Annex 5

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture inputs to

High-level Political forum 2019

"Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality"

Goal 4. *Quality education;* ***Goal 8.*** *Decent work and economic growth;* ***Goal 10.*** *Reduced inequalities;* ***Goal 13.*** *Climate action;* ***Goal 16.*** *Peace, justice and strong institutions;* ***Goal 17.*** *Partnerships for the Goals.*

The **Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** is the only permanent intergovernmental body that specifically addresses biological diversity for food and agriculture. It aims to reach international consensus on policies for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.

The Commission initiates, oversees and guides the preparation of global sectoral and cross-sectoral assessments. These assessments address the state of biodiversity and genetic resources in the respective sectors, along with their uses, drivers that contribute to their erosion, and the challenges and opportunities involved in conserving and using them in a sustainable manner to contribute to food security and nutrition. The global assessments are prepared through participatory, country-driven processes.

In response to the main gaps and challenges identified in the global assessments, the Commission may decide to agree on policy responses, such as Global Plans of Action through which governments commit to take action to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and genetic resources in their respective sector. Implementation of these policy instruments is monitored by countries through the Commission which, on the basis of the implementation results produces new global assessments of the sectors at about every ten years.

I. Progress and challenges

The Commission, at its 17th Regular Session, welcomed FAO's first global assessment report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* as an important milestone for the Commission and the UN Decade on Biodiversity and as an important contribution to the discussions on the Convention on Biological Diversity's post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Report provides an assessment of biodiversity for food and agriculture and its management worldwide, drawing on information provided in 91 country reports (prepared by over 1 300 contributors), 27 reports from international organizations and inputs from over 175 authors and reviewers. It describes:

- the many contributions that biodiversity for food and agriculture makes to food security and nutrition, livelihoods, the resilience of production systems, the sustainable intensification of food production and the supply of multiple ecosystem services;
- the major drivers of change affecting biodiversity for food and agriculture;
- the status and trends of various components of biodiversity for food and agriculture;
- the state of management of biodiversity for food and agriculture;

- the state of policies, institutions and capacities that support the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture; and
- needs and challenges in the management of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

The Report will serve as a baseline for future assessment of progress under SDGs 2, 15 and 14. It clearly shows that biodiversity for food and agriculture is indispensable to food security, sustainable development and the supply of many vital ecosystem services. However, many key components of biodiversity for food and agriculture are in decline, and knowledge of associated biodiversity, in particular micro-organisms and invertebrates, and of its roles in the supply of ecosystem services needs to be improved. Multiple interacting drivers of change are having major negative impacts on biodiversity for food and agriculture and the ecosystem services it delivers, and many of these drivers are at least partly caused by inappropriate agricultural practices. On the positive side, some of these drivers, especially policies and innovations in science and technology are seen as opportunities to balance other drivers and provide opportunities to promote more sustainable management. The sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture call for approaches in which genetic resources, species and ecosystems are managed in an integrated way in the context of production systems and their surroundings. Countries reported an increase in the use of a wide range of management practices and approaches regarded as favourable to the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture. Enabling frameworks for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture urgently need to be established or strengthened. Improving the management of biodiversity for food and agriculture and enhancing its contribution to ecosystem services call for better multistakeholder, cross-sectoral and international cooperation.

The Commission noted that the country-reporting process had been a good opportunity for countries to assess gaps and needs with respect to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture. It agreed on a process in which its Members over the next two years will review and revise the *Revised draft Needs and possible actions*[1] for the Commission's consideration at its next Session, with the motivation to have it adopted as a Global Plan of Action by the FAO Conference at its Forty-second Session in 2021.

Development and progress against SDG targets and indicators

The Commission recognizes the importance of developing targets and indicators for biodiversity for food and agriculture that promote coherence and cooperation among international fora and organizations and reduce the reporting burden on countries. The Commission has taken a leading role in the development and monitoring of SDG indicators under Target 2.5 (genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plans, farmed and domesticated animals and related wild species).[2] FAO maintains two dedicated databases for the monitoring of Target 2.5:

[1] CGRFA-17/19/7/3

[2] Please see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg2 for the full description of SDG targets and indicators.

- The Domestic Animal Diversity Information System[3] provides tools to monitor national breed populations and to make informed decisions on the management of animal genetic resources. It provides access to official data on the implementation of the animal component of SDG indicators 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.
- The World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture[4] provides access to official data on the implementation of the plant component of SDG indicator 2.5.1.

Data show that the number of conserved plant and animal genetic resources (SDG indicator 2.5.1) is rising. Globally reported accessions of plant genetic resources have reached 4.9 Million. However, only for 15% of livestock breeds, material is stored in genebanks and countries report that only for 7 % of breeds, stored material is sufficient to allow for reconstitution of the breed[5].

Results for SDG indicator 2.5.2 (risk classification of local breeds) show that across the world, 67 percent of local breeds are classified as of unknown status, 26 percent as at risk, and 7 percent as not at risk, when excluding extinct breeds[6]. Results differ widely across regions. In all regions except Europe and the Caucasus and North America, more than 80 percent of local breeds are of unknown status. In Europe and the Caucasus, 40 percent of local breeds have unknown status, 51 percent are considered as at risk, and 9 percent not at risk. Improved reporting and reducing the number of local breeds with unknown population status remains a challenge, as is the case for crop varieties and wild relatives kept on farm and in situ.

Readjustment of strategic planning in support of the SDGs

The FAO Conference, at its 41 Session, adopted a resolution on *The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its Contribution to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*[7]. Subsequently, the Commission adopted its ***Strategic Plan for the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2019–2027)***.[8] The Strategic Plan contains four cross-sectoral goals which are in support of the SDGs and build on the strategic priority areas, long-term goals and targets of the Commission's global action plans on plant, animal and forest genetic resources[9] for food and agriculture and other Commission activities taken in response to the global assessments[10].

[3] http://www.fao.org/dad-is/en/
[4] http://www.fao.org/wiews/en/
[5] http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/251/en/
[6] CGRFA-17/19/11.2/Inf.4
[7] Resolution 4/2017 (C 2017/REP, Appendix E).
[8] CGRFA-17/19/Report
[9] http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/policies/global-instruments/gpa/en/
[10] http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/assessments/global-assessments/en/

Goal 1: Sustainable use: Promote the sustainable use and development of genetic resources for food and agriculture and, more generally, all biodiversity relevant to food and agriculture, to increase production for world food security and sustainable development[11];

Goal 2: Conservation: Maintain the diversity of genetic resources for food and agriculture[12];

Goal 3: Access and benefit-sharing: Promote appropriate access to genetic resources for food and agriculture and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization[13];

Goal 4: Participation: Facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in decision-making.[14]

II. Successful experiences and lessons learned on HLPF theme

The Commission initiated a call for project proposals related to the ***Funding Strategy for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources***[15]. Twelve projects were successfully closed. The projects facilitated activities improving the management of animal genetic resources for more than 50 different national breed populations belonging to seven species. A review found that awareness raising was a key component of all projects and most of the projects included capacity-building activities. Livestock keepers were the main beneficiaries of the projects. More than 2 150 people attended awareness-raising, capacity-building and dissemination events with widely diverse participants, including government personnel, livestock keepers, researchers and technical experts. These stakeholders benefited through increased networking with other livestock keepers and technical experts. Livestock keepers represented both genders and a wide range of age groups. Other stakeholders who benefitted included members of producer and marketing associations, university students and staff of implementing agencies. At least 20 policies of various types were prepared in the course of the first project cycle, including breeding strategies, conservation plans and biocultural community protocols. An ex-post informal survey indicated that in 10 of these projects, the activities started by the projects either continue or have evolved into new activities. The extent of the activities range from continued contact between the project implementer and beneficiary livestock keepers (e.g. Bolivia and Peru) to full government buy-in to ensure sustainability (e.g. Ethiopia).[16]

[11] Goal 1 supports SGD 2.4; SDG Target 14.4; SDG Target 15.2
[12] Goal 2 supports SDG 2.5
[13] Goal 3 supports SDG 2.5 and SDG 15.6
[14] Goal 4 supports SDG 16.7
[15] CGRFA-12/09/Report, Appendix C.
[16] CGRFA-17/19/11.2/Inf.2