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Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO

Executive summary

In keeping with established practice, the Council is informed of developments in other fora of importance for FAO's mandate:

- 1) Outcomes of the Tenth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Diplomatic Conference on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources;
- 2) The Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia and International Conference on Food Security in Samarkand;
- 3) Processes related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs); and
- 4) The 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit and Artificial intelligence and digital solutions for the transformation of agrifood systems.

Further information on the above topics are posted as Web Annexes to CL 174/INF/4.

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 174th Session of the Council for information only.

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I. Outcomes of the Tenth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Diplomatic Conference on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources

1. The Tenth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), hosted by the United States of America, took place in Bonn, Germany, from 28 August to 2 September 2023. The Plenary approved the summary for policymakers of the invasive alien species assessment¹ and accepted its individual chapters on the understanding that the Secretariat would subsequently revise the chapters to ensure their consistency with the summary for policymakers as approved. The report highlights that more than 37 000 alien species have been introduced by many human activities to regions and biomes around the world, of which more than 3 500 of these are harmful invasive alien species – seriously threatening nature and nature's contributions to people and good quality of life in all regions and in every country. Alongside causing dramatic changes to biodiversity and ecosystems, the global economic cost of invasive alien species exceeded USD 423 billion annually in 2019, with costs having at least quadrupled every decade since 1970. The report finds that nearly 80 percent of the documented impacts of invasive alien species on nature's contributions to people are negative – especially through damage to food supplies. On a more positive note, it highlights that future biological invasions, invasive alien species and their impacts, can be prevented through effective management and more integrated approaches. The use of biological control for invasive alien plants and invertebrates has been effective – with success in more than 60 percent of known cases. The report offers useful information for fighting against invasive alien species and achieving Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

2. Ongoing thematic and methodological assessments of IPBES address (i) interlinkages among biodiversity, water, food and health,² (ii) underlying causes of biodiversity loss, determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 vision for biodiversity,³ and (iii) impact and dependence of business on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people.⁴ The Plenary at its Tenth Session also approved the three following additional assessments to be prepared up to 2030: (i) a second global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services; (ii) a fast-track methodological assessment on monitoring biodiversity and nature's contributions to people; and (iii) a fast-track methodological assessment of integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and ecological connectivity, for consideration.

3. On 21 July 2022, the General Assembly of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) decided to convene a Diplomatic Conference to conclude an International Legal Instrument Relating to Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources no later than 2024. A Special Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) was held from 4 to 8 September 2023 and a meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Diplomatic Conference from 11 to 13 September 2023.

4. The creation and implementation of patent disclosure requirements related to genetic resources and traditional knowledge have been under discussion in the IGC since 2001. The Diplomatic Conference, if successful, would therefore conclude a lengthy process spanning more than two decades during which the IGC held 48 sessions. In 2009, the WIPO Assembly had agreed to “undertake text-based negotiations with the objective of reaching agreement on a text of an international legal instrument (or instruments) which will ensure the effective protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions”.⁵ The Diplomatic Conference will take place at a time when governments continue to seek, in a number of fora, solutions to the adequate recognition of countries of origin of genetic resources and related genetic sequence data,

¹ [IPBES Invasive Alien Species Assessment: Summary for Policymakers](#) – Advance unedited version

² [Nexus assessment | IPBES secretariat](#)

³ [Transformative change assessment](#)

⁴ [Business and Biodiversity assessment](#)

⁵ WO/GA/38/20, para. 217

and/or the holders of associated traditional knowledge, including the World Health Organization, under the Convention on Biological Diversity and under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

II. The Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia and International Conference on Food Security in Samarkand

5. On 9 March 2023, the Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia was co-organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Turkmenistan with the theme “Cooperation on Food Security in the context of Climate Change”. During the meeting, the ministers reaffirmed the need to find and apply new solutions to create environmentally sustainable and climate change-adapted food systems, with the use of innovative approaches and mechanisms. They also expressed their readiness to put into practice the concept of interaction in the field of food security with the active participation of international organizations and financial institutions.

6. The International Conference on Food Security, held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 7 to 8 September 2023, was organized by the Government of Uzbekistan with the technical support of FAO.

7. Ministers of Agriculture of countries of Eurasia and the Middle East, as well as high-ranking representatives of development partners, regional groupings, and United Nations agencies, experts from international organizations and financial institutions participated in the Conference. The Conference underscored the importance of joint action by countries and international and regional organizations to ensure food security in the context of multiple uncertainties and challenges and expressed concern over the global food security situation. The discussions were held around multiple topics, including strengthening agrifood systems sustainability in landlocked countries, access to healthy diets, climate change impacts on food security, strengthening gender equality in rural areas, agrifood trade promotion with focus on land-locked countries, innovative agricultural development and digital agriculture, etc. The “[Samarkand Declaration](#)” was published as a result of the Conference and will be soon submitted to the United Nations General Assembly.

III. Processes related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

8. In 2024, the international community will convene in Antigua and Barbuda for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and in Kigali, Rwanda for the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). The Conferences will review the progress made and challenges in achieving the commitments under the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway) and Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs, respectively. New, distinct ten-year programmes of action for SIDS and LLDCs will also be established.

9. As part of the preparations for the SIDS Conference, the three regional review meetings for SIDS from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS), Caribbean and the Pacific were held in 2023, along with an interregional preparatory meeting in Cabo Verde. Similarly, the preparations this year for the LLDCs Conference consisted of three regional review meetings for LLDCs in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. Both processes will hold preparatory committee meetings at the United Nations headquarters in the first semester of 2024.

10. FAO participated in the aforementioned preparatory meetings this year and will continue to support the preparatory process in 2024 as well as the implementation of the new programmes of action.

11. FAO strengthened its political dialogue with Heads of State and/or Government and High-Level Government Representatives of Caribbean countries on food security at the Seventeenth Special Meeting of the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) in the Bahamas in

February 2023. FAO partnered with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, in the organization of the Seventeenth Caribbean Week of Agriculture in the Bahamas in October 2023.

IV. The 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit and Artificial intelligence and digital solutions for the transformation of agrifood systems

12. The SDG Summit held from 18 to 19 September 2023 in New York during the United Nations General Assembly, which reviewed progress made and showcased national plans to accelerate implementation of the SDGs. One of the strategic accelerators that was extensively highlighted and discussed is the Innovation and Technology Lever, and acceleration of global trends including the emergence of new and disruptive digital technologies.

13. FAO recognizes that digitalization and the use of data and artificial intelligence (AI) in many sectors, particularly in agriculture, play an important role in supporting evidence-based policy, planning and implementation to not only improve efficiency and productivity, but to also reduce negative environmental impacts.

14. FAO has been actively focusing its efforts on contributing to an “Open, Free and Safe Digital Future For All” – as outlined in the UN Secretary General’s Our Common Agenda Policy Brief on a [Global Digital Compact](#).