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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 7.1 of the Provisional Agenda

Twentieth Regular Session

Rome, 24–28 March 2025

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Note by the Secretariat

The Commission, at its last session, requested its intergovernmental technical working groups to meet prior to its Twentieth Regular Session.¹ The Thirteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) was held in Rome from 20 to 22 November 2024. The Working Group considered: (i) the status of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources ; (ii) FAO's activities related to monitoring the diversity of animal genetic resources; and (iii) the ongoing preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It also addressed the role of genetic resources for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and options for the identification of new and emerging issues.

The report of the Thirteenth Session of the Working Group is contained in this document, for consideration by the Commission.

¹ CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 139.



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

COMMISSION ON
GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE

CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/Report

Thirteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Rome, Italy, 20–22 November 2024

CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/Report

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON

ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Rome, Italy, 20–22 November 2024

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2024

The documents prepared for the Thirteenth Session of the Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture are available on the Internet at the following address:

<https://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/events/events-detail/en/c/1697147/>

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) was held in Rome, Italy from 20 to 22 November 2024. The Members and alternates of the Working Group are given in *Appendix B*. The list of delegates and observers is available on the meeting website.²

II. OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND *RAPPORTEUR*

2. Mr Harvey Blackburn (United States of America), Chairperson of the Twelfth Session of the Working Group, opened the session and welcomed delegates and observers.

3. Mr Thanawat Tiensin, Assistant Director General and Director, Animal Production and Health Division, welcomed delegates and observers. He stressed the importance of the livestock sector but noted the challenges it faces. He further stressed FAO's commitment to innovation and to harnessing the potential of novel approaches, such as new breeding techniques and feed, to enhance food security while minimizing the environmental impact of the livestock sector. He also reported on the ongoing preparation of a Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Livestock Transformation, which is taking inspiration from the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (Global Plan of Action).

4. Mr Dan Leskien, Senior Liaison Officer of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), welcomed delegates and observers. He pointed out that FAO's work on animal genetic resources does not take place in isolation. It is an intrinsic part of FAO's work towards shaping sustainable, productive and resilient agrifood livestock systems. He stressed that the Commission therefore provides an excellent forum not only for considering the status and needs of the individual sectors – animal, aquatic, plant, forest, and microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources – but also for considering the broader picture: the interactions between sectors, possible synergies, and practices and policies addressing biodiversity for food and agriculture as a whole.

5. In line with Article III of its Statutes, the Working Group, in consultation with the regions, replaced absent Members of the Working Group with other Members of the Commission present at the session. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand therefore attended the session as Members of the Working Group.

6. The Working Group elected Mr Samuel Paiva (Brazil) as Chairperson. Mr Tesfu Fekensa Tujuba (Ethiopia), Mr Jan Hendrik Schneider (Germany), Mr Luisito Avante (Philippines), Ms Hoda M Al-Dosari (Qatar), Mr Charles Wesley Kato (Tonga) and Mr Harvey Blackburn (United States of America) were elected as Vice-Chairpersons. Mr Schneider was elected *Rapporteur*.

7. The Working Group adopted the agenda as given in *Appendix A*.

III. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES*

8. The Working Group considered the document *Review of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*³ and took note of the *Summary progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*.⁴

9. The Working Group welcomed the activities taken by FAO to support countries in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. It recommended that the Commission call upon countries to continue to implement the Global Plan of Action with a view to contributing to global food security,

² <https://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/events/events-detail/en/c/1697147>

³ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3.

⁴ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.

sustainable rural development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 15 and to the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector. It recommended that FAO continue to support countries in implementing the Global Plan of Action, including through its Technical Cooperation Programme, and inform Regional and National Coordinators for the Management of Animal Genetic Resources about relevant projects. The Working Group further encouraged FAO to facilitate cooperation among countries and regions in their efforts to conserve and sustainably use animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (AnGR).

10. The Working Group recommended that FAO prepare a technical guidance document exploring the range of disaster mitigation and recovery measures, as they relate to AnGR, including *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation. It recommended that FAO report in greater detail the data made available to the Domestic Animal Diversity Information (DAD-IS) on cryoconserved material, including material from transboundary breeds in different countries.

11. The Working Group recommended that FAO evaluate previous capacity-development workshops and take the evaluation results into account in conceptualizing future events. It invited countries to provide FAO with more detailed information on national projects and policies related to the conservation and sustainable use of AnGR, and recommended that, when reporting on the information received, FAO arrange it according to the strategic priority areas of the Global Plan of Action.

12. The Working Group recommended to invite and actively engage with donors to contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including by providing funds to the FAO Trust Account for the Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources.⁵ It recommended that the Commission invite FAO and all relevant stakeholders to continue raising awareness, particularly among decision makers, on the importance of AnGR and the roles of livestock keepers and of livestock species and breeds and their production systems in the provision of ecosystem services.

IV. MONITORING THE DIVERSITY OF ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

13. The Working Group considered the document *Monitoring the diversity of animal genetic resources*⁶ and took note of documents *Status and trends of animal genetic resources – 2024*,⁷ *Detailed report on the development of the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System*,⁸ and *Alternative methods to estimate breed population size in a cost-efficient way: a brief guide*.⁹

14. The Working Group welcomed the updated information on DAD-IS and stressed its importance as the international clearing-house mechanism for AnGR. It recommended that FAO continue providing Regular Programme funds and the necessary technical support to maintain and further develop DAD-IS, including by improving its user-friendliness, interoperability and responsiveness, and by updating the tools for SDG Indicator 2.5.2.

15. The Working Group stressed the need for countries to regularly update their national data in DAD-IS, especially the data pertaining to breed adaptation classifications, cryoconservation and population sizes, and to bees managed for food and agriculture, to ensure that any measures taken to implement the Global Plan of Action and to achieve SDG Target 2.5 are based on the most up-to-date

⁵ FAO. 2010. *Funding Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/4/i1674e/i1674e00.pdf>

⁶ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4.

⁷ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.1.

⁸ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.2.

⁹ FAO. 2024. *Alternative methods to estimate breed population size in a cost-efficient way: a brief guide*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd1881en>

data and information available. It recommended that FAO organize a webinar to share information about the use of a breed recognition tool and explore further options for data collection and validation. The Working Group invited countries to provide images of livestock cattle breeds for the breed recognition tool development.

16. The Working Group recommended that FAO follow-up with countries regarding the status of breeds with unknown risk status and recommended that countries update their national breed lists in DAD-IS accordingly.

17. The Working Group recommended that FAO, in order to facilitate decision making, develop a new index combining existing information in DAD-IS on cryoconserved material, demographic risk status and existence of *in situ* conservation programmes. It further recommended that FAO continue to provide technical support to countries in their efforts to improve the accuracy of DAD-IS content, including through mentoring and the development of new, and the updating of existing, user manuals, as well as through the organization of global and regional training workshops and the provision of support for the collection of relevant data.

V. PREPARATION OF *THE THIRD REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

18. The Working Group welcomed the working document *Preparation of The Third Report on The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*¹⁰ and took note of the information document *Synthesis progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources – 2024*.¹¹

19. The Working Group reviewed the status of the preparation of *The Third Report on The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report). It recommended to also consider regional specificities. It further recommended to highlight important issues and data, including those related to cryoconservation, in the Third Report, and that the Third Report be complemented with chapter summaries.

20. The Working Group took note of the status of the preparation of thematic studies on special topics and their relevant issues and questions. The Working Group thanked the authors for providing a detailed and intensive overview of their work during the Session.

21. The Working Group Members noted that all questionnaires received by 30 April 2025 will be utilized in the preparation of the Third Report. It recommended that the Secretariat inform all Commission Members about this deadline and continue providing technical support.

22. The Working Group recommended that the Commission encourage countries to continue the collection of information and data for updating their country report questionnaires; endorse the updated timeline; and request FAO to make draft elements of the Third Report available online for review by Members as the elements become available and to engage actively with Members by organizing a dedicated webinar for each element.

23. The Working Group recommended that the Commission invite FAO Members to provide support and expertise for the preparation and review of the Third Report.

¹⁰ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/5.

¹¹ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/5/Inf.1.

VI. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

24. The Working Group considered the document *Climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture*¹² and took note of the information documents *Draft baseline report on genetic resources for food and agriculture and climate change*¹³ and *FAO's work on climate change*.¹⁴

25. The Working Group recommended that the Commission invite Members to make use of the FAO tools and guidance on climate change adaptation and mitigation when developing or updating their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, it noted the urgent need to raise awareness of stakeholders and policymakers for the key role of genetic resources in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change especially for breeding purposes, to lower greenhouse gas emissions and support greater health and robustness, and more efficient production.

26. It recommended that FAO support countries in identifying and articulating how science-based information as well as inputs of farming communities and the private sector, related to livestock and different climate change scenarios, may be collected and incorporated into NAPs.

27. Furthermore, it took note of the draft baseline report and noted the difficulty for National Focal Points to the Commission to coordinate among the agencies responsible for the different sectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture a national response to the questionnaire. It recommended that in future endeavours the Commission consider consulting directly the sectoral National Focal Points on climate change matters specifically related to their sectors.

28. It urged National Focal Points to the Commission that have not yet done so to complete the questionnaire by 31 January 2025. It also recommended that the draft baseline report be revised in the light of further submissions.

29. The Working Group recommended that the global multistakeholder workshop on climate change and GRFA be convened before the Twenty-first Regular Session of the Commission to exchange information and experiences, share views and priorities, and discuss possible changes to the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning (Voluntary Guidelines),¹⁵ taking into account the findings of the baseline report. It highlighted the importance of involving all relevant stakeholder groups in the workshop.

30. It further recommended that the Voluntary Guidelines be revised in light of the baseline report and the outcome of the workshop, for consideration in sub-regional and regional consultations and subsequently by the Working Groups and the Commission. It noted that the Voluntary Guidelines could also provide examples, as appropriate, of how integration of genetic diversity may facilitate mitigation of climate change and the adaptation of agrifood systems to the consequences of climate change.

VII. OPTIONS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF NEW AND EMERGING ISSUES

31. The Working Group considered the document *Options for the identification of new and emerging issues*.¹⁶

32. The Working Group recommended that the Commission, at its forthcoming session, consider the adoption of a new procedure for the ad hoc identification of new and emerging issues. It also

¹² CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6.

¹³ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6/Inf.1.

¹⁴ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6/Inf.2.

¹⁵ FAO. 2015. *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning*. Rome. www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/290cd085-98f3-43df-99a9-250cec270867

¹⁶ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/7.

recommended to consider the involvement of the Commission's working groups in the identification and discussion of new and emerging issues, taking into account the need to limit the quantity of new and emerging issues, in order to avoid overburdening of Commission Members.

VIII. CLOSING STATEMENTS

1. Mr Badi Besbes, Chief, Sustainable Animal Production, Feed and Genetics Branch, Animal Production and Health Division, congratulated the Working Group on its accomplishments and on a fruitful meeting. He affirmed the commitment of the Animal Production and Health Division, and the Animal Production and Genetics Branch in particular, to work with Members to continue supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. He further noted that FAO stands ready to continue providing technical support to Members in updating and finalizing their questionnaires for the Third Report. He ended by thanking the Government of Germany for its generous financial support and other countries for their in-kind contributions.

2. Mr Leskien thanked the Working Group for the fruitful discussions and the detailed comments received, which will be considered at the Commission's Twentieth Regular Session scheduled to be held from 24 to 28 March 2025. He noted that the guidance the Working Group provided on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, on DAS-IS and on the preparation of the Third Report, is essential for the work of FAO and the Commission. In concluding, he thanked the Governments of Canada, Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland for supporting the work of the Commission and its Working Groups and expressed his gratitude to all Members and observers, the Chairperson and *Rapporteur* for having made the meeting a success.

3. The Chairperson thanked all delegates and the *Rapporteur* for their contributions to the success of the Session. He concluded by expressing his thanks to the Secretariat for the organization of this Thirteenth Session.

APPENDIX A

**AGENDA OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL
WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

1. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson(s) and *Rapporteur*
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
3. Status of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources
4. Monitoring the diversity of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture
5. Preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*
6. Climate change and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture
7. Options for the identification of new and emerging issues
8. Any other matters
9. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B**MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, ELECTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

<i>Composition (no. of countries per region)</i>	<i>Country</i>
Africa (5)	Ethiopia Gambia Mauritania Chad Zimbabwe <i>First Alternate:</i> Malawi <i>Second Alternate:</i> Namibia
Asia (5)	China India Republic of Korea Philippines Bhutan <i>First Alternate:</i> Bangladesh <i>Second Alternate:</i> Malaysia
Europe (5)	France Germany Poland Spain Switzerland <i>First Alternate:</i> Netherlands (Kingdom of the) <i>Second Alternate:</i> Norway
Latin America and the Caribbean (5)	Argentina Brazil Cuba Panama Uruguay <i>First Alternate:</i> Costa Rica <i>Second Alternate:</i> Peru
Near East (4)	Egypt Libya Qatar Sudan <i>First Alternate:</i> Kuwait <i>Second Alternate:</i> Oman
North America (2)	Canada United States of America
Southwest Pacific (2)	Samoa Tonga <i>First Alternate:</i> Vanuatu <i>Second Alternate:</i> Samoa

APPENDIX C
LIST OF DOCUMENTS

WORKING DOCUMENTS

CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/1	Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson(s) and Rapporteur
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/2	Provisional agenda
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/2 Add.1	Annotated provisional agenda and timetable
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3	Review of implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4	Monitoring the diversity of animal genetic resources
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/5	Preparation of The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6	Climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/7	Options for the identification of new and emerging issues

INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/1/Inf.1	Statutes of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and Members and Alternates elected by
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/1/Inf.2	Information note for participants
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/2/Inf.1	List of documents
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1	Summary progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.1	Status and trends of animal genetic resources – 2024
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.2	Detailed report on the development of the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/5/Inf.1	Synthesis progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources – 2024
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6/Inf.1	Draft baseline report on genetic resources for food and agriculture and climate change
CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/6/Inf.2	FAO's work on climate change

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Alternative methods to estimate breed population size in a cost-efficient way: a brief guide
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