

# **The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources: Implications and Implementation. (C08-hawtin011738- Oral)**

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## **Abstract:**

In Nov 2001 the FAO Conference adopted the International Treaty (IT) on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), after 7 years and 15 negotiating sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. The new, legally-binding Treaty brings the 1983 International Undertaking in line with the CBD and aims to promote the conservation and use of PGRFA. It comes into force 90 days after 40 countries have ratified, a process expected to take 1-2 years. The IT balances the interests of gene-rich with gene-poor countries, developed with developing countries etc. Particularly contentious were the definition of PGRFA, mechanisms for access and benefit-sharing, relationships with non-Parties and the recognition of IPRs and Farmers' Rights. Some issues remain for the Treaty's Governing Body to resolve. The IT establishes a multilateral system for access and benefit-sharing for 35 crops (mostly defined by genus) and about 80 forages. The CGIAR Centre collections receive special attention. The IT will facilitate the future conservation, international exchange and use of PGRFA and sets a much needed policy framework for initiatives such as the proposed Global Conservation Trust.

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