



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture**

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Lima, Peru, 24–29 November 2025

Report of the Secretary

Executive Summary

This document contains the Report of the Secretary of the International Treaty to the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body on technical, administrative, and financial activities under his mandate and on other activities delegated by the Governing Body at the past sessions. It provides a summary of some of the relevant intersessional processes, mechanisms, and activities that the Secretary oversaw since the Tenth Session of the Governing Body, as well as policy and operational developments of relevance to the preparation of the Eleventh Session.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to take note of the Report and provide any guidance it considers appropriate on the range of relevant issues raised in this document, including especially with regard to the draft Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty and the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report summarizes the intersessional processes, mechanisms, and activities overseen by the Secretary since the Tenth Session of the Governing Body. It includes updates on membership, inter-sessional meetings and processes, communication, capacity development, and financial matters, and presents information on other activities undertaken at the request of the Bureau and the Governing Body.

II. MEMBERSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

2. Since the Tenth Session, the membership campaign to the International Treaty continued to advance, with four new contracting Parties joining and others progressing in their ratification processes.

3. The Kingdom of Bahrain acceded to the Treaty on 29 July 2024, becoming the 152nd Contracting Party. The Republic of Colombia deposited its instrument of ratification on 23 October 2024, becoming the 153rd Contracting Party. South Africa deposited its instrument of accession with the Director-General of FAO on 23 December 2024, making it the 154th Contracting Party. Barbados most recently became the 155th Contracting Party, as the Treaty entered into force for it on 20 October 2025.

4. Each membership marks an important milestone for the Treaty and, overall, reflects the successful engagement and support provided by the Secretariat. The process in each country was also supported by relevant ministries, stakeholders, relevant FAO Country or Regional Offices and, in some cases, partners such as the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

5. The Secretary continues to support membership campaigns in all regions, in collaboration with the relevant FAO Country or Regional Offices. For instance, in collaboration with the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), the Secretariat is organizing a workshop that will target countries from Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans in early November 2025. The workshop aims to raise awareness about the Treaty, its objectives, benefits, and accession process, and to strengthen capacities for implementation and regional cooperation.

6. On the occasion of the 2025 FAO Conference, the Secretary joined the FAO Legal Office, which organize a dedicated event to promote the ratification and membership of Agreements adopted under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, including the International Treaty. The session celebrated new members and provided a platform for sharing experiences, clarifying legal and administrative steps for ratification, and highlighting each Agreement's role in supporting FAO's work, especially related to national food security and agricultural biodiversity.

III. UPDATE ON INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS, MAJOR PROCESSES AND OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

7. Since the Tenth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary served several intersessional meetings and related processes:

- The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System has been particularly active, holding four meetings to advance negotiations on access and benefit-sharing. It convened in Rome, Italy, for its Eleventh (16-18 April 2024), Twelfth (16-19 September 2024), and Thirteenth (1-4 April 2025) meetings, and in Lima, Peru, for its Fourteenth meeting (7-11 July 2025).
- The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG-FR) undertook its important work on discussing the implementation of Farmers' Rights in two meetings. The Fifth meeting was held from 24 to 26 June 2024, followed by the Sixth meeting from 23 to 26 June 2025.
- The standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (SFC) held three meetings. Its Ninth meeting was held virtually on 27 June 2024, with its Tenth (19-22 November 2024) and Eleventh (10-13 June 2025) meetings held in-person meetings, in Rome.
- The Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use (ACSU) met twice to continue its work. The Ninth meeting was held virtually from 1 to 3 October 2024, and the Tenth meeting took place from 8 to 11 September 2025 in Doha, Qatar.

- The Sixth meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC) was held in Rome from 19 to 20 March 2025 to prepare its report to the Governing Body on compliance with the Treaty’s provisions.
- The Sixth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System of Article 17 (SAC- GLIS) was held in a hybrid format in Rome from 7 to 8 May 2025 to provide scientific and technical advice on the Global Information System.
- The Second Global Symposium on Farmers’ Rights, hosted by the Government of the Philippines, was a major event that took place in Manila, the Philippines, from 16 to 19 September 2025.

8. Since the Tenth Session in 2023, the Secretary continued to support activities to facilitate the exchange of information and improve the interrelations between the various subsidiary bodies and processes. The reports from all the intersessional bodies are available to the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body.

IV. UPDATE ON OTHER ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY

9. This section highlights some of the major milestones and notable issues in the implementation of the Work Programme adopted by the Tenth Session of the Governing Body and the documentation that has been produced with more detailed information.¹

The Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF)

10. During the 2024–2025 biennium, the Secretariat made significant progress in implementing the Funding Strategy and the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF), in accordance with the Work Programme adopted by the Governing Body. The Funding Committee actively guided the execution of the Funding Strategy, updating its Operational Plan and supporting the rollout of the Food Processing Industry Engagement Strategy, which had been endorsed at the Tenth Session of the Governing Body. The Committee also initiated preparations for a light review of the Funding Strategy and began drafting policy criteria for specific assistance under Article 13.4 of the Treaty.

11. Efforts to mobilize resources were intensified, with the Secretariat and Committee engaging new donors and strengthening partnerships, including with the food processing industry. Voluntary contributions from countries supported the implementation of the Work Programme and the process for the enhancement of the Multilateral System. The Secretariat also advanced the development of monitoring and review tools, including those aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and continued work on a methodology for monitoring non-monetary benefit-sharing.

12. In terms of BSF operations, the Secretariat completed the contracting process for the 28 projects approved under fifth cycle (BSF-5), with 80 percent of agreements signed by late 2024. This portfolio, representing an investment of over USD 11 million, includes projects from all regions and introduces a new funding modality for second-phase projects aimed at building on strategic achievements in PGRFA. Preparatory work and a fundraising campaign for the sixth cycle of the BSF were launched, with approximately USD 3 million available in the BSF accounts as of June 2025.

13. The Secretariat also advanced on the independent evaluation of the fourth cycle of the BSF (BSF-4) in line with the Operations Manual and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework, and promoted knowledge exchange and learning among BSF projects. In addition, it supported the integration of PGRFA into national priorities and policies, leveraging opportunities arising from the adoption of the GBF and collaborating with initiatives such as the UNDP Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN). Analyses of national-level financial flows to PGRFA were completed and scaled out, with tools and best practices compiled to support replication and integration into national development plans.

14. To enhance outreach and visibility, the Secretariat developed communication tools and platforms aimed at supporting resource mobilization and engaging users of the Multilateral System, new donors, and stakeholders.

¹ [IT/GB-11/25/18.2](#), *Implementation Report of the Work Programme for the 2024–2025 Biennium*.

15. Highlights and main results from the BSF portfolio implementation are available in the document, IT/GB-11/25/10/Inf.1, *Benefit-sharing Fund: 2024–2025 Report*.

Implementation and operations of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing

16. The Secretary continued to support the regular operations and activities of the Multilateral System (MLS). As of 1 August 2025, the MLS Data Store recorded 116 763 Standard Material Transfer Agreements (SMTAs), facilitating the transfer of over 7 million accessions of PGRFA. These transfers involved more than 23 885 distinct recipients across 189 countries, including both Contracting and non-Contracting Parties. The Easy-SMTA tool registered 28 661 users, reflecting its continued relevance and accessibility for users worldwide.

17. The Secretariat continued to assist users transferring material through the MLS helpdesk and has updated the list of frequently asked questions to reflect evolving user needs. In collaboration with the FAO E-learning Academy, the Secretariat translated the online course on the Multilateral System into French and Spanish to broaden access to a wider range of audiences and to enhance user understanding and capacity. Furthermore, in close partnership with the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, the Secretary supported Contracting Parties and relevant stakeholders through targeted workshops and technical assistance, aimed at strengthening national implementation of the MLS.²

Emergency Support to Germplasm Collections at Risk

18. Since the Tenth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary has provided targeted support to germplasm collections at risk through the Emergency Reserve for Genebanks, established in partnership with the Global Crop Diversity Trust. This mechanism has enabled rapid response to imminent threats, including natural disasters, conflict, equipment failure, and other emergencies affecting ex situ collections of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

19. Direct interventions have taken place in several countries. In Ukraine, the Emergency Reserve supported the complex relocation and safeguarding of the national seed collection from Kharkiv to western Ukraine, ensuring the continued conservation of globally significant crop diversity. In Yemen, urgent funding was provided to replace solar batteries and maintain cold storage for the national genebank, addressing risks from power cuts and ongoing conflict. Sudan benefited from funding for a solar power system and safety duplication efforts for its national genebank, protecting over 17 000 samples. In the Philippines, support was provided for the procurement of a power generator, automatic transfer switch, and freezers to maintain the viability of the national genebank's plant genetic resources. The national genebank in Lao People's Democratic Republic also received assistance to preserve its unique plant genetic resources amid infrastructure challenges. In Lebanon, emergency support was processed for the olive field genebank, aiming to establish a safety duplicate and bring the collection under the Multilateral System. Additionally, in Costa Rica, the Reserve supported the rescue of cocoa accessions at CATIE, a regional center of excellence.

20. Looking ahead, interventions are in the pipeline for Guatemala and Vietnam, where preparations are underway to address urgent needs in their national genebank systems. Continued technical and policy support is also being provided for Ukraine's long-term strategy and reintegration into international networks.

21. The Secretary continues to encourage applications from eligible countries and institutions, and remains committed to transparent reporting and the documentation of success stories. As new interventions are approved, the names of additional countries receiving direct support will be highlighted in future reports to the Governing Body.

V. UPDATES ON CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS

Capacity Development Strategy

22. Since the last Session of the Governing Body, the Secretary has worked under the guidance of the Bureau, to finalize the draft Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty. It has also work to develop the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy, under the guidance of the Bureau and in

² Additional information is provided in document [IT/GB-10/23/9.1](#), *Report on Implementation and Operations of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing*.

consultation with Contracting Parties as well as relevant stakeholders, and has presented the updated draft Strategy and the draft Action Plan for the consideration of the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body.³

Youth Engagement

23. The active participation of youth is essential to the long-term success of the International Treaty. Young people bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and a strong commitment to sustainability, making them valuable contributors to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The International Treaty recognises the importance of intergenerational equity, and it is important to discuss how to ensure that youth are meaningfully included in its processes and programmes.

24. In recent years, the Secretariat has taken steps to strengthen youth engagement through targeted outreach, capacity development initiatives and inclusive policy dialogues. Youth representatives have been invited to participate in global symposia, regional workshops and technical consultations, where they have shared their experiences and priorities. These platforms have helped amplify the voices of young people and fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among young stakeholders.

25. The International Treaty also supports youth-led initiatives that promote agrobiodiversity, seed conservation and community-based innovation. Through the Benefit-sharing Fund and other mechanisms, young researchers and practitioners have received support to implement projects that contribute to food security, climate resilience and the sustainable use of PGRFA. By investing in youth, the International Treaty is helping to build a new generation of custodians of agricultural biodiversity. The Secretary invites Contracting Parties to consider the engagement of youth in the discussion of Item 7 and other relevant items, as appropriate.

Update on Advocacy and Communication

26. Clear and impactful communication continues to be a cornerstone of the Secretariat's work in engaging stakeholders and advancing the Treaty's priorities. Throughout the biennium, the Secretariat actively followed its Communication Strategy, utilizing a variety of platforms, channels and customized approaches to effectively connect with a wide spectrum of audiences.

27. In early September 2025, the Secretariat successfully launched the redesigned Treaty website, marking a major milestone in its digital communication efforts. The new site features a streamlined, contemporary design aligned with modern web standards, significantly enhancing user experience. It is fully responsive across devices and offers improved navigation and accessibility.

28. Social media continues to be a vital tool for real-time updates and global outreach. Since the beginning of 2025, the Secretariat has published over 400 posts across X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and LinkedIn, generating more than 78 000 impressions. The presence of the Treaty remains strong in LinkedIn with more than 9 500 connections. The Secretariat also launched a presence on BlueSky, following FAO corporate guidance.

29. Targeted communication campaigns were developed for key international days of observances, including Biodiversity Day and the International Day of the Potato, featuring short videos, infographics, and press releases. Over twenty new short videos were produced and shared across platforms, enhancing visibility and engagement.

30. With BSF-5 projects now in full implementation, the Secretariat has prioritized knowledge management and visibility. Project partners received training and support to develop communication strategies. The Secretariat provides daily helpdesk support and amplifies project updates via social media.

31. A BSF Community of Practice has been established, structured around six thematic "knowledge pathways," fostering cross-project learning and collaboration. The first regional workshop was held in Peru, bringing together participants from 14 countries from the Latin America and Caribbean region for interactive "Agrobiodiversity Knowledge Labs."

32. As part of its strategic communication efforts, the Secretariat organized a series of high-profile activities in 2024 to mark the 20th Anniversary of the International Treaty. These celebrations served to

³[IT/GB-11/25/6.1](#), *Capacity Development Strategy and Draft Action Plan of the International Treaty*.

highlight the Treaty's achievements over two decades and to reaffirm its relevance in addressing global challenges related to agricultural biodiversity, food security, and climate resilience.

33. The anniversary campaign included a dedicated webpage, a commemorative video, and a special edition of the Plant Treaty Headlines. A celebratory event was held at FAO headquarters, featuring interventions from Contracting Parties, Treaty partners, and FAO leadership. The event was livestreamed and widely promoted across social media platforms, generating strong engagement and visibility. The campaign also included a series of thematic articles and interviews with key stakeholders, showcasing the Treaty's impact and future vision.

34. A comprehensive Communication Plan for GB-11 has been developed, covering pre-session, in-session, and post-session outreach. A visual identity aligned with the approved theme was developed in consultation with the Host Countries. This identity guided the design of all GB-11 materials, including posters, banners, signage, and the branding of various exhibit areas. A dedicated GB-11 webpage and key messages have also been developed to ensure coordinated and impactful communication.

35. The Secretariat was also very active in preparing for major events, including the Second Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights, the World Food Forum, and FAO's 80th Anniversary, with tailored communication plans for each.

VI. FINANCIAL UPDATE

36. The provisional sum envisaged to be contributed by FAO to the 2024-2025 Core Administrative Budget (CAB) was USD 2 million, while the total sum actually received in the current biennium's CAB is USD 1 999 445. Relevant information concerning the financial matters is provided in document IT/GB-11/25/18.3, *Financial Report on Progress of the Work Programme and Budget for the 2024–2025 Biennium*.

37. As of 31 July 2025, the contributions received from Contracting Parties amounted to approximately 63 percent of the contributions expected from Contracting Party, including contributions to the Working Capital Reserve and the Third-Party Beneficiary Operational Reserve. The Secretary regularly publishes the state of contributions to the CAB and the amounts received from respective Contracting Parties on the Treaty's website.⁴

38. Ensuring stable and adequate financial resources to implement the Governing Body's work programme has been particularly challenging during this biennium, and the difficult financial situation might continue in the next biennium.

39. The execution of the work programme is subject to timely availability of adequate resources within the Core Administrative Budget (CAB). Contributions to the CAB is an essential and shared responsibility of all Contracting Parties, to provide and ensure necessary resources to implement the Governing Body's Work Programme, and to maintain and advance implementation of the International Treaty.

40. Since the beginning of the current biennium, generous extra-budgetary contributions have been received from several donors to support the implementation of the Treaty and the participation of developing country Contracting Parties in the policy processes of the Governing Body, as well as to the Special Fund for Agreed Purposes or through different funding modalities. These extra-budgetary funds have provided critical support to achieving the expected outcomes of the Work Programme and to further advancing the implementation of the International Treaty.

VII. FUTURE ISSUES

41. The Secretary expresses gratitude to the Bureau of the Eleventh Session for their valuable advice and guidance in relation to the execution of the Work Programme. The Secretary particularly acknowledges the frequent consultations and swift coordination of responses and actions across various regions.

42. The current international context is marked by a series of overlapping crises and persistent global financial pressures that continue to impact international development cooperation at scale. These challenges threaten to undermine progress in critical areas such as the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. In this context, it is essential to reaffirm the mandate of FAO and the

⁴ www.fao.org/plant-treaty/countries/status-of-contributions/en/

International Treaty, and to ensure that the protection of plant genetic resources remains a priority for the international community. The Secretary urges all stakeholders to safeguard investments and actions in this area, recognizing that food security, climate resilience, and the well-being of future generations depend on the continued availability and diversity of these resources.

43. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) aims to stop biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore ecosystems by 2050. The International Treaty and its access and benefit-sharing (ABS) system must be updated to ensure coherence and maximize impact. In this scenario, and in collaboration with biodiversity-related conventions and other international partners, priority should be given to uniting and galvanizing all governments and stakeholders to scale up all types of conservation actions, increase the use of the diversity of PGRFA, multiply synergies, and work in coordinated and cooperative ways. The Governing Body, the Bureau, and the committees and subsidiary bodies of the Treaty will play a pivotal role in contributing to these global efforts

44. Advancing the enhancement of the Multilateral System (MLS) of the International Treaty is now more urgent than ever. The stability of the global food system increasingly remains precarious and a fully functional Multilateral System can contribute to ensuring greater food security. The Secretary calls on all Contracting Parties and stakeholders to intensify their efforts to strengthen the MLS, address outstanding challenges, and unlock its full potential as a cornerstone of global food security and agricultural innovation.

45. As the Governing Body considers the path ahead, it must weigh the direct consequences of inaction. Failing to enhance the Multilateral System risks undermining our collective ability to meet global biodiversity targets and ensure food security. The Secretary encourages all participants to renew the spirit of collaboration, solidarity, and shared purpose that made the adoption of the International Treaty possible. Only through collective action and a reinvigorated commitment can the international community ensure that the Treaty continues to deliver on its promise for present and future generations.

VIII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

46. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information and updates provided, and to provide any guidance it considers appropriate on the range of relevant issues raised in this document, including especially with regard to the draft Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty and the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy.