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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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TARGETS AND INDICATORS FOR GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Fifteenth Regular Session, considered targets and indicators for biodiversity for food and agriculture and welcomed the role of FAO in leading the development and use of international targets and indicators for biodiversity for food and agriculture. The Commission encouraged FAO to continue its work in this area to ensure consistency and coherence among the relevant fora and processes. It requested its Secretary to provide technical inputs to the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to continue its engagement in the post-2015 UN development agenda.¹

2. FAO continues to play a significant role at the global level in the development, refinement and application of targets and indicators related to genetic resources for food and agriculture. This document provides background information on the 2030 Development Agenda adopted in September of last year and on FAO's role in the development and implementation of indicators for monitoring progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For the individual sectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture, reference is made to other documents made available for this session:

- Assessments of the status and trends of **animal and plant genetic resources**, based on indicators developed under the Commission's guidance, are provided in the documents, *Status of animal genetic resources – 2016*² and *Assessment of the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2012-2014*.³
- Targets and indicators for **forest genetic resources** are discussed in the document *Monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources*.⁴
- Since 2013, no reporting on the **indicators on food composition and on food consumption** was performed due to lack of resources. However, in response to the Commission's request⁵, FAO published in April 2016 a new version of the FAO/INFOODS Food Composition Database for Biodiversity⁶ with about 1400 new lines of data, mainly on cereals, cassava, beef and fish.
- Following the finalization of *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, the Commission may wish to discuss the development of targets and indicators for **aquatic genetic resources** for food and agriculture within the context of the indicators developed for the relevant SDGs.⁷

II. THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

3. In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁸ The new Sustainable Development Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, will guide the actions of governments, international agencies, civil society and other institutions over the next 15 years. The 2030 Agenda is defined not only by the

¹ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 15

² CGRFA-16/17/Inf.15.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.17.2.

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/20

⁵ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 16

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/infoods/infoods/tables-and-databases/faoinfoods-databases/en/>

⁷ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.13.

⁸ Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/Res/70/1).

outcome of the September 2015 SDG Summit but also by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda⁹ and the Paris Agreement¹⁰ on climate change.

4. Succeeding the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda represents a real transformation in viewing and doing development and sets out an ambitious framework of universal goals and targets to address a range of global societal challenges. Universal, indivisible and ambitious, the 17 SDGs aim to end poverty and hunger, while restoring and sustainably managing natural resources. The SDGs integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, environment and social), with closely interwoven goals and targets, and demand comprehensive, evidence-based and participatory approaches to problem-solving and policy-making.

5. Food and agriculture, and biodiversity and ecosystems feature prominently across many of the SDGs and associated targets. The 2030 Agenda was developed ensuring consistency with the Convention on Biological Diversity CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as other existing international commitments such as the Commission's Global Plans of Action. The SDGs and the CBD's Strategic Plan are mutually supportive and reinforcing, such that the implementation of each will contribute to the achievement of the other.

III. THE UN AND FAO'S ROLES IN SUPPORT OF THE 2030 AGENDA

6. The SDGs are the first Member State-led global development push in history, laying out specific objectives for countries to be reached with an agreed timeframe and with the level of achievement being monitored on a regular basis. The SDGs provide a set of interconnected priorities, requiring integrated approaches across the different dimensions of the SDGs.

7. As the outcome of the largest multi-stakeholder consultation in history, the SDGs enjoy strong country ownership and commitment to their implementation. Countries are committed to the implementation of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda based on national needs, stage of development and capacities, resources, strategies and partnerships. Partnerships will be the key for mobilizing the needed "means of implementation".

8. The United Nations System, including FAO, are expected to provide coordinated and integrated support leading to comprehensive and well-coordinated national plans and programmes. As cooperation among countries increases, UN support to Member States is shifting – with less emphasis being placed in the future on joint projects and more attention being paid to policy advice, institutional capacity development and monitoring of progress. UN Country Teams will be called upon to operationalize the 2030 Agenda at country level with deeper and more extensive coordination across the UN System than in the past. UN specialized agencies, which have the technical, monitoring and policy expertise, will support work at country level and have been assigned system-wide responsibilities to ensure consistency at all levels. The role of the UN system as convener and facilitator of support processes and partnerships will be fundamental to successfully implementing a transformative agenda.

FAO activities in support of the 2030 Agenda

9. With a broad mandate cutting across multiple SDGs, FAO has strong comparative advantages in its capacity to assist countries meet the new challenges.¹¹

10. FAO is currently assessing the implications of the 2030 Agenda for its policy work at global, regional and national levels. A key challenge is to provide norms, frameworks, standards, tools and data that enable action by others. As proposed in the Medium Term Plan 2018-21¹², FAO will

⁹ Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

¹⁰ The Paris Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: Adoption of the Paris Agreement FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1).

¹¹ FAO 2016. *Food and agriculture: Key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*; CBD, FAO, UNEP, World Bank, UNDP 2016: *Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

¹² COFI/2016/8; COFO/2016/5.1; COFO/2016/5.2; COAG/2016/4

incorporate in its results matrix, the Organization's own accountability framework, indicators related to 53 indicators across 15 SDGs¹³. FAO is engaging in UN country and regional programming initiatives, with emphasis on expanding FAO's policy contribution in the new cycle of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and FAO Country Programming Frameworks. In the area of partnerships, FAO already convenes or leads more than 160 global and regional intergovernmental forums, multi-stakeholder alliances, partnerships, and platforms covering all areas of food and agriculture. FAO will also offer support to many of the 40 countries that will prepare voluntary national reviews for presentation at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), a new body convened under the auspices of the President of ECOSOC, and for the regional forums that are being convened to review progress toward achievement of the SDGs.

11. The success of the SDGs rests to a large extent on an effective implementation, monitoring, review and follow-up process. The role of the UN Regional Commissions and other regional bodies have been considerably strengthened in the new SDG monitoring framework. The progressive regionalization, over time, of UN governance finds expression in the commitment of Agenda 2030 to regional follow-up and review. This presents opportunities as well as additional potential costs to FAO as FAO will need to engage the regional processes in the areas of the Organization's global responsibilities for reporting, monitoring, follow-up and review.

12. The 2030 Agenda puts in place a global reporting structure that includes inputs at local, national and regional levels, and culminates in the HLPF. The HLPF was established to guarantee regular top-level review of outcomes and experiences, and to offer guidance on necessary changes in approach or in duplication of efforts. The new global framework will require unprecedented investment, both by traditional donors and national governments. The HLPF will review in 2017 progress made on several of the SDGs which are highly relevant to FAO's core mandate and also relate to biodiversity, such as SDGs 1 (poverty), 2 (food security and sustainable agriculture) and 3 (health and wellbeing).

- **Reporting:** collecting and analysing statistical information based on the expanded set of 230 SDG indicators.
- **Monitoring:** producing reports monitoring progress towards the achievement of SDG targets, as well as commitments and follow-up actions, including policies, investments, budgetary expenditures, programmes and partnerships, in support of Agenda 2030.
- **Follow-up and Review:** UN regional and global bodies are expected to analyse and evaluate the UN system reports, supported by specialized intergovernmental bodies of the UN system. A key feature of the follow-up and review process will be the sharing of national experiences, with all countries expected to participate in voluntary reviews at least twice in the 15-year cycle.

SDG Reporting, monitoring, follow-up and review

13. A global indicator framework comprising 231 indicators was agreed at the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) in March 2016 as a "practical starting point" to monitor the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SDG indicators are the foundation for mutual accountability of this new global framework. Given the SDGs' breadth and complexity, these indicators are designed to capture the main thrust of the targets, as it would be impossible to measure all the elements covered with a limited number of indicators. While the number of indicators is subject to change before adoption by the UNGA, the final agreed list is not expected to be updated until 2020, when a first complete review of the global indicator framework will be undertaken by the UNSC.

14. Each global SDG indicator has been assigned a 'custodian' UN agency responsible for collecting data from national sources, providing the storyline for the annual global SDG progress

¹³ From SDG2 (end hunger and malnutrition), 13 indicators related to 8 targets have been selected and incorporated at Outcome or at Strategic Objective; from SDG1 (eradicate poverty), 9 indicators for 6 targets; 5 indicators for 5 targets from SDG 15 ("Life on Land"); 4 indicators each from SDGs 8 (inclusive growth and decent work), 13 (climate change) and 14 ("Life under water"); 2 indicators each from SDGs 5 (women's empowerment), 6 (water) and 10 (reduce inequality); and, one indicator each from SDGs 3, 9, 11, 12, 16 and 17.

report to the HLPF, providing and updating the indicator documentation, working on further methodological development, and contributing to statistical capacity building. In addition, the custodian agency will cooperate with other relevant international agencies. Where applicable, indicators will also be disaggregated by gender, age, income, geography, occupation etc. to reflect Agenda 2030's guiding principle of "leaving no one behind".

15. SDG indicators are at different levels of development, and provisionally have been classified into three Tiers: Tier I, an established methodology exists and data are already widely available; Tier II, a methodology is established but data are not easily available; Tier III, an internationally agreed methodology is not yet developed and data are largely unavailable. Prospectively, all SDG indicators should graduate to the Tier I category.

16. The UN Statistical Division, which serves as Secretariat for the UN Statistical Commission, has proposed that FAO serve as custodian agency for 21 global indicators (spanning across Goals 2, 5, 6, 12, 14 and 15), and contributes to four additional indicators. Due to its existing monitoring schemes, FAO is, for example, the proposed custodian for both SDG indicators under SDG target 2.5. (plant and animal genetic diversity). Appendix 1 provides an overview of SDG indicators for which FAO is the custodian agency or contributor, such in the case of SDG indicator 15.6.1. for which the CBD is the custodian.

17. Custodian entities are responsible to further refine, in collaboration with other entities and stakeholder, Tier I and II indicators, to develop agreed and peer-reviewed methods for the compilation of Tier III indicators and to provide detailed and standardized documentation on all relevant SDG indicators. As custodian, FAO will be responsible for collecting data from national sources, validating and harmonizing them, estimating regional and global aggregates and publishing them online. FAO will also contribute to the annual SDG progress reports by providing country, regional and global data and storylines to the UN Statistical Division. It will be essential for FAO to establish and strengthen partnerships with other UN agencies to monitor the SDG indicators.

18. As custodian, one of FAO's primary responsibilities will be to contribute to statistical capacity development in the area of the indicator. To this end, FAO is developing guidelines, online training materials, and organizing workshops for each indicator to assist countries in incorporating the SDG indicators in their national statistical programmes and in collecting and compiling high-quality SDG data on a regular basis.

19. Countries report data for the indicators to FAO, within the regular monitoring of FAO instruments (Global Plans of Action for animal, plant and forest genetic resources), including data on *ex-situ* collections that are supported by partners such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research or the Global Crop Diversity Trust. It is important that actors and initiatives recognize and capitalize on the role of custodians of indicators so as to better position the coordinated work within the 2030 Agenda monitoring, follow-up and review architecture.

20. Since the Commission's last session, FAO continued its partnership with the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (BIP) and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The work of the AHTEG resulted in the development of a list of indicators which was subsequently considered by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice¹⁴.

¹⁴ CBD. 2016. Twentieth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, 25-30 April 2016. *Recommendation XX/13 - Fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, national reporting and indicators for assessing progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*. Montreal, Canada. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/recommendations/sbstta-20/sbstta-20-rec-13-en.doc>

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

21. The Commission may wish to:
 - i. Acknowledge the key role biodiversity for food and agriculture plays for achieving the 2030 Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and stress the need to adequately reflect this role in national development strategies;
 - ii. Request FAO to continue contributing to the development and use of international targets and indicators related to genetic resources for food and agriculture, including to the work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), with a view to ensure consistency and coherence among the relevant fora and processes;
 - iii. Request countries to collect data for annual SDG reporting and monitoring, in order to ensure an appropriate reflection in the reporting to the HLPF of the role of biodiversity for the SDGs' achievement;
 - iv. Welcome FAO's support to countries on implementation of the Global Plans of Action and the leading role of the Commission in the monitoring of SDG Target 2.5.

Appendix 1: SDG indicators: FAO as a custodian agency¹⁵

Indicator	Custodian/ partners	Tier*
2.1.1 Prevalence of undernourishment	FAO	I
2.1.2 Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	FAO	I
2.3.1 Volume of production per labour unit by classes of arming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size	FAO World Bank	III
2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status	FAO World Bank	III
2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture	FAO UNEP	III
2.5.1 Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in medium or long term conservation facilities	FAO UNEP	III
2.5.2 Proportion of local breeds, classified as being at risk, not-at risk or unknown level of risk of extinction	FAO UNEP	II
2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures	FAO IMF	I
2.c.1 Indicator of (food) price anomalies	FAO	II
5.a.1 (a) Percentage of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (out of total agricultural population), by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure	FAO UN-Women EDGE World Bank	III
5.a.2 Percentage of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	FAO	III
6.4.1 Change in water use efficiency over time	FAO on behalf of UN-Water, UNEP, IUCN	III
6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources	FAO on behalf of UN-Water, UNEP, IUCN	II
12.3.1 Global food loss index	FAO UNEP	III
14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	FAO	I
14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	FAO	III
14.b.1 Progress by countries in adopting and implementing a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries	FAO	III
15.1.1 Forest area as a percentage of total land area	FAO UNEP	I
15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management	FAO	III
15.3.1 Percentage of land that is degraded over total land area	UNCCD, FAO UNEP	III
15.4.2 Mountain Green Cover Index	FAO	II

¹⁵ <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-04/Tier%20Classification%20of%20SDG%20Indicators%20Updated%202023-09-16.pdf>

	UNEP	
FAO as contributing agency		
1.4.2 Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure	UN-Habitat World Bank FAO EDGE UN-Women Landesa	III
2.a.2 Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture Sector	OECD FAO	I
14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources	UN-DOALOS FAO ILO IMO UNEP ISA	III
15.6.1 Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits	CBD FAO UNEP	III

*** Criteria for Indicator Tiers**

Tier I: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available and data regularly produced by countries.

Tier II: Indicator conceptually clear, established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Tier III: Indicator for which there are no established methodology and standards or methodology/standards are being developed/tested.