

Council**C/58/19****Fifty-Eighth Ordinary Session
Geneva, October 25, 2024****Original:** English
Date: October 25, 2024**REPORT***Adopted by the Council**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance*Opening of the session

1. The Council of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) held its fifty-eighth ordinary session in Geneva on October 25, 2024, chaired by Mr. Yehan Cui (China), President of the Council.
2. The session was opened by the President who welcomed the participants.
3. Mr. Daren Tang, Secretary-General, welcomed the participants. A copy of the Secretary-General's remarks is reproduced in Annex I to this report.
4. The President reported that Armenia had deposited its instrument of accession to the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention on February 2, 2024, and had become bound by the 1991 Act on March 2, 2024. Armenia became the 79th member of the Union on March 2, 2024.
5. The Council noted the intervention made by Ms. Varsik Martirosyan, Head, Department of Plant production, Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of Ms. Deputy Tatevik Sargsyan, Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia, a copy of which is reproduced in Annex II to this report.
6. The list of participants is reproduced in Annex III to this report.

Adoption of the agenda

7. The Council adopted the revised draft agenda, as presented in document C/58/1 Rev.

Extension of the appointment of the Vice Secretary-General

8. The Council considered document C/58/4.
9. The Council decided to extend the appointments of the Vice Secretary-General and of the Director of Legal Affairs and the promotion of the Director of Global Development and Technical Affairs from October 15, 2025, until October 14, 2028.
10. The Council decided that, after October 14, 2028, the duration of the appointment of the Director of Legal Affairs, and of the promotion of the Director of Global Development and Technical Affairs, would no longer be linked to the duration of the appointment of the Vice Secretary-General.

Report by the Vice Secretary-General on developments in UPOV

11. The Council received a presentation from the Vice Secretary-General and noted that a copy of the presentation would be made available after the UPOV sessions on the UPOV website.

12. The Council welcomed the signing of the Terms of Reference for UPOV e-PVP DUS Exchange Module by the Delegation of Türkiye.

Developments on the Draft Law on Plant Variety Protection of the United Arab Emirates

13. The Council considered document C/58/17.

14. The Council:

(a) noted that certain provisions of the Draft Law on Plant Variety Protection of the United Arab Emirates, as last modified in 2024, contained changes in relation to the text of the corresponding provisions of the Draft Law submitted to the Council in 2020 (Council decision by correspondence, initiated by UPOV Circular E-20/101 of July 28, 2020);

(b) agreed that the changes introduced in the Draft Law on Plant Variety Protection of the United Arab Emirates, as last modified in 2024 (Draft Law of 2024), presented in Annex II to document C/58/17, do not affect the substantive provisions of the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention and, subject to that agreement,

(c) reaffirmed the decision on conformity of July 28, 2020, and requested the Office of the Union to inform the Government of the United Arab Emirates that, once the Draft Law of 2024 is adopted with no changes, the instrument of accession of the United Arab Emirates may be deposited.

15. The Delegation of United Arab Emirates expressed its appreciation for the positive decision of the Council in respect of the examination of the relevant parts of the Draft Law on Plant Variety Protection of the United Arab Emirates, as last modified in 2024, with the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention. It looked forward to working closely with UPOV for accession to the UPOV Convention and to cooperating with members of the Union.

Examination of the conformity of the Law on Intellectual Property, Part IV New Plant Variety, of the Lao People's Democratic Republic with the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention

16. The Council considered document C/58/18.

17. The Council decided to:

(a) note the analysis in document C/58/18;

(b) take a positive decision on the conformity of the Law with the provisions of the 1991 Act, which allows the Lao People's Democratic Republic to deposit its instrument of accession to the 1991 Act; and

(c) authorize the Secretary-General to inform the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic of the above decision.

18. The Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed its appreciation for the positive decision of the Council in respect of the examination of the Law on Intellectual Property, Part IV New Plant Variety for conformity with the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention. It looked forward to working closely with UPOV for accession to the UPOV Convention and to cooperating with members of the Union.

Report by the President on the work of the hundred and second session of the Consultative Committee; adoption of recommendations, if any, prepared by that Committee

19. The Council considered document C/58/15.

20. Based on the recommendations of the Consultative Committee, the Council authorized the use of UPOV e-PVP by States and organizations in the process of becoming UPOV members, as follows:

(a) Have positive advice from the Council on the conformity of the legislation with the UPOV Convention

(b) The use of e-PVP would be authorized during a trial period of three years.

- (c) Other criteria could be established to ensure effective use of resources. The use of UPOV e-PVP by any State and organization in the process of becoming UPOV member would be periodically reported to the Consultative Committee in the information document "Situation concerning those States and intergovernmental organizations which have initiated the procedure for acceding to the UPOV Convention or which have been in contact with the Office of the Union for assistance in the development of laws based on the UPOV Convention."

21. The representative of the Association for Plant Breeding for the Benefit of Society (APBREBES) requested, with reference to the Consultative Committee agenda item "Report on the Working Group on Guidance concerning Smallholder Farmers in relation to private and non-commercial use (WG-SHF)", that the scope of the seminar to be held in 2026 be focused on the terms of reference of the WG-SHF.

22. The Delegation of Japan was of the view that the seminar should focus on access to new varieties.

23. The Vice Secretary General of UPOV recalled that the Consultative Committee had agreed that the Office of the Union would reach out to UPOV members that took the floor during its hundred and second session to identify proposals for the draft program and examples and data to be presented during the seminar. She further noted that the Consultative Committee had agreed that the work of the WG-SHF would be channelled as a contribution to assist in the organization of the Seminar in 2026. On that basis, she recalled that the Consultative Committee had agreed that a draft program of a seminar would be presented for consideration by the Consultative Committee during its hundred and third session on October 23, 2025.

24. The Council noted the work of the Consultative Committee at its hundred and second session, as reported in document C/58/15.

Development of guidance and documents proposed for adoption by the Council

25. The Council considered document SESSIONS/2024/2 in conjunction with the conclusions of the Technical Committee (TC) at its sixtieth session, held in Geneva on October 21 and 22, 2024 (see document TC/60/8 "Report") and the conclusions of the Administrative and Legal Committee (CAJ) at its eighty-first session, held in Geneva on October 23, 2024 (see document CAJ/81/7 "Report").

I. DOCUMENTS PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL IN 2024

Documents for adoption by the Council, subject to agreement by the TC and the CAJ

UPOV/INF/16: Exchangeable Software (Revision) (document UPOV/INF/16/13 Draft 1)

26. The Council noted that the TC and the CAJ, at their sessions in 2024, had approved the revision of document UPOV/INF/16/12 "Exchangeable Software", on the basis of document UPOV/INF/16/13 Draft 1.

27. The Council adopted the proposed revisions to document UPOV/INF/16/12 "Exchangeable Software", on the basis of document UPOV/INF/16/13 Draft 1.

UPOV/INF/22: Software and Equipment Used by Members of the Union (Revision) (document UPOV/INF/22/11 Draft 1)

28. The Council noted that the TC and the CAJ, at their sessions in 2024, had approved the revision of document UPOV/INF/22/10 "Software and equipment used by members of the Union", on the basis of document UPOV/INF/22/11 Draft 1.

29. The Council adopted the proposed revisions to document UPOV/INF/22/10 "Software and equipment used by members of the Union", on the basis of document UPOV/INF/22/11 Draft 1.

UPOV/EXN/DEN: Explanatory Notes on Variety Denominations under the UPOV Convention (Revision) (document SESSIONS/2024/2)

30. The Council noted that the TC and the CAJ, at their sessions in 2024, had approved the revision of document UPOV/EXN/DEN/3 "Explanatory Notes on Variety Denominations under the UPOV Convention" with

the following amendment (additions indicated with highlighting and underline; and deletions indicated with highlighting and ~~strikethrough~~):

“c) The ~~registered~~ proposed denominations of an interspecific hybrid ~~variety~~ with parents from different classes within a genus should be different from introduced denominations in ~~all~~ the classes ~~within a genus~~ of all the parent species. The UPOV code for an interspecific hybrid variety with parents from different classes within a genus should be associated with the variety denomination classes of all the parent species.

31. The Council adopted a revision of document UPOV/EXN/DEN/3 “Explanatory Notes on Variety Denominations under the UPOV Convention” (document UPOV/EXN/DEN/4), on the basis of the proposed revisions presented in document SESSIONS/2024/2, Annex I, section “Proposal: New variety denomination classes for Prunus” with the amendments agreed by the TC and the CAJ

TGP/7: Development of Test Guidelines (Revision) (document SESSIONS/2024/2)

Additional Standard Wording (ASW) 3 “Explanation of the growing cycle”

32. The Council noted that the TC and the CAJ, at their sessions in 2024, had approved the revision of document TGP/7 “Development of Test Guidelines”.

33. The Council adopted a revision of document TGP/7/9 “Development of Test Guidelines”, on the basis of the proposed amendments presented in paragraph 20 of document SESSIONS/2024/2, reproduced below (additions indicated with highlighting and underline; and deletions indicated with highlighting and ~~strikethrough~~):

“(a) Fruit species with clearly defined dormant period

“3.1.2 The growing cycle is considered to be the duration of a single growing season, beginning with the dormancy period, followed by bud burst (flowering and/or vegetative), flowering and fruit harvest and concluding when the following dormant period starts ~~ends with the swelling of new season buds.~~”

TGP/12: Guidance on Certain Physiological Characteristics (Revision) (document SESSIONS/2024/2)

Equivalence table for states of expression in quantitative disease resistance characteristics in Test Guidelines

34. The Council noted that the TC and the CAJ, at their sessions in 2024, had approved the revision of document TGP/12 “Guidance on Certain Physiological Characteristics” with the following amendment to the disposition of information in the table to be presented as follows:

“Table 2: States of expression in Test Guidelines and terminology used in the vegetable seed sector:

<i>States of expression in Test Guidelines:</i>		
Resistance to [disease name]	note	state
	1	absent or low
	2	medium
	3	high
<i>Terminology used in the vegetable seed sector:</i>		
Reaction of a plant variety to a specific pest ¹	Susceptibility (S)	
	Intermediate Resistance (IR)	
	High Resistance (HR)	

¹ source: <https://worldseed.org/>

35. The Council adopted a revision of document TGP/12/4 “Guidance on Certain Physiological Characteristics”, on the basis of the proposed amendments presented in document SESSIONS/2024/2, Annex II, section “Proposal” with the amendments agreed by the TC and the CAJ

Documents for adoption by the Council, subject to agreement by the CAJ

UPOV/EXN/PPM: Explanatory Notes on Propagating Material under the UPOV Convention (Revision) (document UPOV/EXN/PPM/2 Draft 1)

36. The Council noted that the CAJ, at its session in 2024, had approved the revision of document UPOV/EXN/PPM “Explanatory Notes on Propagating Material under the UPOV Convention”.

37. The Council adopted a revision of document UPOV/EXN/PPM/1 “Explanatory Notes on Propagating Material under the UPOV Convention”, on the basis of the proposed revisions presented in document UPOV/EXN/PPM/2 Draft 1.

Other documents for adoption by the Council

UPOV/INF/6: Guidance for the preparation of laws based on the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention (Revision) (document SESSIONS/2024/2, Annex VI)

38. The Council noted that the CAJ, at its session in 2024, had approved the proposed revisions of documents UPOV/EXN/DEN/3 and UPOV/EXN/PPM/1.

39. The Council adopted a revision of document UPOV/INF/6 “Guidance for the preparation of laws based on the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention” (document UPOV/INF/6/7), on the basis of the revisions in document UPOV/EXN/EDV/3 adopted by the Council at its session in 2023, and the proposed revisions of documents UPOV/EXN/DEN/3 and UPOV/EXN/PPM/1, as set out in Annex VI to document SESSIONS/2024/2.

UPOV/INF/15: Guidance for Members of UPOV (Revision) (document C/58/15)

UPOV/INF/20: Rules governing access to UPOV documents (Revocation) (document C/58/15)

40. Following the recommendation of the Consultative Committee in relation to the Communication Strategy (see document C/58/15 “Report by the President on the work of the hundred and second session of the Consultative Committee; adoption of recommendations, if any, prepared by that Committee”, the Council decided to:

- (a) discontinue the restricted area of the UPOV website;
- (b) remove document UPOV/INF/20 “Rules Governing Access to UPOV Documents”;
- (b) revised document UPOV/INF/15 “Guidance for members of UPOV”, as provided below:

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO DOCUMENT UPOV/INF/15/3 “GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS OF UPOV”
(DOCUMENT UPOV/INF/15/4)

PART I. RESPONSIBILITIES AS A UPOV MEMBER

Section 1. Notifications concerning the representatives and alternates to the Council

[...]

Responsibilities of the representative

10. One of the responsibilities of the representative to the Council is to appoint persons to the relevant UPOV bodies and to decide on persons to be given access to UPOV documents in the restricted area of the UPOV website (see Rules Governing Access to UPOV Documents: [document UPOV/INF/20](#)).

11. Upon receipt of the notification, the Office of the Union will:

~~(a) communicate to the representative that has been officially appointed the User Id and password corresponding to that member of the Union. The User Id and password will enable access to the restricted area of the UPOV website in order to download documents (<http://www.upov.int/restrict/meetings/en/>);~~

~~(b)~~ draw the attention to the UPOV structure diagram of the UPOV bodies (<http://www.upov.int/about/en/organigram.html>) and will ask the representative to provide the names and contact details of the "designated persons" to the Council, the Consultative Committee, the Administrative and Legal Committee (CAJ), Technical Committee (TC) and Technical Working Parties (TWPs). The Office of the Union will, if appropriate, attach the existing list for the relevant member of the Union, for confirmation or updating. The designated persons by the representative will receive copies of the invitations to the sessions of the relevant UPOV bodies and the corresponding notifications of the posting of documents for those sessions;

~~(c) send a copy of the Rules Governing Access to UPOV Documents ([document UPOV/INF/20](#)) to guide the representative in the distribution of the User Id and password. Any person from the member of the Union making a request to the Office of the Union for access to documents in the restricted area of the UPOV website will be invited to contact the representative; and~~

~~(d)~~ request the representative to provide the contact details of the authority entrusted with the task of granting breeders' rights in accordance with Article 30(1)(ii) of the 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention, for publication under the section "Directory of PVP Offices" of the UPOV website (http://www.upov.int/members/en/pvp_offices.html).

41. The representative of Association for Plant Breeding for the Benefit of Society (APBREBES) congratulated UPOV on the decision to discontinue the restricted area of the UPOV website and encouraged inclusive participation in meetings, including the Consultative Committee.

UPOV/INF-EXN: List of UPOV/INF-EXN Documents and Latest Issue Dates (Revision)
(document UPOV/INF-EXN/18 Draft 1)

42. The Council adopted the proposed revisions to document UPOV/INF-EXN: "List of UPOV/INF-EXN Documents and Latest Issue Dates", on the basis of document UPOV/INF-EXN/18 Draft 1.

TGP/0: List of TGP Documents and Latest Issue Dates (Revision) (document TGP/0/16 Draft 1)

43. The Council adopted the proposed revisions to document TGP/0 "List of TGP Documents and Latest Issue Dates", on the basis of document TGP/0/16 Draft 1.

II. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

44. The Council noted developments concerning possible future revisions of guidance and information materials under discussion at the TC, as set out in paragraphs 43 to 62 of document SESSIONS/2024/2.

Financial statements for 2023

45. The Council approved the Financial Statements for 2023, as presented in document C/58/9.

Performance Report for the 2022-2023 Biennium

46. The Council noted the UPOV Performance Report for the 2022-2023 contained in document C/58/2.

Report of the External Auditor

47. The Council considered document C/58/10.

48. The Council noted the information contained in the Report of the External Auditor, as presented in document C/58/10, in conjunction with an oral report made by Mr. Peter Cassidy, National Audit Office, United Kingdom.

49. The Council expressed its gratitude to the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom for acting as External Auditor of the UPOV accounts.

Procedure for the appointment of the External Auditor

50. The Council considered document C/58/14.

51. The Council recalled that

- (a) the WIPO General Assembly held its Sixty-Fourth (64th ordinary) Session in Geneva from July 6 to 14, 2023, and “appointed the Audit Board of Indonesia as the WIPO External Auditor for a period of six years to begin on January 1, 2024”;
- (b) the Council, at its fifty-seventh ordinary session, held in Geneva, on October 27, 2023, designated Switzerland, with its agreement, as External Auditor of UPOV, for one year, starting from January 2024 to December 2024;
- (c) the Council further noted that all members of the Union would be part of future consultations for a proposal for the appointment of the External Auditor for UPOV.

52. Due to the extraordinary and exceptional circumstances that, no Auditor General (or official holding the equivalent title) of UPOV member States that were consulted expressed an interest to audit the UPOV accounts starting calendar year 2025 until 2029, the Council agreed on the following way forward:

1. Subject to the agreement of the Audit Board of Indonesia, the Council designates the Audit Board of Indonesia as the UPOV External Auditor to audit the UPOV accounts for the calendar years 2025-2029.
2. The Council requests the Office of the Union to inform the Audit Board of Indonesia of the decision of the Council, in paragraph 1 above, and invite the Audit Board of Indonesia to consider the above designation.
3. If the Audit Board of Indonesia agrees to the designation, the Office of the Union to notify the Council accordingly.
4. The process of designating the UPOV External Auditor is of an administrative nature and does not relate to the substantive provisions on plant breeders’ rights set out in the 1991 Act and the 1978 Act of the UPOV Convention. Therefore, the Council considers that designating the UPOV External Auditor from a State not a member of UPOV, but a State member of WIPO, is an exceptional ad hoc decision which will in no manner set a precedent for future decisions to be taken by the Council.
5. On the above basis, the Council requests that the Office of the Union proposes possible amendments to the provisions in the UPOV Financial Regulations and Rules (document UPOV/INF/4/6) relating to the appointment of the External Auditor for consideration of the Council in its session in October 2025.
6. This exceptional decision is taken to ensure the efficient functioning of UPOV (Article 26 (5)(x) of the 1991 Act and Article 21(h) of the 1978 Act of the Convention).

Arrears in contributions as of September 30, 2024

53. The Council considered document C/58/11.

54. The Council noted the status of payments of contributions as of September 30, 2024, and noted that due to recent payments, Chile, North Macedonia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Republic of Korea, had no arrears.

Program of meetings

Approval of work programs for the Administrative and Legal Committee, the Technical Committee and the Technical Working Parties

55. The Council considered document C/58/12 and received an oral presentation by the Chair of the CAJ, on the work of the eighty-first session of the CAJ, based on document CAJ/81/7 "Report".
56. The Council approved the work program for the eighty-second session of the CAJ, as presented in the report of the eighty-first session of the CAJ (see document CAJ/81/7 "Report", paragraph 61).
57. The Council noted the work of the Technical Committee (TC) and of the Technical Working Parties (TWPs), and the oral presentation made by the Chair of the TC on the work of the sixtieth session of the TC, based on document TC/60/8 "Report".
58. The Council approved the work of the TC and the work programs of the TWPs as provided in document TC/60/8 "Report".

Calendar of meetings in 2024

59. The Council considered document C/58/8 and the recommendation by the Consultative Committee at its hundred and second session, as reported in document C/58/15.
60. The Council approved the calendar of meetings in 2025, and the tentative dates for meetings in 2026 and 2027, as set out in document C/58/8, with the following changes:

DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2025

MARCH 2025

Monday, 17	EAM/5 (virtual meeting)
Tuesday, 18 and Wednesday, 19	TC-EDC (virtual meeting)
Thursday, 20	WG-HRV/7 (virtual meeting)
Friday, 21	WG-SHF/7 (virtual meeting)
Monday, 31 [to Thursday, April 3]	TWO/57 (Roelofarendsveen, Kingdom of the Netherlands)

APRIL 2025

Monday, 7 to Thursday, 10	
Monday, 28 to Thursday, May 1	TWM/3 (virtual meeting), Beijing, China (hybrid meeting)

OCTOBER 2025

Tuesday, 14 and Thursday, 16	TC-EDC (virtual meetings)
Sunday, 19 and Monday, 20 (evening)	TC-EDC (hybrid meetings)
Monday, 20	TC/61
Monday, 20 (evening)	TC-EDC
Tuesday, 21	TC/61
Tuesday, 21 (evening)	EAM/6 (hybrid meeting)
Wednesday, 22 (morning)	CAJ/82
Wednesday, 22 (afternoon)	Seminar on the cooperation with breeders in DUS examination
Thursday, 23	CC/103
Friday, 24	C/59

TENTATIVE DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2026

JANUARY 2026 (week 3)

Monday, 12 and Wednesday, 14	
Tuesday, 13 and Thursday, 15	TC-EDC (virtual meeting)

MARCH 2026 (week 12)

Tuesday, 17 and Wednesday, 18	
Thursday, 19	TC-EDC (virtual meeting)

OCTOBER 2026

[Date to be provided]

Seminar on [title to be provided]

Matters for information:

61. The Council noted the following documents under item 15 “Matters for information”, which had been posted for information on the C/58 webpage:

- (a) Report on activities during the first nine months of 2024 (document C/58/3)
- (b) Situation in the legislative, administrative and technical fields:
 - (i) Reports by representatives of members and observers (document C/58/13)
 - (ii) Cooperation in examination (document C/58/5); List of the taxa protected by the members of the Union (document C/58/6); Plant variety protection statistics for the period 2019-2023 (document C/58/7)

62. The Council endorsed the proposal that, starting in 2025, the Office of the Union would implement a more efficient way to collect and present priority information from UPOV members and observers.

63. The Council noted the oral presentation made by the Office of the Union concerning information contained in documents C/58/5 “Cooperation in examination” and C/58/6 “List of Taxa protected and PVP statistics” is published on the UPOV Website (see link: [PVP Data & Statics](#)).

Press release

64. The Council noted the draft press release, as contained in document C/58/16.

65. The Council agreed to discontinue the procedure to adopt press releases and agreed to invite the Office of the Union to prepare newsletters reporting developments relevant for PVP and UPOV.

Retirements

66. The President reported that Ms. Janice Cook Robbins, Director, Finance Division would retire before the subsequent session of the Council and expressed his thanks, on behalf of the UPOV Council, and wished her a long and happy retirement.

67. The President also reported that Ms. Päivi Mannerkorpi and Mr. Dirk Theobald, delegates from the European Union, would retire before the subsequent session of the Council. The President expressed his thanks to Ms. Mannerkorpi and Mr. Theobald, on behalf of the Council, for their contribution to the work of UPOV and wished them a long and happy retirement.

68. The President reported that Ms. Ariane Besse would retire in May 2025, after 30 years of loyal services to UPOV and expressed his thanks, on behalf of the UPOV Council, and wished her a long and happy retirement.

69. The Secretary-General awarded a UPOV gold medal to Ms. Ariane Besse and the Vice Secretary-General expressed her gratitude for Ariane’s contribution and commitment to the work of UPOV.

[Annexes follow]

OPENING REMARKS OF MR. DAREN TANG, SECRETARY-GENERAL,
AT THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

President Yehan Cui,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

2023 was the warmest year on record. Greenhouse gas levels reached new highs. Ocean heat broke new records, sea levels continued to rise, and glaciers continued to retreat.

At the same time, more than 860 million people are experiencing severe food insecurity. In Africa, nearly 60% of the population is either moderately or severely food insecure.

These are troubling times, but this is not a time for despair. Instead, what we need is to roll up our sleeves to support agricultural innovation so that human ingenuity, invention and dynamism can help us address our many challenges.

There is already some cause for optimism.

A recent survey of seed industry experts found that 9 in 10 believe we will continue to develop more resilient and productive crops.

At the broader picture, according to WIPO's latest World IP Report, intellectual property applications related to agricultural innovation surged from 36,000 in 2008 to 136,000 in 2021.

Closer home, we see a similar increase in PVP filings.

Filings have grown by 80% over the past eight years with now close to 200,000 titles in force. Filings grew by 7% last year, with nearly 29,000 filings recorded. This is the highest growth rate of all IP filings.

China remains the most significant driver, with filings up a further 25% last year. But it's not the only growth engine. Economies as diverse as Kenya, the Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa and Viet Nam also saw double-digit growth last year.

These developments highlight that more breeders – of all sizes and in all locations – are turning to PVP to unlock innovation, boost productivity, and support economic and social progress.

Today, I want to emphasize how UPOV, under its new leadership, is upholding a plant variety protection system that fosters innovation, drives investment, and supports a more sustainable future.

I will focus on the three pillars of UPOV's Strategic Business Plan – uniting stakeholders, awareness and assistance, and service provision.

Pillar 1 highlights UPOV's role as a convenor of members and stakeholders – efforts that are growing in importance as the use of the UPOV System expands around the world. Recently, we welcomed Armenia as UPOV's 79th member and have important agenda items today regarding the accession procedures of Laos PDR and the United Arab Emirates.

With the increase in members and filings, the importance of the work of this Council, and of our committees and working groups will only grow.

The work of UPOV should also be seen in its broader, international context, and especially in its strong connection with global development goals.

With agriculture touching on all but 2 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the work of UPOV is a horizontal enabler of the SDGs and addressing our common, global challenges like hunger, climate change and sustainability.

To concretize this, we need to step up our work with other agencies and stakeholders, working in a multi-stakeholder and inclusive manner.

This week, we have heard about the importance of providing farmers with varieties that are resistant to disease, along with the need of UPOV – and its members – to strengthen international cooperation for innovation in this area.

With new technologies emerging, it is also important that we harness them for the good of the world. We have also heard about the importance of image analysis, automated data capture and cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, in assessing plant varieties.

It is critical that UPOV continues to stay ahead of these trends. The horizon scanning initiative agreed by the Consultative Committee will help guide these efforts and how UPOV should evolve to support continuous advancements in plant breeding.

Pillar 2 focuses on raising awareness, providing training and offering assistance.

Our desire and ability to engage beyond our community of experts and to communicate about the value of our work to a broader audience out there is critical to our continued relevance and success. To do this, we must communicate about the value of our work, sharing stories on how our work has touched the lives of people, through channels that are used by them.

One such story is that of Dr. Mary Mgonja from the United Republic of Tanzania. Her journey in plant breeding started with a dogged determination to build a career in one of agriculture's most challenging fields. Now, her plant breeding venture, Namburi, produces hundreds of tons of maize and sorghum seeds annually, benefiting some 40,000 farmers and leading to the creation of more than 40 demonstration fields across the country. Stories like Dr. Mary's bring our work alive and engage the 99% out there unfamiliar with UPOV and the importance of plant breeding.

On training and support, 16 States have requested legislative assistance this year, bringing the total to 34 over the past two years. This includes 28 countries that are not yet UPOV members – demonstrating growing interest in our work.

Beyond bilateral support, we are also engaging with regional platforms. For example, this year we held a successful regional workshop on PVP for ARIPO, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization, involving representatives from the 22 ARIPO Member States.

Within countries, we also need to engage with in-country experts. Alongside our regular suite of learning courses, the UPOV PVP Certificate Program launched in April and has been well received. Designed for PVP officials, office staff, examiners and other practitioners, 42 certificates have been issued in just the first 5 months of operation. We greatly appreciate the enthusiastic engagement of members and stakeholders. Looking ahead, we will continue to find new ways of broadening engagement with UPOV and providing our experts and breeders with the skills they need to maximize the potential of PVP.

Pillar 3 is about delivering high-quality services to UPOV Members.

Since its launch last September, UPOV e-PVP, our digital application and administration service, has made significant progress. Twelve authorities, including Brazil, Canada, the EU, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States, have committed to using the DUS Exchange Module, and three – Ghana, the UK, and Viet Nam – have committed to the e-PVP admin service.

As this system facilitates more efficient collaboration – like the recent exchange of seven DUS reports between the Netherlands and Viet Nam – we are confident that engagement will continue to grow, and we are ready to support members and users in this regard.

Additionally, we have seen a 4% increase in applications submitted via UPOV PRISMA and a nearly 40% rise in the number of general service users of our PLUTO database. The value of member and stakeholder engagement in driving these projects forward cannot be overestimated, with these digital tools instrumental in broadening access to PVP and ensuring its benefits reach the grassroots level. While the numbers are a good start, we believe that we can do more to boost the usage of these services, and we will work closely with Members to step up our efforts in this area.

Ultimately, our focus on all of these areas of work is to deliver impact. Plant Variety Protection is not just a technical matter for those steeped in the mysteries of the UPOV system. Rather, UPOV is a vital link in our efforts to address food security, climate change, global health, poverty reduction and other challenges.

Let us therefore work together, in partnership and as the tight UPOV family that is our hallmark to strengthen plant variety protection, deepen UPOV engagement with the world and drive agricultural innovation for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

[Annex II follows]

ANNEX II

INTERVENTION BY MS. VARSIK MARTIROSYAN, HEAD,
DEPARTMENT OF PLANT PRODUCTION, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

ON BEHALF OF:
MS. TATEVIK SARGSYAN,
DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ARMENIA,
AT THE FIFTY-EIGHTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

Distinguished President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to address you today as Armenia has become the 79th member of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). This step serves as testament to Armenia's dedication to advancing its agricultural sector and supporting sustainable economic growth.

By joining UPOV, Armenia not only aligns itself with international standards but also commits to take steps aimed at empowering our breeders, farmers, and entrepreneurs to succeed in a competitive global market. Protecting plant varieties is essential for boosting productivity and ensuring that the plant varieties of scientific research in agriculture are effectively safeguarded. For Armenia, this means unlocking opportunities to cultivate new and improved plant varieties that are resilient, high-yielding, and climate-adaptive, which is imperative for enhancing food security and rural development.

Our membership in UPOV will further encourage foreign investments in Armenian agriculture by providing a robust legal framework for the protection of intellectual property rights in plant breeding. This protection is not only a tool for economic development but also a pathway to more sustainable agricultural practices. It will enable Armenian farmers to access higher-quality seeds, their productivity, and contribute to Armenia's role in enhancing regional food security.

We understand that joining the UPOV not only provides us with big opportunities but also brings significant responsibilities. As we integrate UPOV's principles into our national legislation, we commit to balancing the interests of all stakeholders to ensure that everyone benefits from the progress we make.

In conclusion, I would like to convey Armenia's sincere gratitude to the UPOV community for welcoming us into this esteemed organization. We look forward to work with all our partners to create a future where agricultural innovation thrives, sustainable development is achieved, and our farmers and breeders are empowered to contribute to a more resilient agricultural sector. The Government of Armenia is fully committed to collaborating with all member countries, UPOV Secretariat and other stakeholders in a spirit of unity and partnership, to collectively advance the shared vision of a sustainable and progressive world—one that future generations will benefit from.

Thank you.

[Annex III follows]

ANNEX III

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS / LIST OF PARTICIPANTS /
TEILNEHMERLISTE / LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

(dans l'ordre alphabétique des noms français des membres /
in the alphabetical order of the French names of the Members /
in alphabetischer Reihenfolge der französischen Namen der Mitglieder /
por orden alfabético de los nombres en francés de los miembros)

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