

Inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2024 Inputs from functional commissions of ECOSOC, other intergovernmental bodies and forums to the 2024 HLPF

1. Entity/ Intergovernmental body or forum

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

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4. Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.

SDG 1- No Poverty

The biodiversity and climate crises are severe threats to efforts to end poverty and hunger. Crops, livestock, forest trees, along with farmed and wild-harvested aquatic organisms, are direct sources of livelihood for large numbers of people worldwide, including particularly many of the most vulnerable. These livelihoods are also underpinned by ecosystem services provided by a wide range of other components of biodiversity (e.g. pollinators, soil-dwelling organisms, biological control agents, grasslands, coral reefs and mangroves). Loss of biodiversity threatens livelihoods and reduces the options available for future livelihood development. Climate change also has multiple livelihood impacts. Moreover, the two crises are closely interlinked. Climate change threatens biodiversity, and biodiversity is key to the carbon cycle and provides many options for improving climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Links between biodiversity and livelihoods are at the heart of the Commission's work, and it has a workstream on climate change. The Commission works to strengthen efforts to improve the management of biodiversity and genetic resources to support livelihoods across all the sectors of food and agriculture, including by overseeing country-driven global assessments of components of biodiversity ("State of the World" reports), by negotiating policy responses to these global assessments, and by monitoring and supporting the implementation of the policy responses. The five existing policy responses (the global plans of action for plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources and the Framework of Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture) provide guidance on country-level action and promote international cooperation in the management of biodiversity. At present, global assessments for plant, forest and animal genetic resources are at various stages of development and when complete will feed into reviews and potential updates of the respective global plans of action, all of which emphasize the management of genetic resources to support present and future livelihoods and food security.

The Commission's support for ongoing implementation of its global policy instruments includes overseeing the preparation of a range of guidelines on policy and technical issues, convening workshops and other events, and overseeing the development of global information systems for managing data on genetic resources of various kinds. Recent examples include the publication of the proceedings of the First Multistakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources, held in March 2021, which emphasise the importance of sustainably using and conserving the farmers' varieties and landraces grown in smallholder

agriculture and the crop wild relatives found in natural and semi-natural ecosystems, the publication of several practical guides on the conservation of plant and aquatic genetic resources, and the preparation of studies that identify gaps and needs at national and international levels in the management of various groups of microorganisms and invertebrates of importance to food and agriculture (pollinators, biological control agents, rumen microbes and soil-dwelling organisms). The Commission recently established two new subsidiary bodies, the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Expert Group on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, the latter with a mandate to address integrated approaches to the management of biodiversity across the sectors of food and agriculture and at all levels from genes to ecosystems. These subsidiary bodies will provide opportunities for country representatives to discuss technical matters in the respective fields and feed recommendations into the Commission's work.

SDG2 – Zero Hunger

Loss of genetic resources and other components of biodiversity is a serious threat to food security and interacts with the threat posed by climate change. As noted above, biodiversity is essential to food production and to many livelihood activities that help support household and individual food security. Diversity among the species, varieties as well as breeds raised and harvested underpins the supply of diverse and nutritious diets. It helps maintain food supplies in the face of shocks and seasonal and year-to-year variations in production conditions. Various components of biodiversity, notably microorganisms used in food processing, contribute to the utilization of food post-production. The Commission's past work in the nutrition field has included the development of guidance on mainstreaming biodiversity into national nutrition-related policies and programmes and it maintains a workstream on biodiversity, nutrition and human health. Food-processing microorganisms will be among the functional groups of microorganisms and invertebrates considered by the next session of the Commission, which will provide an opportunity to identify gaps and needs in this field and potential actions to be taken by the Commission and its Members to address them.

SDG 13 – Climate Action

As noted above, climate change is a severe threat to food security and agricultural livelihoods and is closely linked to biodiversity loss. The Commission seeks to promote the mainstreaming of the management of genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture into climate change policies and actions and to ensure that climate change is accounted for in efforts to support the sustainable use and conservation of these components of biodiversity. The Commission's above-described global assessments and policy responses address these links. Over the years, the Commission has also overseen the development of voluntary guidelines on the integration of genetic diversity into national climate change adaptation planning and the publication of several studies specifically addressing the roles of genetic resources for food and agriculture in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change..

SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The pressures exerted by biodiversity loss, climate change and food insecurity are threats to the achievement of SDG 16. Most of the targets under this SDG are not specifically within the ambit of the Commission's work. However, in its work to support the development of effective policy and institutional frameworks for the management of genetic resources and biodiversity the Commission has sought to promote participatory and transparent approaches and has provided information and tools that contribute to capacity development.

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

The Commission's global policy instruments target capacity development, technical assistance and technology transfer in their respective fields of activity, particularly within and to developing countries. The Commission oversees and promotes activities of this kind on an ongoing basis, offering a space for discussion of integrated approaches that support both socioeconomic and environmental development objectives at all levels.

5. Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

With regard to the work of the Commission, key areas of activity include the following:

1. The implementation of the Commission's global plans of action for plant, animal forest and aquatic genetic resources promotes the sustainable use and conservation of the respective components of biodiversity in ways that promote their multiple contributions to the achievement of the SDGs, including their major and direct contributions to livelihood development and poverty reduction (SDG1), food security and nutrition (SDG 2), and climate change adaptation and mitigation (SDG13). The longer established of these global plans of action have proved their value to countries over extended periods of time. The implementation of the Commission's Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture promotes an integrated approach to the management of all components of biodiversity, including microorganisms and invertebrates, across all the sectors of food and agriculture.
2. The preparation of country-driven global assessments of plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture underpinned the development of the above-mentioned policy instruments, and the rolling reporting cycles allow for periodic reviews of the state of their implementation and for their potential updating to address emerging challenges. The national-level elements of the reporting processes provide countries with an opportunity to review the state of their policies and programmes for the management of genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture and identify what needs to be done to improve them and strengthen their implementation.
3. The Commission's work in areas such as access and benefit-sharing, digital sequence information, nutrition and climate change supports the mainstreaming of the sustainable use and conservation of multiple components of biodiversity for food and agriculture in an integrated manner into the development and implementation of policies and programmes in these fields.

6. Three examples of specific actions, policies and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

1. Urgent action is needed to implement all aspects of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM GBF).
2. In the context of the above, there is a need to ensure that the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity of importance to food and agriculture is adequately addressed and that the food and agriculture sector plays an active role in meeting the goals of the KM GBF. Effective implementation of the Commission's global policy

instruments (the FA BFA and the global plans of action for PGRFA, FGR, AnGR and AqGR) is required.

3. At all levels, there is need to ensure that efforts to address the biodiversity, climate change and food security crises are undertaken in a coordinated way so that synergies can be promoted and trade-offs managed.

7. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

The last meeting of the Commission took place before the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit was agreed upon. However, the Commission's work in support of the sustainable management of genetic resources and biodiversity in the food and agriculture sector contributes to efforts to achieve many of the objectives highlighted in the Political Declaration's call to action, particularly those related to ending hunger and food insecurity and to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the KM GBF.

8. Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF.

The sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity of importance to food and agriculture is vital to efforts to meet multiple targets across the SDGs, including many of those under review in 2024. Ecosystems used by the food and agriculture sector, such as forests, grasslands, oceans and coastal and inland wetlands, are critical both to livelihoods and food security as well as to carbon sequestration. The available evidence indicates that many of these ecosystems along with the species and genetic diversity within them are in decline and remain under threat. Global action is needed to tackle threats to biodiversity and ensure it is conserved and used sustainably to help develop resilient, equitable and climate-friendly agrifood systems and provide healthy diets for all. This requires greater efforts to understand the contributions that specific components of biodiversity make to food and agriculture, how these components interact with each other, what drivers threaten their survival, and how their sustainable use and conservation can best be promoted. It requires action on the part of agrifood system stakeholders, but it also requires that their needs are taken into account, particularly those of the poorest and most marginalized among them. The KM GBF needs to be implemented urgently, including in the food and agriculture sector. Stepping up the implementation of the Commission's global plans of action for plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources and its Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture would make an important contribution to these efforts.