



SUMMARY OF THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL ROUND TABLE ON THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: 21 JUNE 2012

The Second High-Level Round Table on the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGR) took place at the Rio Centro, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 21 June 2012 during the Rio+20 Summit. The event was co-organized by Brazil and Italy, under the patronship of the High-level Task Force of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the ITPGR. The Round Table aimed to help to join efforts for a coherent and synergic implementation of the International Treaty.

As part of the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020, the event fostered discussions among ITPGR parties, stakeholders and experts on pressing issues regarding the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The discussion in particular focused on: the interaction between economy, biodiversity and food security; the ITPGR innovative mechanisms such as the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and its Benefit-sharing Fund; and the potential monetary and non-monetary benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Meeting participants agreed to adopt as recommendations of the Round Table a six-point action plan for the ITPGR.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITPGRFA

Concluded under the auspices of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the ITPGR is a legally binding instrument that targets the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and equitable benefit-sharing, in harmony with the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for sustainable agriculture and food security. The Treaty contains sections on general provisions, farmers' rights, supporting components, and financial and institutional provisions. It establishes an Multilateral System for facilitated access to a specified list of PGRFA including 35 crop genera and 29 forage species (Annex I), balanced by benefit-sharing in the areas of information exchange, technology transfer, capacity building and commercial development. The Treaty entered into force on 29 June 2004, and currently has 127 parties.

NEGOTIATION PROCESS: The Treaty's negotiations were based on the revision of the non-binding International Undertaking on PGRFA (IU). The IU was originally based on the principle that PGRFA should be "preserved ... and freely available for use" as part of the common heritage of mankind. This was subsequently subjected to "the sovereignty of States over their plant genetic resources," according to FAO Resolution 3/91. In April 1993, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) decided that the IU should be revised to be in harmony with the CBD. The negotiations spanned seven years. .

ITPGR INTERIM COMMITTEE: The CGRFA, acting as the ITPGR Interim Committee, held two meetings (October 2002 and November 2004, Rome, Italy), where it adopted its rules of procedure, and set TORs for intersessional consideration of the rules of procedure and financial rules for the Governing Body, procedures for compliance, and the terms of the standard material transfer agreement (SMTA).

An open-ended intersessional working group (December 2005, Rome, Italy) revised the rules of procedure and financial rules of the Governing Body, the funding strategy and procedures for compliance, and prepared a draft resolution on compliance for consideration by the first meeting of the Governing Body. An expert group on the SMTA (October 2004, Brussels, Belgium) considered options for the SMTA terms and draft structure, and recommended establishment of an intersessional contact group to draft its elements.

This contact group held two meetings, which ended with agreement on a draft SMTA but left a number of issues unresolved, including: the Third Party Beneficiary's rights; the definitions of "product" and "sales," and the formula for benefit-sharing; obligations of the recipient in the case of subsequent transfers of material; dispute settlement; and applicable law. Contact group Chair Eng Siang Lim (Malaysia) established an intersessional Friends of the Chair group to resolve pending issues prior to the first session of the Governing Body.

ITPGR GB 1: The first session of the ITPGR Governing Body (June 2006, Madrid, Spain) adopted the SMTA and the Funding Strategy. The SMTA includes provisions on a fixed percentage of 1.1% that a recipient shall pay when a product is commercialized but not available without restriction to others for further research and breeding; and 0.5% for an alternative payments scheme. The Governing Body further adopted: its rules of procedure, including decision making by consensus; financial rules with bracketed options on an indicative scale of voluntary contributions or voluntary contributions in general; a resolution establishing a Compliance Committee; the relationship agreement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust; and a model agreement with the IARCs of the CGIAR and other international institutions.

ITPGR GB 2: The second session of the Governing Body (October-November 2007, Rome, Italy) addressed a series of items, including implementation of the Funding Strategy, the MTA for non-Annex I crops, cooperation with the CGRFA, and sustainable use of PGRFA. Following challenging budget negotiations, the meeting adopted the work programme and budget for 2008-09. It also adopted a resolution on farmers' rights, as well as a joint statement of intent for cooperation with the CGRFA.

ITPGR GB 3: The third session of the Governing Body (June 2009, Tunis, Tunisia) agreed to: a set of outcomes for implementation of the Funding Strategy, including a financial target of US\$116 million for the period July 2009 - December 2014; a resolution on implementation of the MLS, including setting up an intersessional advisory committee

on implementation issues; procedures for the Third Party Beneficiary; and a resolution on farmers' rights. The meeting also adopted the work programme and budget for 2010-11; agreed to finalize the outstanding financial rules at GB 4; and established intersessional processes to finalize compliance procedures by GB 4 and review the SMTA.

HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON THE ITPGR: Hosted by the Government of Italy with the support of the ITPGR Secretariat under the title "Leading the Field," the High-level Roundtable on the ITPGR (7 December 2010, Rome, Italy) focused on the role of the ITPGR in addressing food security in a time of climate change. Speakers emphasized: the need to continue exchanging and using PGRFA to achieve food security, particularly in the climate change context; the Treaty's role in that regard; that all parties should make their relevant PGRFA available through the MLS; that the Treaty's benefit-sharing fund should be used to assist small-scale farmers to adapt to climate change; and that investing in the Treaty should continue and the Treaty's Core Administrative Budget should be funded adequately.

CONFERENCE ON FARMERS' RIGHTS: The Global Consultation Conference on Farmers' Rights (23-25 November 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) focused on: rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seeds; protection of traditional knowledge; benefit-sharing; and participation in decision making. The meeting provided an overview of national measures affecting the realization of farmers' rights, achievements and success stories, farmers' views on required measures, major obstacles and options, gaps and needs, as well as recommendations to the Governing Body.

BALI MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: Convened on 11 March 2011, this ministerial conference adopted the Bali Ministerial Declaration on the ITPGR, in which participants: engage themselves to further enhancing Treaty implementation to help meet the challenges of agricultural biodiversity erosion, food insecurity, extreme poverty and the effects of climate change; and call upon parties and relevant stakeholders to prioritize activities relevant to the MLS, SMTA, sustainable use of PGRFA, and farmers' rights, and to mobilize more effective and timely contributions to the implementation of the Funding Strategy, including its benefit-sharing fund.

ITPGR GB 4: The fourth session of the ITPGR Governing Body (14-18 March 2011, Bali, Indonesia) adopted nine resolutions, including on procedures and mechanisms on compliance, the financial rules of the Governing Body, a work programme and budget for the 2012-2013 biennium, farmers' rights, sustainable use and implementation of the Funding Strategy.

MEETING REPORT

Maurizio Antonio Lopes, Executive Director of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, chaired the roundtable. Bård Vegard Solhjell, Minister of Environment of Norway, emphasized: the complementarity between the ITPGR, the CBD and its Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS); the importance of the continued improvement of crop varieties for climate change adaptation; participatory plant breeding; and the contribution of traditional seed supply systems of indigenous and local communities to food security and the conservation of biodiversity. He called for partnerships between farmers, industry and governments in building the capacity of developing countries.

Erikson Camargo Chandoha, Secretary of Agricultural Development and Cooperativism, Ministry of Agriculture of Brazil, pointed to sustainable agricultural production and development and food security as pillars of the green economy.

José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General, recalled FAO's three key messages to Rio+20: the Rio vision of sustainable development cannot be achieved unless hunger and malnutrition are eradicated; the Rio vision requires that both food consumption and production systems "achieve more with less"; and the transition to a sustainable future requires fundamental changes in the governance of food and agriculture and an equitable sharing of the transition costs and benefits.

He welcomed the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol and the important role the ITPGR plays in it. He underscored the importance of farmers' rights, their traditional knowledge, their access to genetic resources, and their active participation in benefit-sharing and national decision-making about plant genetic resources. He also stressed the need for increased participation of farmers, civil society and the private sector in debates on food security. He further highlighted the reference in the draft Rio+20 outcome document to the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

Yannick Glemarec, UN Development Programme (UNDP), reported on UNDP's work on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in productive systems, notably agricultural systems and on increasing demands for support of the conservation of plant genetic resources and on agricultural biodiversity in increasing resilience to the negative impacts of climate change.

Javad Mozafari, ITPGR Governing Body Chair, underscored the importance of a comprehensive vision for plant genetic resources, of countries' interdependence in the conservation and use of these resources, and the global-to-local integrated approach for their effective conservation and sustainable use. He pointed to the role of the ITPGR in relation to information exchange and technology transfer, public-private partnerships, intellectual property rights and farmers' rights, compliance and capacity-building, innovative technology, and traditional knowledge. He also reported on the ITPGR side-event on public-private partnership for the implementation of the Treaty held on 20 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro and the resulting six-action plan for the ITPGR.

Braulio de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary, stated that the agriculture community is one of the major users of biodiversity and that on-farm conservation should receive more support. He then announced a new cooperation initiative between the CBD Secretariat and the ITPGR Secretariat to promote the complementarity between the Nagoya Protocol and the Treaty, noting the opportunity for the implementation of the Protocol to benefit from the experience of the ITPGR and the need to provide a clear indication to the agricultural community that the two instruments are complementary.

Dias and Shakeel Bhatti, ITPGR Secretary, signed a document on the Joint Initiative between the Treaty and the CBD.

Dacian Cioloş, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, emphasized: the added value of crop diversity in addressing climate change; other environmental challenges and food security; and the need to translate this value into a competitive edge in the agricultural sector, by promoting

the use of plant genetic resources, not only their conservation. He announced that the EU is in the process of doubling its budget for research and innovation in agriculture.

Hans-Jürgen Beerfeltz, Vice-Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, reported on: continued investment in national rural development; agricultural development and food security; work towards the elimination of agricultural subsidies; and the adoption of an action programme for rural development and food security for 2012-2014, which includes an agenda to tackle corruption and land grabbing and an initiative to stop land degradation globally.

Roberto Cavalcanti, Secretary for Biodiversity and Forestry at the Ministry of Environment of Brazil, stated that the conservation of genetic resources is a duty for every country. Participants then watched a video message on food security, poverty eradication and sustainable development by John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor, former President of the Republic of Ghana and former Chairman of the African Union, who encouraged all countries to support the realization of the purpose of the Treaty.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Director of UNEP Environmental Policy Implementation Division, expressed satisfaction for the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol, noting that no agreement can be implemented in isolation. He also reported on UNEP's work on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. He then exchanged with Bhatti the documents for a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Treaty and UNEP.

Sándor Fazekas, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of Hungary, underscored: the fundamental role of FAO in strengthening international cooperation on plant genetic resources; the importance of the genetic diversity in cultivated lands and of wild species; and cooperation with all stakeholders at the national level towards achieving international objectives.

Emile Frison, Director-General of Bioversity International, emphasized: the role of agricultural development and sustainable agriculture in addressing climate change, poverty and malnutrition; the contribution of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research to the distribution of genetic material and the generation and sharing of benefits; and the need for countries to adopt measures implementing the ITPGR. Participants then watched a video message by Francis Gurry, Secretary-General of the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties and Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, who underscored the important role of innovation in plant breeding and facilitated access to plant genetic resources to improve productivity, and pointed to a joint research project on the economics of the Multilateral System carried out with the ITPGR Secretariat.

Emilia Harahap, Assistant Minister for the Environment of Indonesia, announced her government's intention to host a conference on biodiversity, climate change and food security in 2013 as a follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on biodiversity, food security and climate change held in Bali, Indonesia, on 11 March 2011. Harahap also publicized a back-to-back a high-level consultation on completing the governance of all PGRFA under the Treaty and ensuring the ITPGR implementation to its full potential. Participants then witnessed the signing ceremony of a German contribution to the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Treaty by Clemens Neumann, Ministerial Director, Department for Bio-based Economy, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of Germany.

On the six-point action plan for the ITPGR, Pat Mooney, ETC Group, welcomed proposals on: the platform for the co-development and transfer of technologies as part of non-monetary benefit-sharing of the Treaty, emphasizing the need to include technology assessments as part of technology transfer; a public-private partnership for pre-breeding; and a new keystone-type dialogue to complete the governance of all PGRFA under the Treaty.

FAO Director-General Graziano da Silva emphasized the expansion of the list of the crops included in Annex I of the Treaty. Chair Lopes suggested, and participants agreed, that the six-point action plan be the main recommendation of the Second High-level Round Table. Chair Lopes drew the meeting to a close at 1:07 pm.

Outcome: The Rio Six-point Action Plan for the ITPGR highlights a list of action items, including to:

- establish a platform for the co-development and transfer of technologies as part of non-monetary benefit-sharing of the Treaty;
- promote a public-private partnership for pre-breeding;
- facilitate a new keystone-type dialogue to complete the governance of all PGRFA under the Treaty, as part of the international regime on ABS, including all the relevant stakeholders;
- raise awareness of the actual and potential value of underutilized species of local and regional importance for food security and sustainable development;
- sensitize policy-makers and other key stakeholders about the importance of the full implementation of the Treaty, not only for food and agriculture but also for food security, nutrition and the resilience of agriculture systems, particularly in the context of the climate change; and
- explore the possible expansion the list of the crops included in Annex I of the Treaty.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Nagoya Protocol IC 2: The second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS will address, *inter alia*, compliance procedures and mechanism, and the need for a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism. **dates:** 2-6 July 2012 **location:** Delhi, India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/>

CBD COP 11: The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is will address, *inter alia*, the status of the Nagoya Protocol, biodiversity and climate change, implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. **dates:** 8-19 October 2012 **location:** India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/>

ITPGR GB 5: The fifth session of the Governing Body of the ITPGR is expected to be held in 2013. **dates:** to be determined **location:** to be determined **contact:** ITPGR Secretariat **phone:** +39-06-570-53441 **fax:** +39-06-570-56347 **email:** pgrfa-treaty@fao.org **www:** <http://www.itpgrfa.net/>