

## ITPGRFA GB 11 Highlights: Tuesday, 25 November 2025

Negotiations on the enhancement of the Treaty's Multilateral System (MLS) of access and benefit-sharing (ABS) continued in a contact group. Plenary met throughout the day and in the evening to address a range of items, including the Funding Strategy, farmers' rights, and the Global Information System (GLIS). Two evening contact groups focused on farmers' rights, and conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA).

### Plenary

**Funding Strategy:** The Secretariat presented the report of the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization ([IT/GB-11/25/10](#)) and the report on the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) ([IT/GB11/25/10/Inf.1](#)). Committee Co-Chair Yasmina El-Bahloul (Morocco) recalled that the annual income target range for the BSF remains bracketed. She expressed support for finding a target range that is realistic yet ambitious.

Delegates welcomed work to implement the [Food Processing Industry Engagement Strategy](#) and to strengthen synergies with other multilateral mechanisms. Spain, for the EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP (ERG), noted that only 2% of the contributions to the BSF are mandatory user-based. The US, for NORTH AMERICA, opposed setting an overall target for the BSF, while BRAZIL highlighted that establishing a range would encourage countries to make additional materials available to the MLS. URUGUAY supported a target range of USD 20-25 million.

Egypt, for NEAR EAST, called for capacity-building to develop national legislation and genebank infrastructure and management, and supported mobilizing additional resources and enhancing partnerships, including with the private sector. Togo, for AFRICA, called for diversifying financial sources, strengthening value chains and underutilized crops, and reinforcing technology transfer. On the general policy and criteria for specific assistance under the Funding Strategy, ECUADOR opposed the prioritization of countries with significant contribution of PGRFA to the MLS.

GB 11 Chair Alwin Kopše (Switzerland) emphasized the need for partnerships for resource mobilization and for enhanced flow of resources to the BSF. He said a revised draft will be prepared, while the target range for the BSF can be addressed as part of the MLS enhancement.

**Farmers' Rights:** The Secretariat presented: the report on the implementation of farmers' rights ([IT/GB-11/25/13](#)); the report of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG-FR) ([IT/GB-11/25/13.2](#)); the executive summary of the draft

assessment of the state of implementation of Article 9 ([IT/GB-11/25/13.3](#)); and the draft strategy on the [options](#) for encouraging, guiding, and promoting the realization of farmers' rights ([IT/GB-11/25/13.4](#)).

AHTEG-FR Co-Chair Kim Van Seeters (the Netherlands) provided an overview of the AHTEG-FR's work. AHTEG-FR Co-Chair Modester Kachapila-Millinyu (Malawi) highlighted discussions on the: relevance of new technologies, including digital sequence information/genetic sequence data (DSI/GSD); use of the terminology "Indigenous Peoples and local communities"; establishment of an international day of observance for farmers' rights; and future activities on capacity-building. She noted some experts' recommendation to reconvene the AHTEG-FR as a standing committee on farmers' rights.

The PHILIPPINES pointed to the recommendations from the second Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights, held in September 2025 in Manila ([IT/GB-11/25/13/Inf.1](#)), stressing that "protecting farmers' rights is not just a policy issue but an imperative duty." Speaking for ASIA, the Philippines supported continuing global initiatives that promote dialogue and foster collaboration toward implementation. Tonga, for SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, encouraged continued support to Pacific Small Island Developing States, including technical and financial assistance for implementation. Niger, for AFRICA, proposed developing an action plan to assist Parties in implementation and called for establishing measures to assess the success of farmers' rights implementation. Sudan, for NEAR EAST, called for raising awareness of the importance of PGRFA in conflict areas and for a benefit-sharing mechanism including benefits from DSI/GSD use.

Many supported designating an international day for the observance of farmers' rights. EGYPT highlighted the close connection between fair and equitable benefit-sharing and farmers' rights, and underscored the need to support national seed systems. CONGO proposed requesting Parties to institutionalize farmers' rights at the national level to facilitate their implementation. JAPAN highlighted the contribution of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) to farmers' rights by providing choice and improved varieties.

PERU emphasized the essential role of Indigenous Peoples in conservation, including through community seed banks and agrobiodiversity zones, and called for moving toward binding mechanisms ensuring farmers' rights. ITALY highlighted North-South cooperation as a way to fill gaps and share experiences. INDIA highlighted national efforts on protecting farmers and breeders.

Spain, for ERG, welcomed reconvening the AHTEG-FR for the next biennium. Ecuador, for GRULAC, with NEAR EAST and others, supported converting the AHTEG-FR into a standing committee. Canada, for NORTH AMERICA, opposed creating a standing committee, and requested that the terms of reference (ToRs) of the AHTEG-FR do not include drafting an outline of voluntary guidelines to support implementation and measures of success to assess implementation.

ECUADOR suggested implementing the activities foreseen in the strategy on the “options.” JAPAN and the UK opposed references to Category 10 of the “options” (legal measures for the implementation of farmers’ rights), noting, with PERU, they do not represent consensus. NORWAY cautioned against reopening discussions on Category 10, pointing to the agreed footnote and GB 9 [Resolution 7/2022](#).

GRULAC suggested using the “Indigenous Peoples and local communities” (IPLCs) terminology to harmonize with other UN processes. BRAZIL proposed considering the possible impacts of DSI/GSD on the realization of farmers’ rights. The UK cautioned against activities related to DSI/GSD, while GERMANY favored strengthening multilateral approaches rather than inviting Parties to develop national measures.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat reported on developments on the rights and contributions of IPLCs, including rights over traditional territories. Observer organizations supported a rights-based approach to implementation; ending the criminalization of seed exchanges and repatriating seeds to communities; and turning the AHTEG-FR into a standing committee. A contact group was established, co-chaired by Van Seeters and Kachapila-Millinyu.

**GLIS:** The Secretariat introduced the report on GLIS implementation ([IT/GB-11/25/11](#)). The United Arab Emirates, for NEAR EAST, drew attention to: considering scientific and technical issues related to DSI/GSD; defining its relationship with GLIS; and ensuring criteria to guarantee responsible use of the information. Nepal, for ASIA, noted that information through the MLS, including commercialization and benefit-sharing data, should be fully captured under GLIS. The US, for NORTH AMERICA, pointed out that GLIS should remain an information exchange tool and not be repurposed as a compliance mechanism or a DSI/GSD repository. Many called for capacity-building, technology transfer, and technical and financial support for data management, development of national inventories, and interoperability between those and GLIS.

PERU called for continuing expanding the GLIS to assess implementation of Treaty Articles 5 and 6 and supporting the drafting of national inventories. TUNISIA highlighted support for Parties in assigning digital object identifiers and strengthening national inventories of crop wild relatives. EGYPT called for a user-friendly platform that encourages wider participation from all regions. The BOTANIC GARDENS CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL drew attention to their platforms documenting millions of plant records. Chair Kopše said a revised draft resolution will be developed.

**Capacity Development Strategy and Draft Action Plan:** The Secretariat introduced the document ([IT/GB-11/25/6.1](#)). Czechia, for ERG, supported using a dedicated section under GLIS on capacity-development opportunities. Canada, for NORTH AMERICA, called for avoiding an overly-prescriptive approach.

Tuvalu, for the SOUTHWEST PACIFIC, urged strong alignment between global and regional strategies, encouraging further collaboration with relevant organizations. Uganda, for AFRICA, recognized the strategy’s holistic approach. Saudi Arabia, for NEAR EAST, called for reflecting national and regional priorities, and highlighted financing mechanisms, partnerships with international institutions, and regional cooperation.

PARAGUAY requested clarification on the informal expert group’s functioning and work methodology. The US opposed references to a “gender responsive approach,” the 2030 Agenda, and Sustainable Development Goals. ALGERIA underlined the importance of long-term coordinated approaches and raised concerns about gender considerations. The COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CGRFA) stressed support for smallholders by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs) and the INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY (IPC) called for references to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants.

**Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA:** The Secretariat introduced the document and the report of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA (ACSU) ([IT/GB-11/25/12](#) and [12.2](#)). ACSU Co-Chair Pesach Lubinsky (US) drew attention to the: revised version of the mechanism to identify the status of implementation and support to Parties; revised draft voluntary guidelines to overcome bottlenecks identified in a [background study](#); and establishment of an international advisory committee on global crop conservation strategies.

Many expressed their support for the draft voluntary guidelines and the revised version of the mechanism. PAPUA NEW GUINEA, and ALGERIA called for developing practical and flexible guidelines, and BRAZIL stressed the need for concrete outcomes, avoiding duplication of work.

Qatar, for NEAR EAST, the Philippines, for ASIA, and others supported reconvening the ACSU for the next biennium. Spain, for ERG, favored establishing a scientific advisory committee, with a composition similar to the one on GLIS.

Costa Rica, for GRULAC, and Rwanda, for AFRICA, supported adopting the ACSU as a standing committee. URUGUAY called for further discussions to establish a long-term plan of action, developing ACSU’s ToRs accordingly. CGIAR called for a prioritization exercise to identify key work areas.

AFRICA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA and CGIAR supported establishment and funding of an international technical advisory committee on global crop conservation strategies. Many called for continued capacity-building, financial support, and technology transfer to strengthen both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation systems.

IPC called for national legal measures and political will to overcome challenges. CSOs urged measures to improve the sustainable use of PGRFA. A contact group was established.

**Compliance:** Co-Chair Priya Bhanu (US) presented the report of the Compliance Committee ([IT/GB-11/25/14](#)). Tunisia, for AFRICA, Indonesia, for ASIA, and Spain, for ERG, regretted that the 80% submission target has not been reached, with ASIA urging identifying and addressing the underlying reasons

for underreporting. BRAZIL cautioned against evolving the mechanism to a punitive or compliance-oriented one.

**FAO Contribution:** Kaveh Zahedi, FAO, presented the FAO report ([IT/GB-11/25/15](#)). Delegates welcomed FAO's continued financial and administrative support to the Treaty. ECUADOR urged seeking synergies between the BSF and other financial resources. BRAZIL cautioned against using language in the draft resolution that could suggest equivalence between the BSF and voluntary mechanisms.

Egypt, for NEAR EAST, called for developing regional partnerships between research centers and genebanks. Chair Kopše noted that a revised draft resolution will be developed.

**Cooperation with the CGRFA:** The Secretariat introduced the relevant document ([IT/GB-11/25/16.1](#)). Dan Leskien, CGRFA, presented the report of the CGRFA Secretariat ([IT/GB-11/25/16.1/Inf.1](#)), focusing on collaboration on the implementation and review of the [Second Global Plan of Action for PGRFA](#) and the [Third Report on the State of the World's PGRFA](#). Czechia, for the ERG, and Libya, for NEAR EAST, welcomed strengthened collaboration. Burkina Faso, for AFRICA, encouraged continued joint work to strengthen the capacities of respective national focal points and harmonize data collection. Canada, for NORTH AMERICA, stressed that collaboration must continue to be efficient and avoid duplication of efforts. JAPAN reaffirmed that the Treaty shall not be interpreted as implying a change in the rights and obligations of Parties under other Agreements, including instruments on intellectual property rights. A revised draft resolution will be prepared.

**Cooperation with the Crop Trust:** The Secretariat presented the draft resolution to provide policy guidance to the Global Crop Diversity Trust ([IT/GB-11/25/16.2](#)) and the report on the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk ([IT/GB-11/25/9.1.3](#)). CROP TRUST presented its report ([IT/GB-11/25/16.2.2](#)). Delegates highlighted activities supported by the Crop Trust and recommended further cooperation. A revised draft resolution will be prepared.

**Cooperation with the CBD:** The Secretariat, presented the document ([IT/GB-11/25/16.3](#)), including a draft resolution, and Kathryn Garforth, CBD, presented their report ([IT/GB-11/25/16.3/Inf.1](#)). Italy, for the ERG, welcomed CBD Decision 16/2 (DSI on genetic resources), noting that it does not affect the rights and obligations of the Parties to the Treaty. Zambia, for AFRICA, called for strengthening collaboration between the respective focal points, and with JAPAN, suggested avoiding duplication between implementation of the multilateral mechanism and its Cali Fund, and the MLS, and its BSF.

CANADA invited Parties to take note of the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2020-2030. Iraq, for NEAR EAST, called for synergies on empowering relevant national and regional institutions. BRAZIL called for coherence and mutual supportiveness on DSI/GSD and the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Observer organizations emphasized the need for: a study on the impact of CBD Decision 16/2; reiterating that CBD Decision 15/9 (DSI on genetic resources) recognizes that other fora may develop specialized approaches for benefit-sharing from DSI use; and taking into account "all rights over genetic resources." A revised draft resolution will be developed for further consideration.

## **Contact Groups**

**Enhancement of the MLS:** In the morning, the group addressed the comments of the Standing Group of Legal Experts (SGLE), separating editorial amendments from those related to, or contingent upon, decisions on policy issues. In the afternoon, delegates engaged in an open discussion in the three "hotspots": expansion of the list of crops in Annex I (list of crops in the MLS), DSI/GSD, and the payment structure. Many developing countries expressed discomfort with expanding the MLS to "all PGRFA," citing national sovereignty and opting for voluntary contributions through positive lists of species. Some Parties suggested using exemption lists and adding safeguards to alleviate concerns around national sovereignty.

While acknowledging the expectations for benefit-sharing from DSI/GSD use, many developed countries opposed addressing it in the draft revised standard material transfer agreement (SMTA) due to the lack of a definition. Others stressed that excluding DSI/GSD from the SMTA will hinder traceability and create uncertainty around the use of materials in the MLS.

On the payment structure, developing countries supported a subscription-only system, to minimize complexity and bring a predictable flow of income. Many developed countries supported maintaining a single-access option, citing legal arguments and the need to attract a diversity of users. Others pointed to loopholes created as a result of single access.

**Farmers' Rights:** The group discussed the elements of a package for future work, including ToRs and the continuation of the AHTEG-FR or its transformation to a standing committee, and development of an action plan to address the needs and gaps indicated in the draft assessment of the state of implementation of Article 9.

**Conservation and Sustainable Use:** The contact group met in the evening to discuss the development of a package for future work, ToRs for reconvening the ACSU, and the draft resolution.

## **In The Corridors**

Urgency seems to come at the expense of inclusivity, some participants noted, referring to the negotiations on the enhancement of the MLS. While the deadline for agreement is approaching fast, positions remain divided. Pointing to the lack of translation of critical documents and the limited time allowed for stakeholder input, some wondered whether the process helps build the trust required for reaching consensus. "This is the culmination of a long and inclusive process," a delegate said, adding that "we all know each other's positions and red lines by now." The way and tools to bridge the gaps are less obvious though, with some suggesting a frank discussion on the "truly inflexible red lines" and others opining that the key is to address the underlying causes of the entrenchment: the different visions on the future of the Treaty and the deep inequalities among its Parties.

Later in the day, while delegates engaged positively during discussions on the expansion of Annex I, deliberations on DSI/GSD showed little progress, with the same entrenched positions that led to the collapse of the negotiations in 2019, resurfacing.

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