



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

Overview of the ITPGRFA and its Multilateral Systems (MLS) of ABS

Pan-African Workshop
Supporting an Enabling Environment for ABS

3 – 7 February 2025,
Saly, Senegal

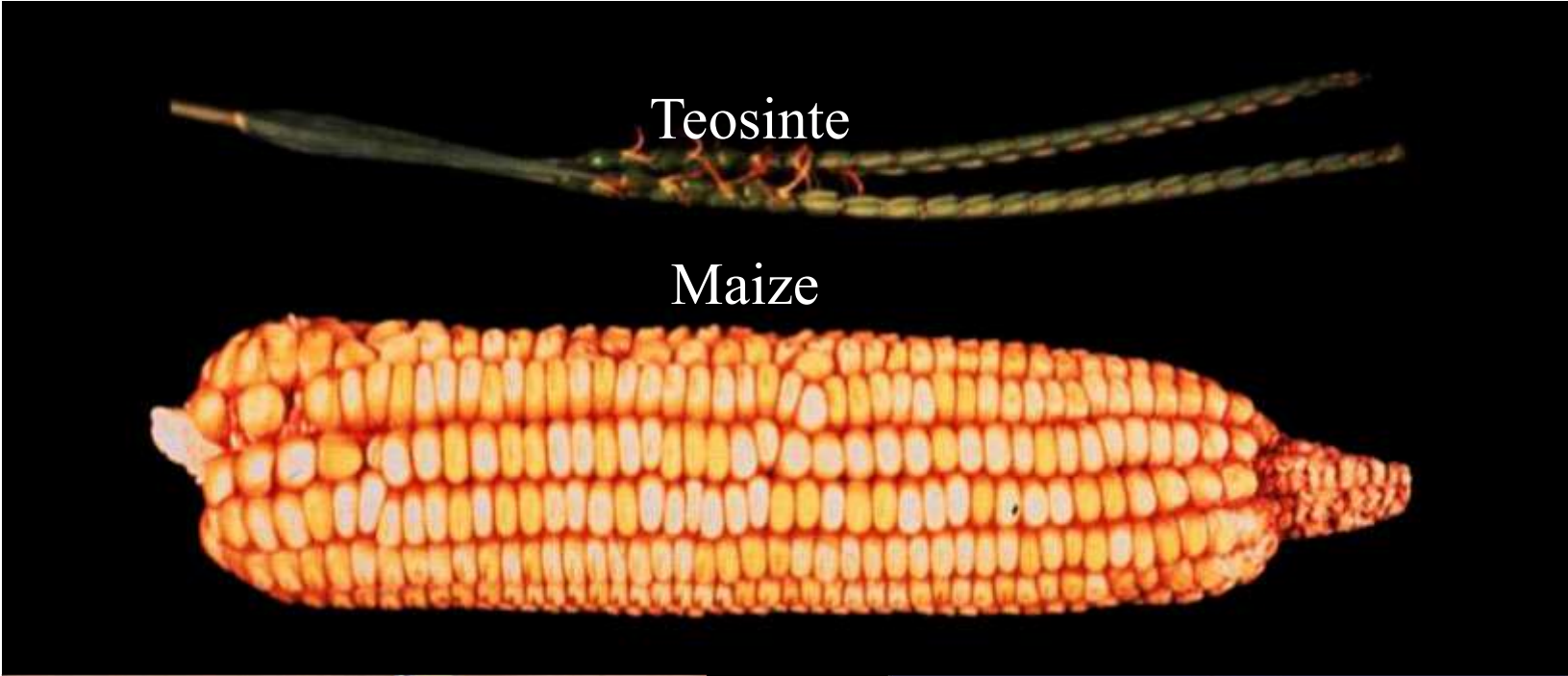
Kent Nnadozie
International Treaty
PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org



Plant genetic resources for food and agriculture: unique features

- Man-made biodiversity
- High interdependence
- Supports food security and sustainable agriculture
- Conservation is guaranteed by & achieved through use
- Continuous international exchange is critical
- Many types of users involved: biotech; breeders; farmers; seed companies and nurseries; universities; genebank curators; local organizations.





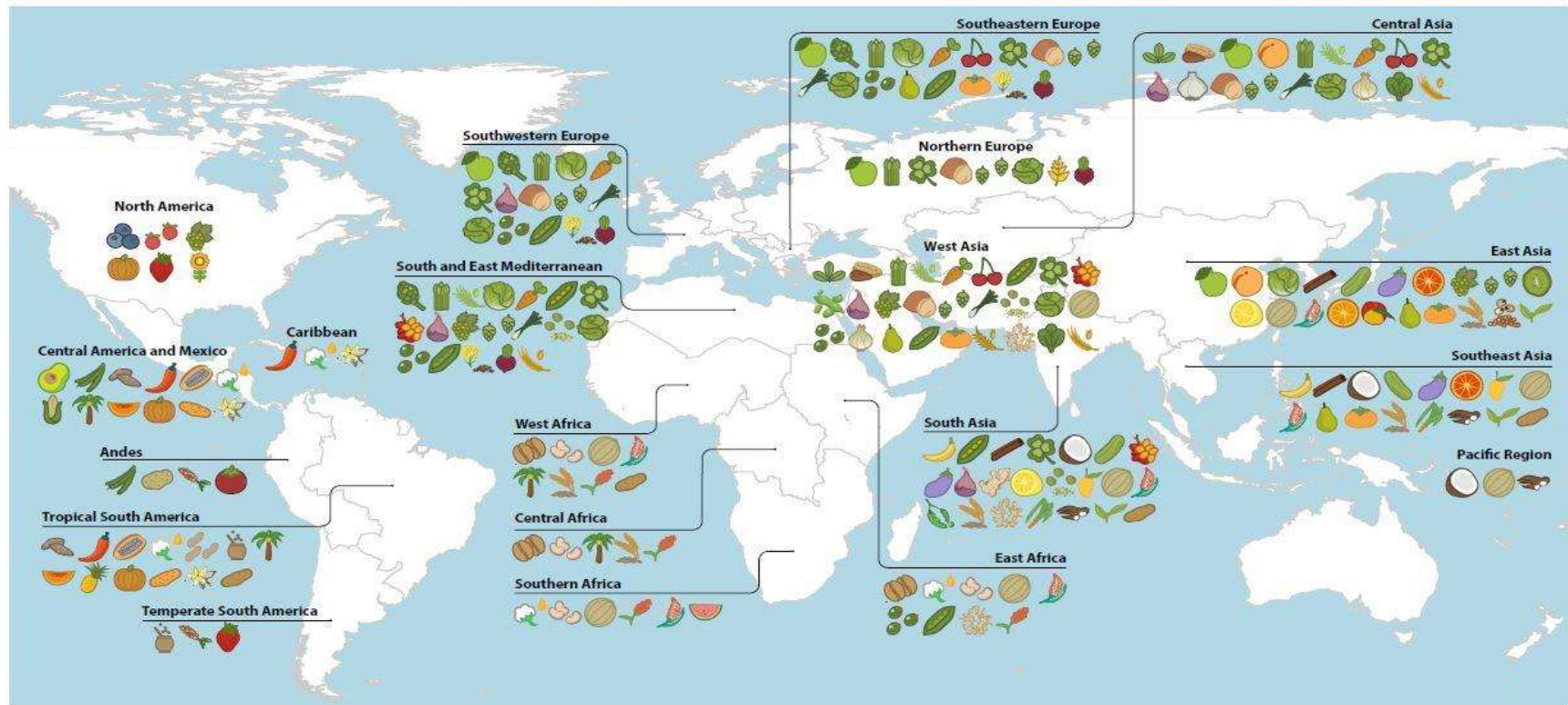
Teosinte

Maize



ORIGINS AND PRIMARY REGIONS OF DIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL CROPS

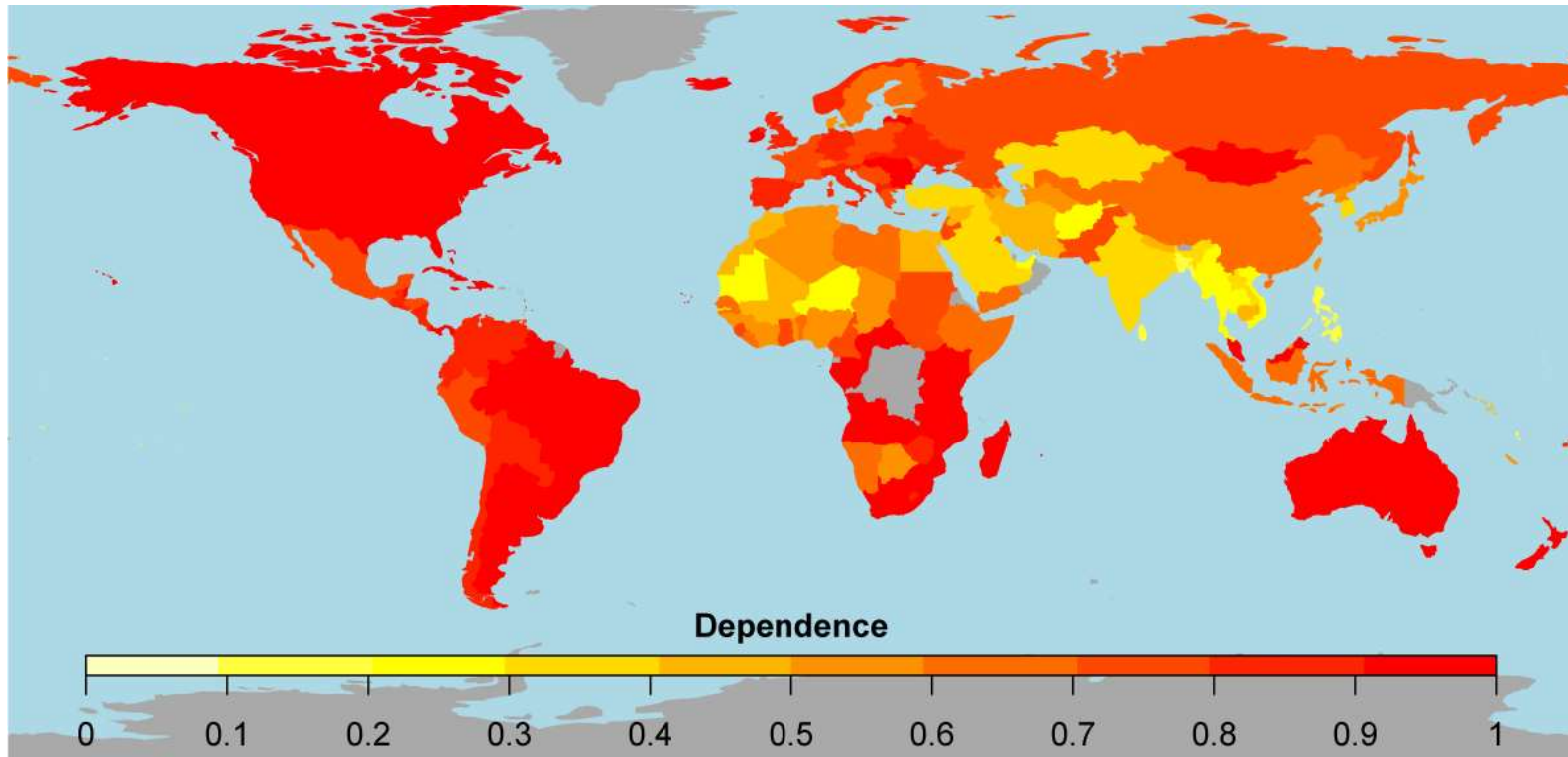
Khoury CK, Achicanoy HA, Björkman AD, Navarro-Racines C, Guarino L, Flores-Palacios X, Engels JMM, Wiersema JH, Dempewolf H, Sotelo S, Ramírez-Villegas J, Castañeda-Álvarez NP, Fowler C, Jarvis A, Rieseberg LH, and Struik PC (2016). Origins of food crops connect countries worldwide. Proc. R. Soc. B 283: 20160792. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2016.0792.



- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Alfalfa | Beans | Clover | Eggplants | Hops | Melons | Pears | Rice | Sunflower |
| Almonds | Blueberries | Cocoa beans | Faba beans | Kiwi | Millets | Peas | Rye | Sweet potatoes |
| Apples | Cabbages | Coconuts | Figs | Leeks | Oats | Pigeonpeas | Sesame | Taro |
| Apricots | Carrots | Coffee | Garlic | Lemons & limes | Olives | Pineapples | Sorghum | Tea |
| Artichokes | Cassava | Cottonseed oil | Ginger | Lentils | Onions | Plums | Soybean | Tomatoes |
| Asparagus | Cherries | Cowpeas | Grapefruit | Lettuce | Oranges | Potatoes | Spinach | Vanilla |
| Avocados | Chickpeas | Cranberries | Grapes | Maize | Papayas | Pumpkins | Strawberries | Watermelons |
| Bananas & plantains | Chillies & peppers | Cucumbers | Groundnut | Mangoes | Palm oil | Quinoa | Sugar beet | Wheat |
| Barley | Cinnamon | Dates | Hazelnuts | Mate | Peaches & nectarines | Rape & mustard seed | Sugar cane | Yams |



Degree of dependence per country on crops whose genetic diversity originates outside of their borders



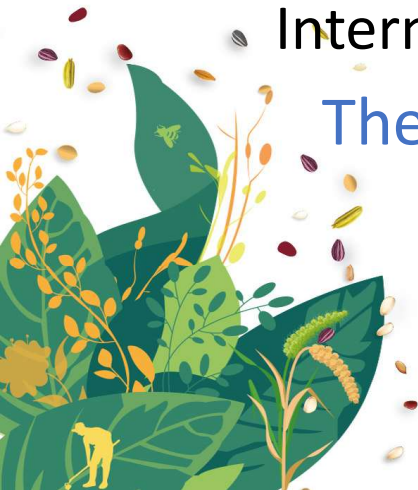
Source: Khoury, C. et al,
2015

**Production
quantity**

Background

- At its adoption, the CBD did not cover ex situ resources received or collected before its entry into force, including genebank collections of the CGIAR, as well as many national collections;
- The 1992 Nairobi Conference recognised the need to seek solutions to these and other outstanding matters concerning plant genetic resources within the Global System for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA established by FAO;
- The Nairobi Conference therefore requested that the FAO take up the matter in the context of the revision of the International Undertaking on PGRFA, earlier adopted by the FAO Conference, thus giving rise to the negotiations for and adoption of the International Treaty;

These were the reasons that lead to the negotiation of a specific international agreement:
the International Treaty



What are the objectives of the International Plant Treaty?

- The **conservation** and **sustainable use** of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture
- The fair and equitable **sharing of benefits** derived from their use, **in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity**, for sustainable agriculture and food security



Harmony with the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol

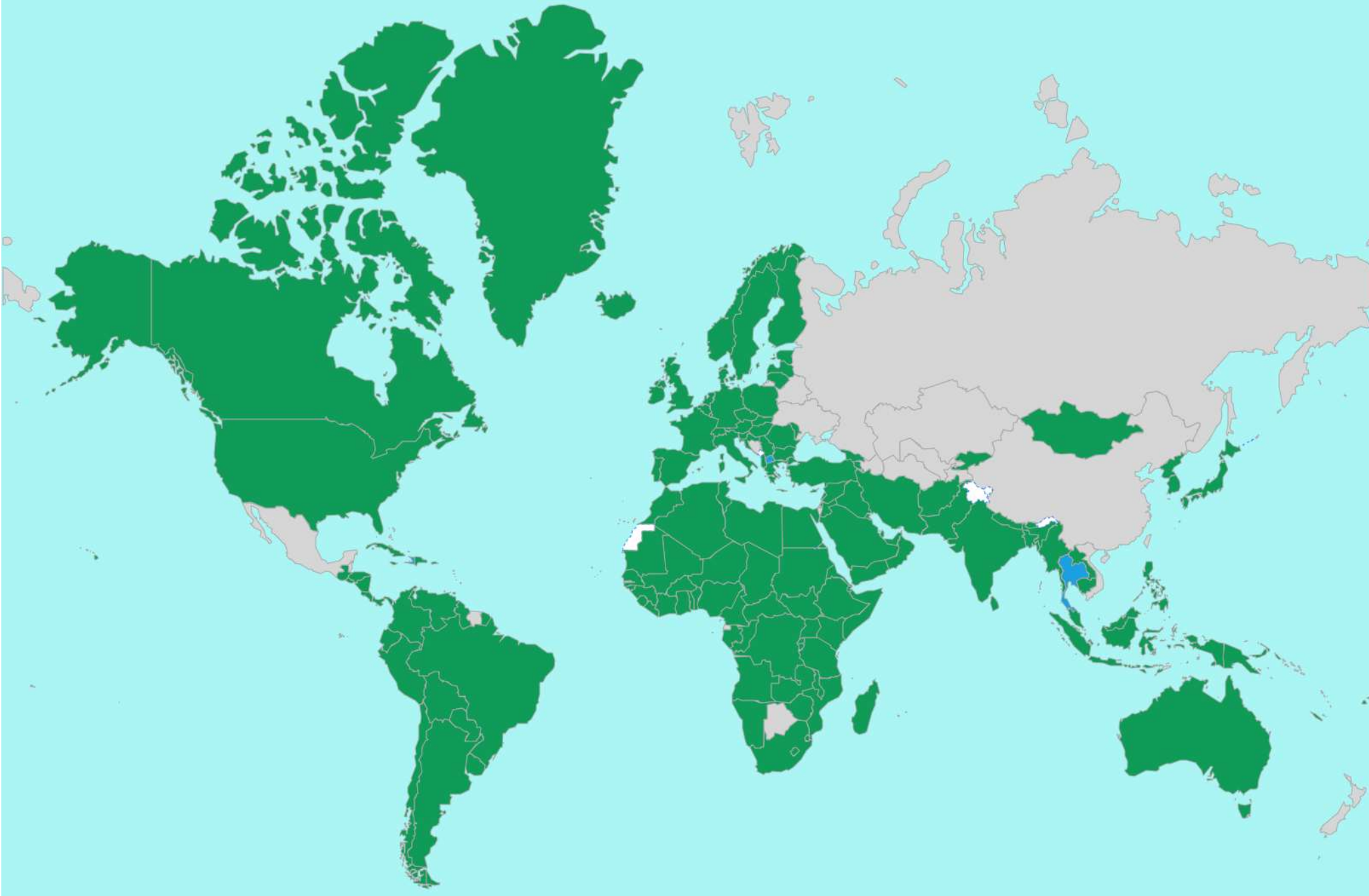
In adopting the Nagoya Protocol, the CBD Conference of Parties, *inter alia*, recognized:

- the International Treaty as one of the complementary instruments that constitute the International Regime on ABS;
- that the objectives of the International Treaty are the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use, in harmony with the CBD, for sustainable agriculture and food security.

COP Decision X/1, Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization.



Global Membership Map



The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

International
Legal
Framework
connecting
the local to
the global

CYMMIT Genebank, Mexico



Svalbard Global Seed Vault, Norway



Community Seed Bank, Malawi



FROM FRIDGE TO FRIDGE



The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing



The Plant Treaty establishes a multilateral system, both to facilitate access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to share, in a fair and equitable way, the benefits arising from their use.



Basic features of the Multilateral System



- PGRFA are available for **research, breeding and training** ;
- Recipients must continue to **make them available**;
- **“Intellectual property or other rights that limit access to the plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, or their genetic parts and components, in the form received from the Multilateral System” may not be claimed.**



Basic features of the Multilateral System (2)



- Applies to a **list of crops** established according to criteria of food security and interdependence, providing about **80% of our food from plants**;
- MLS “**pools**” these crucial PGR from Contracting Parties, international institutions, natural and legal persons;
- **To facilitate access, and to share, in a fair and equitable way, the benefits** arising from their use;
- Accessible for all under the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (**SMTA**)



Benefit-sharing Fund

- Focuses on three priority areas
- Supports actions in response to food insecurity and the effects of climate change
- Seeks to have a catalytic effect on a global scale in conservation and sustainable use
- 5 project cycles so far – 80 projects
- Supports projects in more than 67 developing countries



Working Group to enhance the functioning of the MLS

- ❖ Original mandate: 5/2013; new/refined: 3/2022 and 3/2023
- ❖ First phase: 2014-2019:
 - ❖ Studies, submissions/inputs, FOCCs, SGLE; informal meetings, negotiations at formal meetings;
- ❖ *(Informal consultations 2020-2022);*
- ❖ GB-9 (2022, New Delhi, India): WG re-established; composition
- ❖ Second phase: 2023-2025:
 - ❖ Three “hotspot” issues: DSI/GSD, amendment Annex I, payment structure/rates;
 - ❖ Updated studies, submissions/inputs, Co-Chairs-Regions & stakeholders, informal meetings, interaction other bodies; drafting groups, regional consultations;
 - ❖ One formal meeting in 2023; four formal meetings 2024-2025;
 - ❖ OWG-EFMLS-12, September 2024

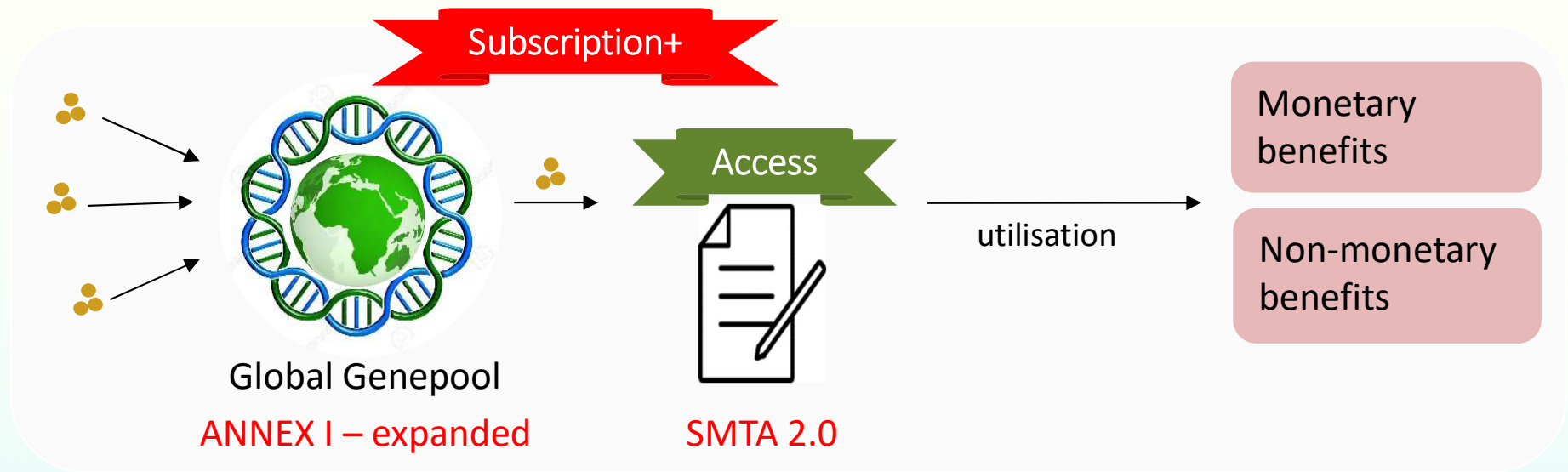


Enhancement of the Multilateral System on Access and Benefit-sharing: three hotspots

- Enhance monetary benefit-sharing to the Benefit-sharing Fund, in a predictable and sustainable way: Subscription Mechanism;
- Expand the coverage of the Multilateral System from current 64 crops to additional crops that are critical for global food security, agricultural trade and for which countries are interdependent;
- Deal with the on-going digitalization of genetic research and integrate considerations of Digital Sequence Information in the negotiation package.



Multilateral System - *enhancement*



The enhanced MLS

- Subscription mechanism
- Amendment of Annex I
- Revision of the SMTA
- Addressing DSI/GSD

- Deliver sustainable and predictable user-based income to the Benefit-sharing Fund.
- Increase benefits, monetary & non-monetary.
- Make the MLS more dynamic (developments and emerging issues in science, innovation, plant breeding and global policy environment).
- Legal certainty, administrative simplicity and transparency.



OWG-EFMLS-12 (Sept 2024)

- ❑ Full reading of Co-Chairs' proposed negotiating text
→ Working Group's draft as basis for next meeting;

- ❑ Subscription mechanism with two payment options
 - Early payment option (strong support, aims of process)
 - Deferred payment option→ criteria and factors defined, drafting group; updated study;

- ❑ Amendment Annex I:
 - Number of safeguards, especially national sovereignty, ex situ only, possibility of exclusions;
 - Importance of balance between expansion and monetary income;



OWG-EFMLS-12 (Sept 2024)

□ DSI/GSD:

- Directly in Resolution, indirectly in revised SMTA?
- Solution under International Treaty. Mutually supportive with mechanism under CBD.
- Important role of DSI/GSD on PGRFA in conserving and sustainably using PGRFA;
- Importance of maintaining “open access” to DSI/GSD in the MLS for its purposes;
- Benefit-sharing payments under the revised SMTA reflect contributions to PGRFA product development from the use of DSI/GSD; → deferred payment option?
- Possible ways to indicate the MLS as a source in DSI/GSD databases;
- Capacity development for access and use of DSI/GSD.



MLS enhancement: next steps

→ Intense intersessional programme:

- Informal physical meeting (DSI/GSD and payments): Dec 2024;
- DSI/GSD work by CGIAR;
- Regional consultations: Feb/Mar 2025;
- Drafting group, small group direct use: Nov-Jan 2025;
- Suggestions by the Co-Chairs to update the negotiating text: soon;
- Expected inputs from seed sector; updated study on sales and profitability within the seed sector;
- Cooperation and CBD COP-16.

→ Next formal meeting 30 Mar to 4 April 2025 in Rome (including two days regional and preparatory meetings)

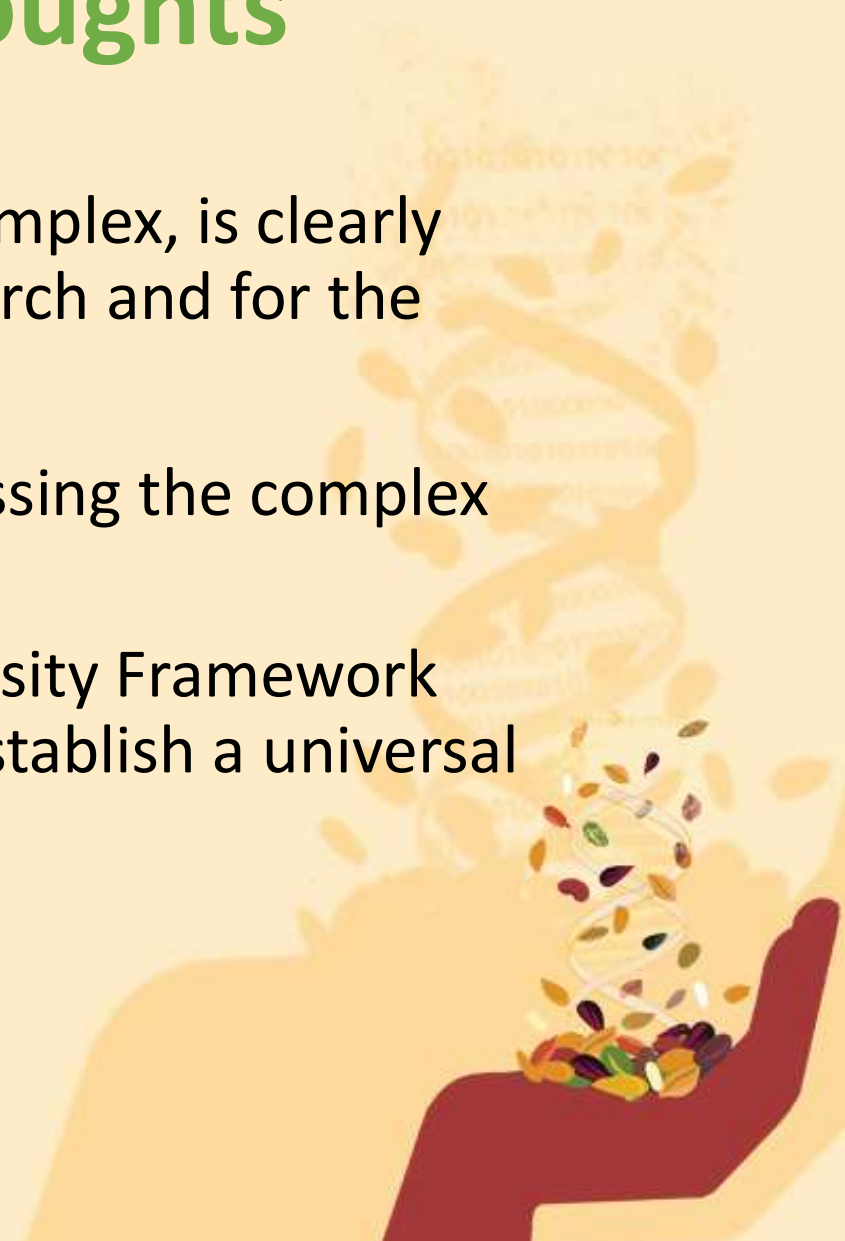
→ Last formal meeting early July 2025, Cusco, Peru

→ GB-11, 24 to 28 November 2025, Lima, Peru



Concluding Thoughts

- International cooperation, although complex, is clearly essential, both to the progress of research and for the betterment of society.
- Multilateralism indispensable in addressing the complex interconnected issues & challenges;
- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework provides such unique opportunity to establish a universal agenda and framework for action.





Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

Thank you!

www.fao.org/plant-treaty
PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org

