

## HLPF 2022

### Theme: Building back better from the COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

#### International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

##### Background information

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) promotes and facilitates the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use for sustainable agriculture and food security, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is a legally binding international agreement that deals with the management of PGRFA. Conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA are essential to achieving sustainable agriculture and food security, for present and future generations, indispensable for crop genetic improvement to adapting to unpredictable environmental changes and human needs. Because countries are interdependent in their reliance on PGRFA and the management of PGRFA is at the meeting point between agriculture, the environment and commerce, the ITPGRFA has established a multilateral system that facilitates continuous exchange of PGRFA (Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing).

The implementation of the ITPGRFA contributes in particular to SDG Targets 2.5 and 15.6 relating to conservation, access and benefit-sharing of plant genetic resources.

- (a) Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships) from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs;**

Relevant in particular to the implementation of SDGs 15 (Life on land) and 17 (Partnerships), the ITPGRFA, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), and the Global Crop Diversity Trust (GCDDT) co-organized the *International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* in March 2021. The Symposium brought together technical experts and stakeholders on in situ conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA and provided an open-ended forum for the exchange of information and experiences to strengthen and support on-going efforts with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity.

The Panel addressed the main technical and scientific challenges in promoting in situ conservation and use of crop wild relatives and wild food plants and on-farm conservation and use; how these can be addressed; and how global communities of practice could address these challenges over the coming

decades. Overall, the desirability of multi stakeholder collaboration with iterative planning and building on existing initiatives was emphasized.

ITPGRFA and GCDT also worked together on a number of joint outreach and resource mobilization initiatives to support conservation of PGRFA, including in relation to emergencies suffered by genebanks and bringing the finance sector and food processing industries as innovative funding. The partnership between the two institutions was also advanced on scientific and technical matters, including strengthening capacity-building for genebank staff and other experts to enhance conservation and availability of PGRFA. In addition, two international panels of experts were co-organized to discuss matters of emerging importance to the management of PGRFA; one on the Fruit and Vegetable Genetic Diversity (February 2021), and another on Cryopreservation (June 2021).

Meanwhile, the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the ITPGRFA has continued facilitating the transfer of more than 6 million PGRFA around the world for research and breeding for sustainable agriculture.

**(b) Assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “leaving no one behind” against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body;**

ITPGRFA continued the operation of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) to support farmers, in particular smallholder farmers, for in situ and on-farm management. The current project cycle has been funding 20 projects executed in 29 developing countries.

Also recognizing the important role played by women in conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, gender inclusion is a key focus in the current project cycle (SDG 5). BSF emphasizes the role of women as the major custodians of agrobiodiversity and specifically encouraged their involvement in project implementation. It targets 30-70% women’s participation and women’s leadership, ensuring that women’s crop breeding objectives and trait preferences are specifically addressed, and (ii) training in gender awareness and gender sensitive courses, such as household plans for economic stability to address women’s aspirations and leadership.

ITPGRFA has also published the *Inventory of national measures that may be adopted, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers’ Rights*. Through the Inventory, Contracting Parties and interested stakeholders share the experiences gained so far with, and lessons learned from, the realization of Farmers’ Rights.

**(c) Actions and policy recommendations in areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the implementation of the SDGs under review;**

To ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, and promote appropriate access to genetic resources (Target 15.6), the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of ITPGRFA needs to be enhanced to further facilitate the exchange of PGRFA. Contracting Parties and stakeholders are encouraged to conclude their discussions and agree on the way to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System as soon as possible, so that further progress

would be made to achieve Target 15.6 by 2030. Trust building would be a key to advance the discussion, with common understanding and willingness to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food security through facilitated exchange of PGRFA.

To promote effective partnerships between relevant stakeholders (Goal 17), ITPGRFA has various mechanisms, providing a neutral forum for policy dialogue among various stakeholder groups, such as farmers association, research institutions and the private sector, creating a platform for information and experience sharing for collective learning and promoting cooperation and collaboration. Benefit-sharing Fund plays a catalytic role for partnerships for innovation and capacity-building for improved management of PGRFA. Stakeholders in the ITPGRFA community are encouraged to use these mechanisms to work together in an innovative and cooperative manner to advance conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

**(d) Policy recommendations, commitments and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda;**

Encourage governments to mainstream implementation of the ITPGRFA into their national agriculture policies, development strategies and programmes related to the 2030 Agenda, including measures to promote Farmers' Rights and continuous exchange of PGRFA through access and benefit-sharing system. Conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA are essential to achieving sustainable agriculture and food security, adapting crops to unpredictable environmental changes and human needs.

The implementation, especially the operation of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing, requires cooperation and collaboration among different stakeholders and across sectors.

**(e) Key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 HLPF**

Safeguarding and sustainably using plant genetic diversity, to ensure food security and nutrition and support smallholder farmers' livelihoods.