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Preparation of the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Mexico 4-17 December 2016)

Mainstreaming of Biodiversity within and across sectors

I. Introduction

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has a longstanding history of collaborating with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as evidenced by a number of decisions and joint work programmes adopted or endorsed by the CBD Conference and Governing and Statutory Bodies of FAO. The CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity,¹ adopted in the follow-up to a joint FAO/ CBD assessment of instruments in this area, identifies assessments, adaptive management, capacity building and mainstreaming as important cornerstones of this collaboration. Since 2006, FAO and the CBD have been collaborating on cross-cutting global initiatives on pollinators², food and nutrition and soil biodiversity.

2. On various occasions, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) has addressed topics on sustainability that are relevant for biodiversity mainstreaming, for example on Sustainable Production Intensification and Sustainable Food Systems³ Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems⁴, Sustainable Crop Production Intensification⁵, on land and water resources⁶, the update of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides⁷ or governance in the livestock sector⁸.

¹ COP decision V/5, Annex.

² COAG/2016/INF/7

³ COAG/2014/4

⁴ COAG/2014/12

⁵ COAG/2012/5, COAG 2010/3

⁶ COAG/2012/7

⁷ COAG/2012/6

⁸ COAG/2014/9; COAG 2012/4 Rev.1; COAG/2010/5

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3. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD will consider at its 13th meeting, to be held from 4 to 17 December 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, strategic actions to enhance the implementation of its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 “including with respect to mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity within and across sectors.”⁹ Mexico, in its role as the host of COP-13, intends to highlight the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming for the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals and will convene a high-level ministerial segment with the aim of facilitating the adoption of a declaration on biodiversity mainstreaming within and across agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. Mexico recently circulated, through the Executive Secretary of the CBD, a non-paper outlining some possible elements of the declaration.¹⁰

4. FAO’s commitment to mainstreaming and integrating biodiversity within and across crop and livestock agriculture as well as within the other sectors, forestry and primary forestry products, fisheries, marine products,¹¹ is reflected in its Goal 3 on *Sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations*. Under the current Programme of Work and Budget¹², biodiversity forms an integral part of Strategic Priority 2, *Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*. COP-13 is expected to recognize FAO’s Reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-19 as an important contribution to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets¹³.

5. The CBD Executive Secretary, as well as representatives of the host government of COP-13 have repeatedly stressed the need for FAO’s involvement in (the preparation of) COP-13. The CBD secretariat and FAO consult regularly and closely collaborate in the preparation of COP-13.

6. This document identifies some of the challenges and opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity within the agricultural sector and summarizes recommendations adopted in the run-up to COP-13 by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) of the CBD.

II. FAO activities in the preparation of the COP-13

7. In preparation for COP13, FAO participated in the 19th and 20th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the CBD¹⁴ and the 1st meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) of the CBD¹⁵. FAO also contributed to the 8th Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity entitled “*Food systems for a sustainable future: Interlinkages between biodiversity and agriculture*” (Trondheim, Norway, 31 May – 3 June 2016), the report¹⁶ of which will inform the COP 14 high-level segment.

8. During the preparatory phase, FAO and the CBD Secretariat are regularly consulting to improve collaboration to the mutual benefit of agriculture and the environment. Internally, a task force with representatives of technical departments was established at the request of the Director General.

⁹ UNEP/CBD/COP/13/1.

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/cop/preparation/cop13-hls/default.shtml>

¹¹ Constitution, Article I.1.

¹² CL 153/3 Medium Term Plan 2014-17 (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17.

¹³ UNEP/CBD/SBI/REC/1/4 Strategic actions to enhance implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 including the mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors.

¹⁴ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/INF/4/Rev.1, see: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-19/information/sbstta-19-inf-04-rev1-en.pdf>

¹⁵ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/4 Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning; UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/42 Status of Preparation of the Report on the State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture;

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/53 Building a Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and the Implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 7; UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/54 Building a Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture - Principles and Approaches;

¹⁶ <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/en/Biodiversity/Home/Report-and-summary/>

III. Challenges and opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming

9. Agriculture, including crop and livestock production, forestry, and fisheries and aquaculture, depend heavily on biodiversity and its components, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services that they underpin. The loss of biodiversity can impact these sectors negatively, potentially threatening food security and the provision of ecosystem functions and services that are vital to humanity.

10. However, these sectors also impact on biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers. The Global Biodiversity Outlook 4¹⁷ singles out agriculture “*as the major global threat to biodiversity.*” Mainstreaming biodiversity across agriculture means to recognize the essential role of agriculture for world food security, on the one hand, and the essential role of biodiversity which provides the basis of all our food and which is threatened by unsustainable production methods, on the other. Mainstreaming biodiversity across the different sectors of food and agriculture production requires intensification of production based on ecological processes and biodiversity, increased diversity in farming systems and landscapes, including through improved connectivity in area-based conservation systems, and sustainable consumption.¹⁸ Without this transformation, food and agriculture production will continue to destroy biodiversity and thus threaten world food security.

11. The maintenance or strengthening of a diversity of habitats and production systems in the landscape, and of patches of natural and semi-natural habitats on farms, assist in making use of biodiversity and ecological process to enhance the productivity of agricultural systems, including pollination.¹⁹

IV. Biodiversity Mainstreaming in crop and livestock agriculture

12. The SBI, at its first session, adopted a series of recommendations to COP-13²⁰ related to mainstreaming biodiversity.²¹ It recommended, *inter alia*, that COP-13:

- Recognize the opportunities that arise from an integrated and mutually supportive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018), and the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-2019 of FAO for the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets;
- Urge Parties to the CBD, and invite other Governments to strengthen their efforts to mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism at all levels and scales, including by involving relevant stakeholders and by taking into account relevant standards and best practice guidance related to biodiversity in these sectors;
- Urge Parties to the CBD to use, as appropriate, existing guidance relating to the Food and Agriculture Organization’s Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Systems Guidelines and the Policy Support Guidelines for the Promotion of Sustainable Production Intensification and Ecosystem Services, take note of the voluntary guidance on Building a Common Vision for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and encourage Parties and invite other Governments to apply this guidance, as appropriate;
- Take note of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, endorsed by the Committee on

¹⁷ Global Biodiversity Outlook 4.

¹⁸ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/15 Mainstreaming of Biodiversity across sectors including Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries.

¹⁹ COAG/2016/INF/7

²⁰ Strategic actions to enhance implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 including the mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors.

²¹ UNEP/CBD/SBI/REC/1/4,

World Food Security and encourage Parties and invite other Governments to make use of this guidance, as appropriate, to promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests;

- Encourage Parties to the CBD and invite other Governments, as appropriate,
 - to reduce and reverse biodiversity loss, through the implementation, as appropriate, of sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies and integrated landscape and seascape management that foster sustainable practices, identify potential measures to contribute to the health and resilience of ecosystems and consider spatial and regional approaches as well as appropriate measures to promote the conservation and restoration of areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, habitats of threatened species, and recovery of endangered species;
 - To create and strengthen cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms that enable biodiversity mainstreaming across agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, tourism and other sectors, and to establish milestones for the mainstreaming of biodiversity in national agendas;
 - To enhance monitoring of the use of natural resources, such as land, soil and water in all sectors, including agriculture, forests, fisheries and aquaculture, among others, and to improve public access to monitoring data.
- Request the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to prepare and disseminate to Parties, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant partners, further guidance on the concept of “sustainability” in food and agriculture with regard to biodiversity, and to promote and strengthen support for relevant information-sharing and technology transfer among Parties, in particular for developing countries, building on existing initiatives, where feasible, such as the Satoyama Initiative, consistent with decisions X/32 and XI/25, and consistent with international obligations.

13. More specifically, the SBI adopted recommendations to COP-13 on agriculture, that COP-13:

- *Recognize* the importance of biodiversity to food security and nutrition and its role in human health and well-being, including through the production of food, fibers, biofuels, and medicinal plants, as well as through their contribution to ecosystem processes and mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- *Also recognize* that agriculture depends on biodiversity, as well as on the ecosystem functions and services that it underpins, but also recognizes that some agricultural and rangeland management practices maintain habitats in a variety of agricultural areas that support biodiversity;
- *Further recognize* that there are currently many unsustainable agricultural practices that can have significant impacts on biodiversity and habitats;
- *Recognize* Sustainable Development Goal 2, which refers to ending hunger, achieving food security, and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture, and its targets 4 and 5, which refer to sustainable food production systems, and the maintenance of the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species;
- *Recall* that, in decision IX/1, it was agreed that the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, including its three international initiatives on the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators, sustainable use of soil biodiversity and biodiversity for food and nutrition continues to provide a relevant framework for achieving the objectives of the Convention;
- *Also recall* that one of the conclusions of the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*²² and its supporting assessments that addressing the pressures on biodiversity

²² <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4/>.

resulting from food systems will be crucial in the success of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020,²³ and that urgent action to achieve sustainable food systems is needed;

- *Note* that the growing demand for food and agricultural commodities will increase the pressures on biodiversity unless those pressures are appropriately addressed;
- *Encourage* Parties to recognize the importance of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities for the sustainability of agriculture and to promote community and family farming, alongside agroecology, that is aligned with the world view (cosmovisión) of indigenous peoples and local communities, which upholds diversification and ecological rotation that promotes sustainable production and improving nutrition;
- *Also encourage* Parties and invite other Governments, as appropriate to use an appropriate mix of regulatory and incentive measures aligned with national biodiversity objectives, including the elimination, phasing out and reform of incentives harmful to biodiversity in order, inter alia, to reduce habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation and to increase the efficiency of use of water, fertilizer and pesticides and to avoid their inappropriate use, and to encourage public and private sources of finance to be channelled into practices that improve the sustainability of production while reducing biodiversity loss, and to promote and support the restoration of ecosystems that provide essential services in a way that provides for the needs of indigenous peoples and local communities, does not cause harm to other ecosystems, and consistent with national legislation and international obligations;
- *Further encourage* Parties and *invite* other Governments, to reduce loss and waste at all stages of production and consumption in the food system, including reducing post-harvest losses;
- *Encourage* Parties and invite other Governments and stakeholders to promote lessons learned and best practices from various sectors, such as campaigns to reduce food waste, and promote sustainable consumption, production and supply chains;
- *Also encourage Parties* and *invite* other Governments to maintain genetic diversity of resources for food and agriculture and their landraces and wild relatives as a key pathway to achieving sustainable productivity and nutritional gains, in particular in centres of genetic diversity;
- *Further encourage Parties* and invite other Governments, as appropriate, to support agricultural development models that are consistent with the Reviewed Strategic Framework 2010-2019 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations²⁴ and apply, as appropriate, the voluntary principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems approved by the Committee on World Food Security in October 2014,²⁵ noting in particular the importance of small-scale family farming, and pastoralism in view of its dominance in terms of food security and nutrition, poverty reduction, social equity in farming and biodiversity conservation efforts;
- *Welcome* the private sector initiatives to eliminate deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities and operations across their supply chains, *encourage* more companies to adopt and implement similar commitments, and *invite* Parties, as appropriate, to support these companies to achieve their initiatives;
- *Welcome* the assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production carried out by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and *note* the relevance of decision XIII/--;²⁶
- *Note* the preparation of the “TEEB for Agriculture and Food Interim Report”²⁷ and of the first *State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- *Invite* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its Committee on Agriculture:

²³ [Decision X/2, annex.](#)

²⁴ Conference of FAO, Thirty-eighth Session, Rome, 15-22 June 2013, C2013/7.

²⁵ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml291e.pdf>.

²⁶ As per Subsidiary Body recommendation XX/9 on the IPBES assessment on pollinators, pollination and food production.

²⁷ [UNEP/CBD/SBI/INF/18.](#)

- To further support the development and implementation of measures, guidance and tools to promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the crop, livestock and food and nutrition sectors, with a view to supporting member countries in the transition to sustainable food and agricultural systems;
- To consider developing a global plan of action on the basis of the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture report;
- To provide information on progress to relevant bodies under the Convention;
- *Encourage* Parties and *invite* other Governments to implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, in a mutually supportive manner.

14. No agreement has been reached by the SBI on the following recommendations to COP-13 on agriculture, that COP-13:

- [*Encourage* Parties and *invite* other Governments to develop and/or enforce, as appropriate, clear legal frameworks for land use that secure conservation and sustainably use biodiversity and national habitats;]
- [*Also encourage* Parties and *invite* other Governments to develop, as appropriate, policy frameworks for land use that reflect the national biodiversity objectives, that guide decision making at various scales and levels of governance to, inter alia, promote sustainable increases in the productivity [and diversification of production] of existing agricultural land and rangeland while enhancing ecosystem functions and services, including those services that contribute to agricultural production (such as pollination, pest control, water provision and erosion control), while also protecting, restoring and sustainably using biodiversity natural habitats and promoting connectivity in the landscape;]
- [*Encourage* Parties and *invite* other Governments to promote and support, as appropriate, the sustainable and ecological intensification and diversification of agriculture and agro-ecological approaches, including the enhanced use of a diverse range of well-adapted crops and livestock, and their varieties and breeds, and of associated biodiversity in agricultural systems, including pollinators, pest-control organisms and soil organisms that promote nutrient cycling, thereby reducing or replacing the need for chemical inputs.]

V. Conclusion

15. The Committee may wish to consider the above recommendations with a view to guide the integration of biodiversity within the agricultural sectors and across the different sectors.