



# COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

## Twenty-sixth Session

Rome, 1 - 5 October 2018

## Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform

### Executive Summary

Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including food security and nutrition, addressing climate challenges and combatting land degradation, and above all securing the health of people and planet.

The Conference, at its Fortieth Session, welcomed FAO's initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform<sup>1</sup>, and requested FAO to facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, the integration of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels.

As one of the first major activities of the Platform, FAO held on 29 to 31 May 2018 a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors. A joint report by the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue is provided in this document.

### Suggested action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to recommend that the Conference:

- 1) Welcome the convening of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors, held on 29 to 31 May 2018, in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- 2) Request FAO to develop a strategy for FAO on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors, for consideration by the Conference at its next session;
- 3) Request FAO to organize, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, regional consultations on the draft strategy on biodiversity mainstreaming;
- 4) Request FAO to continue to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform; and
- 5) Invite countries to mainstream biodiversity across their agricultural sectors.

<sup>1</sup> C 2017/33; C 2017/REP, paragraph 55.

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## I. Introduction

1. The Conference, at its Fortieth Session, welcomed FAO's initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, and requested FAO to facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other UN organizations, the integration in a structured and coherent manner of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological biodiversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels.<sup>2</sup>

## II. Background

2. Biodiversity and ecosystem services are essential for ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). All agricultural sectors (crop and livestock agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and the ecosystem functions and services that it provides. In addition to direct provision of food, biodiversity provides ecosystem services that benefit agricultural production indirectly through nutrient cycling, decomposition of organic matter, soil formation and rehabilitation, water purification, pest and disease regulation, and pollination.

3. Biodiversity plays an important role in the eradication of poverty in all of its forms (SDG1). Healthy ecosystems are essential to increase resilience and agricultural production in a context of global change, including climate change. A large number of the world's poor rely directly on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their livelihoods are affected first and foremost by biodiversity loss. Producers in smallholder and traditional systems have historically used biodiversity, including agricultural biodiversity, as an insurance and coping mechanism to increase flexibility and to spread or reduce risk in the face of increasing uncertainty and shocks. A vastly broader share of the human population would be affected by a decrease in the provision of ecosystem services related to food production, nutrition, water and sanitation.

## III. Multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors

4. As one of the first major activities of the Platform, FAO held on 29 to 31 May 2018 a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors (Dialogue). The Dialogue was co-organized with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. In the run up to the event, an e-consultation via FAO's Food Security and Nutrition Forum was held to gather comments and suggestions for the Dialogue.

5. The Dialogue brought together about 250 experts and stakeholders representing a wide range of actors, including governments, the research sector, civil society organizations, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations.<sup>3</sup>

6. The Dialogue confirmed the timeliness and necessity of mainstreaming, as a priority, biodiversity across the agricultural sectors. It also took stock of the state of current biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and experiences at different levels and identified areas of joint action in developing integrated approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, while increasing production to meet the growing demand for food. The Dialogue considered concrete future work of FAO acting as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform in support of biodiversity mainstreaming within and across agricultural sectors at national, regional and global levels.

7. The Dialogue addressed in four different working groups the topic from different perspectives: global governance; national policies and legislation; incentives and investment; and voluntary

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<sup>2</sup> C 2017/33; C 2017/REP, paragraph 55

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-dialogue-on-biodiversity/en/>

certification schemes. The results of the working group discussions were presented on 31 May 2018 to a high-level segment attended by representatives of agriculture and environment ministries.

8. The working group discussions as summarized by the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups<sup>4</sup> are given in the Appendix to this document.

#### **IV. Points for consideration by the Committee**

9. The Committee is invited to recommend that the Conference:

- (1) Welcome the convening of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors, held on 29 to 31 May 2018, in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (2) Request FAO to develop, in consultation with relevant Governing and Statutory Bodies a strategy for FAO on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors, for consideration by the Conference at its next session;
- (3) Request FAO to organize, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, regional consultations on the draft strategy on biodiversity mainstreaming;
- (4) Request FAO to continue to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform and to
  - Facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and other UN organizations, the integration in a structured and coherent manner of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels
  - Facilitate dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders;
  - Facilitate the exchange of information and data on biodiversity and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and policies among stakeholders;
  - Translate knowledge into policy-related actionable recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by FAO's Governing and Statutory Bodies; and
- (5) Invite countries to mainstream biodiversity across their agricultural sectors.

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<sup>4</sup> H.E. Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran) and H.E. Martha Bárcena Coqui (Mexico), Mr Antonio Otávio Sá Ricarte (Brazil), H.E. François Pythoud (Switzerland) and H.E. Godfrey C. Magwenzi (Zimbabwe), Ms Gunnvor Berge (Norway) and Mr Brian Baldwin (International Agri-Food Network)

## APPENDIX

### **Joint report of the co-chairs of the working groups of the multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors**

The Dialogue brought together a range of views of what the Platform should be and do. First it should be complementary, and no duplication of other initiatives. Second, it should capitalize on FAO's role as a neutral forum for policy dialogue, its convening and facilitation power at different levels, and its technical support and knowledge management functions.

The Dialogue emphasized that the Platform should explore a systemic approach with the Rio Conventions, reinforce synergies and use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to develop links and join implementation goals. This will require a transformational change in and an integrated vision for agriculture and food systems. It is expected that outcomes of this Dialogue will be one of the highlights of the Fourteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Egypt, underpinning the mandate of the Cancun Declaration. Hope was expressed that the CBD COP 15 in China would become the 'Paris of biodiversity', stressing the linkages between biodiversity loss and climate change and the risks associated with inaction.

In response to the fruitful discussions held during the Dialogue FAO will carefully consider specific actions with regard to biodiversity mainstreaming.

Three cross-cutting issues that ran across the debates in the four working groups were: 1. the absolute need to prepare, at the latest by 2020 and in collaboration with partners and relevant stakeholders, a Biodiversity Strategy setting out future activities; 2. the catalytic role of knowledge management; and 3. the importance of metrics.

Knowledge management was stressed as a critical driver of change. The Platform was asked to facilitate sharing of information, including case studies and communities of practice on valuation, policies and legislation, and to promote learning among farmers, stakeholders and decision makers, recognizing the value of local and indigenous knowledge in using and preserving biodiversity.

Another area where support was requested was on data collection and on the development of metrics and indicators to measure impact and performance of management practices on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem level, involving research and other stakeholders, such as consumers and suppliers.

The suggestions fall in the following clusters:

#### **1. Global governance**

- The Biodiversity Strategy, in support of mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, would be reviewed by the Technical Committees, the Regional Conferences and the Conference; and serve to improve mainstreaming biodiversity across FAO's departments and work;
- Provide through the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform a neutral forum for governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders along the food chain to build bridges between sectors, identify synergies, align goals and develop integrated cross-sectoral approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors;
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral dialogues at regional and national level with a view to identify gaps and opportunities with a focus on processes, policies and legislation, including research, implementation and impact;
- Lead on developing a vision for sustainable food systems of the future, and a comprehensive global plan of action on biodiversity mainstreaming in food and agriculture systems;

- Strengthen coordination of work with other relevant international fora and instruments, in particular the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Contribute to the CBD's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework towards the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, including baseline data and information for potential targets and commitments;

## **2. National policies and legislation**

- Assist countries in raising awareness of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their essential role for human well-being and food and nutrition security;
- Monitor national and regional policy initiatives, governance mechanisms and regulatory approaches that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors; providing best practices and successful models;
- Develop new, update or complement existing instruments (such as codes of practice, guidelines, and standards) with a view to support countries in the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity across agricultural sectors more effectively;
- Support countries in the development and implementation of national biodiversity mainstreaming strategies, including policies, voluntary national commitments and regulatory measures;
- Identify and promote approaches and practices that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors, across landscapes and seascapes (using experiences with agroecology and GIAHS) with a focus on strengthening research, training and extension systems;

## **3. Incentives, investment and voluntary certification schemes**

- Contribute to the improvement of methods for valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services in national accounts, and to the removal of dis-incentives;
- Support countries to review and revise incentive schemes for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in the agricultural sectors;
- Provide a neutral forum for the development of agricultural performance standards that may serve as basis for responsible private investment and voluntary standards;
- Encourage responsible, biodiversity sensitive investment in agriculture and food systems to reduce biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems;
- Facilitate dialogue, trust and transparency among all stakeholders making use of and impacting on biodiversity, and foster systematic policy change and inclusive value chains;
- Encourage investment in neutral and responsive extension services for producers;
- Carry out an inventory of existing certification schemes in different agricultural sectors and regions.

To conclude, it was recognized that there is a need to develop a long-term vision on how to bring together biodiversity with sustainable food and agriculture to help us move together in our respective work. In this regard, participants called upon FAO to develop its biodiversity strategy.