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Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Executive Summary

Biodiversity is an important factor for the achievement of food security and improved nutrition. All agriculture sectors (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and on the ecosystem functions and services they underpin. However, the sectors also affect biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers. This may also impact potentially food security and nutrition and the provision of vital ecosystem functions and services. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture has been one of the major areas of work across the technical divisions of FAO.

Africa's key challenge today is how to increase production and generate employment and income to meet the growing demand for food, feed and bioenergy of a growing and increasingly urban population while conserving biodiversity and reducing the pressure on natural resources and ecosystems to maintain those ecosystem services that human life and well-being depend upon.

The document introduces the concept of biodiversity mainstreaming, describes FAO acting as a Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, and considers cross-sectoral and sectoral issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services in agriculture, fisheries and forestry in Africa. It also refers to biodiversity and climate change. To be most effective, interventions need to be part of integrated strategies and plans, and biodiversity mainstreaming strategies should be multiscale, multisector, multistakeholder and gender-sensitive.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference may wish to provide guidance on the implementation of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform in Africa and the way forward.

In particular, the Regional Conference is invited to:

(i) invite countries to enhance collaboration and coordination towards a stronger and more effective biodiversity mainstreaming across agriculture, forestry and fisheries, including in the context of climate change;

(ii) encourage countries to consider biodiversity as a cross-subsector aspect (agriculture, forestry, fisheries) when developing agricultural policies, planning interventions in the agriculture sector, and developing climate change mitigation measures.

I. Introduction

1. Biodiversity for food and agriculture includes the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels that sustain ecosystem structures, functions and processes in and around production systems, and that provide food and non-food agriculture products. The diversity found in and around production systems has been managed or influenced by farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fishers over many hundreds of generations and reflects the diversity of both human activities and natural processes.

2. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts biodiversity at the centre of many economic activities, particularly those related to sustainable agriculture sectors, calling for the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into national and local planning, development processes. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda encompass and support existing agreements such as the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD)'s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

3. SDG 2 target is to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. With these different targets, SDG 2 exemplifies a key feature of the 2030 Agenda which stresses the interrelatedness and interdependence of many SDGs and their respective targets. Effective reduction of food insecurity and malnutrition depends on sustainable agricultural sectors. Conversely, progress towards SDG 2 will depend on progress made towards several of the other SDGs, including the eradication of poverty and the response to climate change. In order to make progress on SDG 2, policy-makers and stakeholders will need to address such critical interactions, in terms of both synergies and trade-offs, among the different SDG 2 targets and between SDG 2 and the other goals, for example: SDG 14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources; and SDG 15, to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss. Biodiversity mainstreaming across agriculture sectors will thus significantly contribute to the achievement of SDGs 2, 14 and 15 and the 2030 Agenda, as a whole.

4. Biodiversity is a key factor for the achievement of food security and improved nutrition. All agriculture sectors (crop and livestock agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and on ecosystem functions and services they underpin. However, the sectors also affect biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers. This may also impact potentially food security and nutrition and the provision of vital ecosystem functions and services. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry are the sectors that can most contribute to addressing these challenges, through biodiversity mainstreaming.

5. CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 aims to “address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society”[1]. The process aims at integrating biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of key public and private actors that impact or rely on biodiversity, so that it is conserved and sustainably and equitably used both locally and globally.

6. This document introduces the concept of biodiversity mainstreaming, describes FAO acting as a Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, and considers cross-sectoral and sectoral issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem services in agriculture, fisheries and forestry in Africa. It also refers to biodiversity and climate change.

[1] Strategic Goal A, https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/

II. Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Africa

7. Biodiversity forms the basis of all agriculture sectors as it is at the origin of all crops and domesticated livestock and the variety among them. Essential functions, such as nutrient cycling, decomposition of organic matter, soil formation and rehabilitation, water purification, pest and disease regulation, and pollination that benefit crop and livestock production, are maintained by ecosystems which are critical to sustain food production, nutrition and health and, therefore, human well-being. Forests hold the majority of the world's terrestrial biodiversity.

8. One example of these complex interactions among the sectors is the nutrient transfer from rangelands by livestock which improves croplands soil fertility. Trees, hedges and other landscape elements create habitats for pollinators and biological control agents. Sustainable intensification of agriculture allows more land to remain in a natural state. On the other hand, forest conversion leads to loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and converted or degraded land is difficult and expensive to restore. It takes a long time for restored land to provide the same benefits and services as the forest or fertile soil once did. Coastal aquaculture expansion may lead to mangrove degradation, reducing flood protection. Nutrient and pesticide effluents from agriculture may pollute water bodies and affect aquatic biodiversity.[2]

9. Land use and land use changes are main threats to biological diversity and ecosystem functions in Africa, including those supporting agriculture. In addition, land use change and habitat destruction are drivers of disease emergence in humans. More than 70 percent of emerging zoonotic diseases are assumed to come from the animal kingdom, especially from wildlife. One recent example is the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa, where the disease spread as a result of handling bushmeat and contact with infected bats.

10. Stabilizing land use is therefore a major task regarding the development of the biological diversity in landscapes and seascapes. With a growing demand for agriculture products, increasing productivity and resource use efficiency of the agriculture sectors is crucial, not only for biodiversity and ecosystem services of the planet, but for humanity that depends on those ecosystem services.

11. Strengthening and improving tenure governance is crucial not only to achieving food security and nutrition outcomes, but also for improving biodiversity. Biodiversity mainstreaming involves respecting cultural heritage sites and systems, including traditional knowledge, skills, and practices; and recognizing the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in agriculture and food systems.

12. Forestry and fisheries depend more on extraction from the wild than agriculture. These sectors have since long developed voluntary international agreements to protect the resource bases that livelihoods depend on. The global governmental concern about the sustainability of forest and marine management is mirrored by the private sector third party certification schemes which emerged in the 1990s as a tool for communicating the environmental and social performance of operations.

13. The Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI)[3] (in particular Principle 6) note that responsible investment in agriculture and food systems conserves, and sustainably manages natural resources, increases resilience, and reduces disaster risks and explicitly mentions biodiversity. Mainstreaming biodiversity across agriculture, fisheries and forestry provides employment opportunities in value chain development and diversification (e.g. labels, agrotourism).

14. The African Union, in the comprehensive regional strategic framework "Agenda 2063 - The Africa we want"[4], considers sustainable and long-term stewardship of natural resources as crucial for

[2] FAO 2016. Sustainable agriculture for biodiversity – Biodiversity for sustainable agriculture http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6602e.pdf
[3] http://www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf
[4] https://au.int/agenda2063/about;

economic and social development. Agenda 2063 combines ambitious goals on agriculture for increased production, productivity and value addition that contributes to farmer and national prosperity and food security with goals on the valuation and protection of Africa's unique natural endowments, its environment and ecosystems, including its wildlife and wild lands, especially related to climate resilience. The Agenda states that "Africa by 2063 will have been transformed such that natural resources will be sustainably managed and the integrity and diversity of Africa's ecosystems conserved" and that "Africa's biodiversity, including its forests, wildlife, wetlands (lakes and rivers), genetic resources, as well as aquatic life, most notably fish stocks and coastal and marine ecosystems, including transboundary natural resources will be fully conserved and used sustainably".

15. The paragraphs under this section address, by subsector, the recent trends of the resources in Africa, and some challenges and opportunities ahead, as well as some examples of FAO's work.

A. Agriculture

16. Subsistence agriculture is important for the livelihoods of many poor households in Africa. Due to low productivity, production growth in Sub-Saharan Africa since the 1980s has been based almost entirely on extending the area under cultivation. Opportunities to improve the efficiency of this form of agriculture, such as the strengthening of farmer organizations and value chains, need to be combined with wider rural development, and social protection programmes. There are many opportunities to improve the efficiency of small-scale subsistence farms, for example through improved cultivation, irrigation, seed storage, breeding, crop-livestock integration, animal feeding and management, agro-ecological practices, composting, agroforestry and food storage practices.

17. However, production should not only address the quantity of food or calories but high nutrient values such as vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients as well, which are rich in many underutilized crops such as those researched and promoted by the African Orphan Crops Consortium.

18. FAO has been producing technical guidance documents to assist African countries in finding synergies between chemicals management and conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services and biodiversity. The documents have a policy focus, and are specifically geared towards the revision, or implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), to help meet the relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and of equivalent, relevant policies in the agriculture sector[5]. The recent Twenty-first meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice invited FAO to contribute, as appropriate, to providing support to Parties in preparing their sixth National Reports[6].

19. Furthermore, FAO is supporting ongoing activities in Africa to mainstream further agrobiodiversity for sustainable agriculture at the policy level. Through different, interlinked, and crucial processes, FAO is providing technical , in-country expertise on agrobiodiversity, to mainstream the concept and related agricultural practices and providing technical support to mainstream the incorporation of provisions for the protection and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, including by fostering information sharing and exchange of experiences between the different sectors.

[5] FAO, CBD 2016. Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa. Practical issues for consideration in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to minimize the use of agrochemicals. Technical guidance document, http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5603e.pdf
[6] CBD/SBSTTA/REC/XXI/5

B. Fisheries and aquaculture

20. The fisheries sectors are important sources of employment and food security in Africa. In 2014, 10 percent of the global population engaged in the fisheries and aquaculture sector was in Africa.

21. Marine, coastal and inland ecosystems host a variety of aquatic biological diversity that greatly contribute to the economic, social and cultural aspects of communities around the world. Fisheries and aquaculture depend on the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems to maintain economic, social and ecological benefits in the long-term. Biodiversity is the source of fisheries, and mainstreaming biodiversity in fisheries policies, programmes and plans is key to sustain the habitats which serve as feeding, spawning and nursery sites which are essential for wild fish populations.

C. Marine fisheries

22. The Indian and Atlantic Oceans also contain a wealth of biodiversity. In many coastal countries fisheries are well developed and the majority of the fisheries resources are fully exploited or already overexploited. Overall, the Eastern Central Atlantic has 53.5 percent of its assessed stocks fished within sustainable levels. However, according to IUCN, 37 of assessed 1 288 bony fish species are threatened with extinction and 14 species are Near-Threatened - many of them important food sources. Other threats to these species include the degradation of habitats, pollution, climate change and invasive species.[7] In the Southwest Atlantic, 50 percent of the assessed stocks were fished within biologically sustainable limits. The Western Indian Ocean has a higher share of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels.[8]

23. The continuing problem of Illegal, Unregulated and Unrecorded (IUU) fishing affects biodiversity as well as national job creation in Africa. Although IUU is a problem in the region[9], the legally binding Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA) that came into force on 5 June 2016 has been ratified by only a few African countries.

24. Fishing activity is not the only threat to marine biodiversity. The destruction of habitats (e.g. logging of mangroves, harbour construction, oil exploration and exploitation) can also have an impact on the diversity of marine and estuarine life. For example, discarded fish from industrial vessels attract large numbers of seagulls, whose breeding colonies increase in size, directly competing with other bird species breeding at the same locations. Manatees and seals are under threat by the reduction of their habitats. In addition to the ecosystem approach to fisheries[10] management, marine protected areas (MPAs) are one other approach beneficial to marine biodiversity, provided that the coastal human populations are involved in the biodiversity conservation.

D. Inland fisheries

25. Some of the characteristics of the African Great Lakes are the numerous species of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, plankton, and other phyla, most of them endemic. The usual sources of perturbation, such as overfishing, dumping of untreated sewage, pebble and sand mining, agricultural run-off, oil exploration, water-level fluctuations and other threats, have impacts on African water

[7] IUCN 2016. Red list of marine bony fish species of the Eastern Central Atlantic. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. viii + 80 pp, https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/RL-2016-002.pdf
[8] FAO 2016. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture.
[9] ODI 2016 Western Africa's missing fish. The impacts of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and under-reporting catches by foreign fleets. https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10665.pdf , https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/29/tackling-illegal-fishing-in-western-africa-could-create-300000-jobs
[10] http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/16034/en

bodies, including the Great Lakes, . African waters also experienced many introductions of exotic species, many of which became invasive.

26. Lake Victoria has a long history of fish introductions (e.g. Nile tilapia and Nile perch) and invasive weeds (e.g. water hyacinth), but on Lake Tanganyika the original species composition of many taxa can still be conserved and protected, at a cost. In the light of the impact of the Nile tilapia on the local fish species communities in Lake Victoria very strict measures should be taken to keep this species out of other species-rich lakes, where this species does not yet occur. However, introduced species can be economically rewarding, for example since the commercial exploitation of the Nile perch on Lake Victoria, billions of dollars have been earned along the value chain of this species.

27. The Great Lakes surrounding countries, by means of conventions and regional management bodies, sought to protect the environments and called for international collaboration to improve management of the natural resources, both terrestrial and aquatic. The way forward will be to involve local fishing communities in nature conservation and management.

E. Aquaculture

28. The share of African aquaculture production, though continuously increasing, is only 16 percent of total production of aquatic animals, much less than the world average of 45 percent, and provides less than 2 kg food per capita.[11] With the increasing human population and the stagnating capture fisheries production, much emphasis will be placed on the development of aquaculture. It will be important that aquaculture will grow in a sustainable, resources efficient manner and not add further pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems.

F. Forestry

29. Forest biodiversity includes all the life forms found within forested areas as well as the ecological roles they perform. Prospects for sustainable development will be greatly influenced by the state of diversity of forest ecosystems and species. They provide people with a range of benefits which extend far beyond the provision of timber. The ecosystem services that forests provide are of particular importance for the poor and vulnerable. Furthermore, for many people they are an essential element of cultural identity, spirituality and worldview.

30. Forests and tree-based agricultural systems contribute directly and indirectly to the livelihoods of an estimated one billion people globally. Non-wood Forest Products are important for food security and nutrition while trees and forests are vital for their role in the provision of ecosystem services to agriculture.

31. Forest take many forms, depending on their latitude, geology and soil, rainfall and prevailing temperatures. The richest forests in Africa in terms of biodiversity are those close to the equator, in areas with high rainfall. Mangrove forests play a special role, catering for not only terrestrial biodiversity, but also as nurseries for many fish species, including coral reef fish. Mountains and mountain ranges are another special case of areas high in biodiversity.

32. Many forestry operations substantially affect the composition of the biomass and biodiversity present in the forests. Forestry therefore implicitly carries a huge responsibility in maintaining the overall biodiversity in a landscape. The alarming expansion of large-scale industrial production systems in tropical regions threaten the contributions of forests and tree-based agriculture systems to food security, diets and nutrition in the tropical regions of the world. The 2016 SOFO[12] showed a strong correlation between agricultural expansion and deforestation in Sub-Saharan Africa over the period 2000 to 2010, resulting in net forest loss of 19 Mill ha and net gains in agricultural area.

[11] FAO 2016. State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture.
[12] FAO 2016. State of the World's Forests.

Commercial agriculture accounts for one-third of forest loss in Africa, where small-scale agriculture is the most significant driver of deforestation.

33. Already in the 1960s, FAO initiated work on forest genetic resources, i.e. the heritable materials maintained within and among trees and other woody plant species that are of current or potentially future economic, environmental, scientific or societal value. FAO coordinated the preparation of the first ever State of Forest Genetic Resources which included data from 31 African countries. The report was published in 2014[13] and a Global Plan of Action adopted by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) as a follow-up.

34. FAO's work on wildlife and protected area management ranges from legislative and policy support to capacity development and technical guidance. Today FAO hosts the Collaborative Partnership on Wildlife, and major areas of its work are addressing unsustainable use of wildlife, invasive species, human-wildlife conflict, competition of wildlife with livestock and the transmission of zoonotic diseases to humans at the human-livestock-wildlife interface.

35. FAO is strongly engaged in promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through knowledge generation and technical support to countries. At the moment, through REDD+, SFM has regained public attention. In Africa many countries are active in the REDD+ work, and are now moving into a more active phase of REDD+ implementation, which has SFM as a corner stone.

36. The first ever UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030[14], contains six global forest goals, and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030. They support the objectives of the International Arrangement on Forests and aim to contribute to progress on the SDGs, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other international forest-related instruments, processes, commitments and goals.

37. FAO is, and has been throughout, an active stakeholder in these discussions. Throughout these international processes and deliberations, biodiversity has been a key element. Biodiversity is for instance clearly listed "Forest biological diversity" as one of the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management, as adopted in the UN Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI). Forests, forestry, and biological diversity are intricately linked. Work is, and has been, ongoing, for a long time to mainstream biological diversity within the agriculture subsector forestry.

38. Work is ongoing in Africa for restoring large areas of previously degraded (forest) land. The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) is one example. It is a country-led effort responding to the African Union mandate to bring 100 million hectares of degraded land into restoration by 2030, as expressed in the political declaration endorsed by the Africa Union in October 2015 for the creation of the umbrella Africa Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI). AFR100 is coordinated by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). To date, more than 80 million hectares of land has been committed. FAO is a technical partner in this initiative. The headquarters-based Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism coordinates FAO's work in this area.

G. Climate change adaptation

39. There are several reasons why plants and animals are less able to adapt to the current phase of global warming. One is the very rapid pace of change: it is anticipated that over the next century the rise in average global temperatures will be faster than anything experienced by the planet for at least

[13] http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e.pdf
[14] http://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html

10 000 years. Many species will simply be unable to adapt quickly enough to the new conditions, or to move to regions more suited to their survival[15].

40. Equally important, the massive changes humans have made to the landscape, river basins and oceans of the world have closed off survival options previously available to species under pressure from a changing climate. There are other human-induced factors as well. Pollution from nutrients such as nitrogen, the introduction of alien invasive species and the over-harvesting of wild animals through hunting or fishing all reduce the resilience of ecosystems, and thus the likelihood that they will adapt naturally to climate change[16].

41. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a comprehensive assessment of the links between ecosystem health and human well-being, climate change is likely to become the dominant direct driver of biodiversity loss by the end of the century. Projected changes in climate, combined with land use change and the spread of exotic or alien species, are likely to limit the capability of some species to migrate and therefore will accelerate species loss.

42. The changes on the ground needed for adaptation to climate change in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition will require to be enabled by investments, policies and institutions in various areas. Increasing resilience of food security in the face of climate change calls for multiple interventions, from social protection to agricultural practices and risk management. Biodiversity is a key factor underlying the resilience of ecosystems to existing stresses and is a basic ingredient for building their adaptive capacity in the face of future stresses.[17] The recent edition of the Climate-Smart Agriculture Sourcebook contains a wealth of references to biodiversity and genetic resources.[18]

43. Many African countries have acknowledged the importance of agrobiodiversity and the ecosystem based approached in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Projects covering several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have enabled the integration of conservation and sustainable use of agriculture related biodiversity and ecosystem services into agriculture production practices and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) approaches in more than ten countries[19].

III. FAO as a Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform

44. FAO has a long-standing history in pursuing its goal to alleviate poverty and end hunger and malnutrition by promoting sustainable agricultural development and implementing ecosystem approaches.

45. FAO’s Strategic Programme 2 aiming to "make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable”, reflects the need for biodiversity mainstreaming by demanding productivity increases in the agriculture sectors to go hand in hand with economic, environmental and social sustainability. Working together with many partners, FAO contributes at multiple levels to biodiversity mainstreaming. Avoiding adverse impacts of agricultural practices on biodiversity, ecosystems and natural habitats is a key demand of FAO’s Environmental and Social Management Guidelines.

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[15] https://www.cbd.int/doc/bioday/2007/ibd-2007-booklet-01-en.pdf
[16] https://www.cbd.int/doc/bioday/2007/ibd-2007-booklet-01-en.pdf
[17] FAO 2016. Climate change and food security: Risks and responses. www.fao.org/3/a-i5188e.pdf
[18] CSA sourcebook chapter on genetic resources has been prepared, http://www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture-sourcebook/production-resources/module-b8-genetic-resources/b8-overview/en/
[19] Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, the Niger, Nigeria, Madagascar, Seychelles and the United Republic of Tanzania.

46. FAO's Global Important Agricultural Heritage System promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through management of natural resources based on traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities.

47. Acting as the Platform, FAO ensures consideration of biodiversity by its Governing and Statutory Bodies facilitating dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders on concrete and coordinated steps to mainstream biodiversity across the agriculture sectors. The Platform also facilitates the exchange of information and data among stakeholders to reach a common understanding of the status quo, trends and trade-offs in the conservation and use of biodiversity services as well as the exchange of expertise to improve the design and coordination of relevant policies from local to international levels. Acting as the Platform, FAO assists in translating the richness and variety of forms of knowledge into policy-related forms of knowledge that can be shared among the different agriculture sectors.

48. The ultimate goal of the Platform is the adoption of good practices across all agriculture sectors that will support biodiversity conservation and increase the productivity, stability and resilience of production systems in an integrated landscape/seascape approach, reducing pressure on natural habitats and species. This will also require better coordination among the different agriculture sectors as none of them may be able to address biodiversity in isolation.

49. As an early activity, FAO intends to facilitate an informal multistakeholder dialogue between the environment and agriculture sectors with a view to identifying areas of joint action in developing integrated approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

50. Taking into account the outcome of the multistakeholder dialogue, the Platform could in the mid- to longer-term develop further activities in the region, including:

1) identify policy gaps and governance challenges related to biodiversity in all relevant sectors;
2) contribute to the achievement of the relevant SDGs and Aichi Biodiversity Targets within the framework of Agenda 2030;
3) identify and promote existing governance mechanisms and policy initiatives that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agriculture sectors;
4) strengthen bridging processes, at national, regional and international levels to allow the agriculture sectors to learn from each other and from the environment sector, identifying synergies and aligning goals;
5) coordinate biodiversity mainstreaming with efforts to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use; and
6) providing capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements in Africa.

IV. Conclusion

51. Africa’s key challenge today is how to increase production, employment and incomes to meet the growing demand for food, feed and bioenergy of a growing and increasingly urban population while conserving biodiversity and reducing the pressure on natural resources and ecosystems to maintain those ecosystem services that human life and well-being depend upon.

52. To be as effective as possible such interventions need to be part of integrated strategies and plans as indicated in biodiversity mainstreaming. The strategies should be multiscale, multisector, multistakeholder and gender-sensitive. They should be elaborated in a transparent way and consider the different dimensions (social, economic, environmental) of the issues and different time scales by which the changes will need to be implemented and supported. They should be based on assessments

of trends, risks and vulnerabilities, learn from experience and progresses, and be regularly monitored, assessed and updated.

53. FAO strives to harmonize the need for food with the need to protect natural resources through the development of an integrated approach to sustainability across agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It recognizes that biodiversity is an integral part of agriculture sectors and is committed to working with governments and other key actors to mainstream biodiversity as a vital element within and across sustainable agriculture sectors.