at CGRFA 17 and the corresponding Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (FA BFA) adopted in 2021.

At CGRFA 19, talk of "mutual supportiveness" and "synergies" between the FA BFA and the GBF, was omnipresent. A newly established *ad hoc* expert team was tasked with building on these synergies during the intersessional period.

Biodiversity was not the only cross-sectoral item on the CGRFA 19 agenda. Indeed, more than half of the agenda items as well as most discussions revolved around the CGRFA's connection to nutrition and health, climate change, access and benefit-sharing, and

digital sequence information (DSI). Although these issues all sit at the core of other processes within the UN's institutional landscape, they bear important connections to CGRFA topics, for instance, the conservation and sustainable use of crop varieties that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Not every member shared the Commission's growing interest in "connecting the dots," however. Although there was general agreement to increase the Commission's visibility and to explore intersections, delegates voiced concern about "mission creep" and warned of "duplication of efforts." These concerns did not shut down the Commission's future cross-sectoral work, although they caused delays on some key items. For instance, a planned review of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning was postponed from CGRFA 20 to CGRFA 21. Similarly, proposed research on the effects of countries' seed policies, laws and regulations stirred up controversy over alleged overlap with the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). While such issues could ultimately be resolved amicably, the boundaries of the CGRFA's mandate will likely continue to be contested.

Hub of Expertise

Looking ahead to the Commission's upcoming meetings, as well as those of related international processes, seasoned delegates commented that the CGRFA has positioned itself as an important technical body that addresses the breadth and depth of BFA. Many acknowledged that CGRFA meetings provide a positive and enabling environment for delegates to engage in substantive debates, including those that may have become politicized or come to a standstill in other fora. One participant could not help but note that the CBD or ITPGRFA could only dream of successfully concluding discussions on DSI in a half-day session.

Clearly, the CGRFA is not the main body where important decisions will be taken, and yet it has increasingly become a meeting that enables fruitful exchange among experts. This, as often noted, may be attributed to the nature of the Commission's mandate and conduct of its sessions. CGRFA has, over the years, established itself as a hub of knowledge and evidence-based guidance for members. At the same time, the sessions of the Commission are lauded for not only presenting outcomes of studies but for applying these towards building technical capacities among members. The Commission is a scientific and technical body that also serves as an incubator for important policy guidance. It is worth remembering that it also served as the birthplace for the development of an international legally binding instrument, the ITPGRFA.

Such exchange is also intended to inspire solutions that radiate out from the CGRFA to other related processes. The GBF met with fertile soil at the CGRFA. The Commission's efforts in championing an integrative approach to BFA culminated in the SOW-BFA report launched at CGRFA 17 and the corresponding Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (FA BFA) adopted in 2021.

In recalling the exceptional spirit of "cooperation and unity" in the room, delegates left the meeting with "smiles on their faces and homework in their bags," as one put it. At the closing plenary, there was little doubt that some delegates are already looking forward to returning to a much cooler Rome in March 2025 for CGRFA 20, to tackle the Commission's next milestones and continue the paths charted at CGRFA 19.

Upcoming Meetings

2023 UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment: This event will serve as the first global follow-up to the 2021 Food Systems Summit, where individuals and countries committed to accelerate and deepen the transformative power of food systems. **dates:** 24-26 July 2023 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** unfoodsystemshub.org/fs-stocktaking-moment

Tenth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-10): This event is set to approve the summary for policymakers of the thematic assessment of invasive alien species, among others. **dates:** 28 August - 2 September 2023 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** ipbes.net/events/ipbes-10-plenary

SDG Summit: The Summit is the quadrennial meeting of the HLPF under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. The 2023 Summit will be the second since the adoption of the SDGs and will take place at the midpoint of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **dates:** 18-19 September 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** hlpf.un.org/sdg-summit

Climate Ambition Summit: This event is being organized by the UN Secretary-General during the High-level week of the UN General Assembly. It is an opportunity for “First Movers and Doers” to report how they are responding to the Secretary-General’s call to accelerate climate action. **date:** 20 September 2023 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/climatechange/climate-ambition-summit

Twenty-fifth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity: This meeting will address the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as issues such as invasive alien species, sustainable wildlife management, and biodiversity and climate change. **dates:** 16-20 October 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-25

Twelfth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intersessional Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the CBD: This meeting will, among others, feature an in-depth dialogue on the role of languages in the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices, and take up the development of a new programme of work and institutional arrangements on Article 8(j). **dates:** 12-16 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings/WG8J-12

First meeting of the CBD’s Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources: This will be the first meeting of the Working Group that was established in 2022 with the aim to further develop the multilateral mechanism and formulate recommendations thereon for consideration at CBD COP 16. **dates:** 14-18 November 2023 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings/WGDSI-01

Tenth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA): This meeting will reflect on the implementation of the Treaty, among others with regard to the enhancement of its MLS and farmers’ rights. **dates:** 20-25 November 2023 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1618930

UNFCCC COP 28: The 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28), the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP

18), and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 5) will convene to complete the first global stocktake, among other matters. **dates:** 30 November – 12 December 2023 **location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates **www:** unfccc.int/cop28

Twenty-sixth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity: This meeting will address the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the broad array of issues on the SBSTTA agenda. **dates:** 13-17 May 2024 (TBC) **location:** TBC **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Second meeting of the CBD’s Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources: This will be the second meeting of the Working Group that was established in 2022 with the aim to further develop the multilateral mechanism and formulate recommendations thereon for consideration at CBD COP 16. **dates:** 20-23 May 2024 (TBC) **location:** TBC **www:** cbd.int/meetings

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 16): COP16 will convene in Türkiye, with the exact location to be confirmed. **dates:** 21 October - 1 November 2024 (TBC) **location:** Türkiye **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Twentieth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture: The next meeting of the CGRFA will convene to address policies on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) and to assess progress in the implementation of its Global Plans of Action. **dates:** 24-28 March 2025 **location:** Rome, Italy **www:** fao.org/cgrfa

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

ABS	Access and benefit-sharing
AnGR	Animal genetic resources
AqGR	Aquatic genetic resources
BFA	Biodiversity for food and agriculture
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CGRFA	Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
DAD-IS	Domestic Animal Diversity Information Service
DSI	Digital sequence information
FA BFA	Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGR	Forest genetic resources
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GPA	Global Plan of Action
GRFA	Genetic resources for food and agriculture
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
ITWG	Intergovernmental Technical Working Group
MIGR	Microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources
MYPOW	Multi-Year Programme of Work
NFP	National Focal Points
PGR	Plant genetic resources
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOW	State of the World Report