

Seed treaty

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In news—India hosted the 9th session of Seed Treaty recently.

About the treaty-

- Seed Treaty, **known as the seed treaty, was adopted by the 31 st session of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in November 2001.**
- It is a **comprehensive international agreement in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity.**
- The treaty was **negotiated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA).**
- The treaty, which came in force on June 29, 2004, has been ratified by 149 countries. And since 2006 has its own Governing Body under the aegis of the FAO.
- The treaty recognises *farmers' rights*, subject to national laws.
- **The Treaty aims at:** recognising the enormous contribution of farmers to the diversity of crops that feed the world; establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials; and ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from the use of these genetic materials with the countries where they have been originated.
- The sharing of information on germplasm is limited to 64 most important crops that together account for 80 per cent of the food consumed in the world.
- The main objective is to build a global pool of genetic resources so that it is freely available to potential users in the Treaty's ratifying nations.
- The treaty has implemented a Multilateral System (MLS) of access and benefit sharing, among those countries

that ratify the treaty, for a list of 64 of some of the most important food and forage crops essential for food security and interdependence.

- The eighth session of the treaty was held in Rome in November 2019.
- During the eighth session, **a resolution was passed asking the ITPGRFA secretary to explore why many countries have not placed the material in the Multilateral System** and invite contracting parties to share difficulties that may be encountered or the needs for capacity building for placing material in the Multilateral System or in sharing germplasm with other Contracting Parties.
- Amid lack of consensus on issues like benefit sharing of germ plasm which will provide access to better quality seeds, **India in 9th session urged member countries of the International Treaty** to make headway eliminating the north-south divide