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Developments in *Fora* of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Executive Summary

In keeping with established practice, the Council is informed of developments in other *fora* of importance for FAO's mandate. Presentations will be made on the following topics at the 150th Session of Council:

- 1) 37th Session of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission
- 2) Global Health Security Agenda
- 3) UNSG's Climate Summit (New York, 23 September 2014)
- 4) Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 12) / Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (COP MOP)
- 5) Enhancement of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing: International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- 6) Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Development Agenda
- 7) Global Migration Group
- 8) Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to end hunger in Africa by 2025 within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Framework

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 150th Session of the Council for information only.



I. 37th Session of the FAO/WHO Codex Commission

1. The Codex Alimentarius Commission held its 37th session (CAC37) from 14 to 18 July 2014 in Geneva and was attended by representatives from 170 Member Countries and the European Union, as well as 30 international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The CAC is a main contributor to FAO Strategic Objective 4 “Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems”.
2. CAC37 adopted maximum acceptable levels of lead in infant formula and of arsenic in rice and other contaminants, as well as maximum levels of pesticide residues and additives. The Commission adopted a code of hygienic practices for spices and dried aromatic herbs and new safety and quality standards for foods such as raw scallops, passion fruit, durian and okra. The Commission also recommended restricting the use of certain veterinary drugs in food producing animals. Future work will include establishing standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin, oregano, thyme and garlic, and setting maximum levels for cadmium in chocolate and cocoa-derived products. Following a proposal from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Commission also discussed the need for a Codex standard for ready-to-eat foods for malnourished children in order to guarantee the safety and quality of such foods.
3. CAC37 noted the Codex budget reports for the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 biennia and highlighted the need for a better budgeting and work-planning process. The Commission encouraged Codex members to advocate for adequate budgetary allocations through the Governing Bodies of FAO and WHO, and expressed appreciation to the Organizations for their scientific support and stressed the importance of funding to ensure provision of scientific advice. The Commission agreed to establish a monitoring framework for the implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019.
4. Furthermore, CAC37 noted the continued interest in the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) and its importance to enable participation in Codex meetings and expressed support for the development and implementation of a successor initiative when the current CTF ends in 2015. In this regard, the Commission expressed satisfaction with the joint FAO/WHO Capacity Development programme. Finally, CAC37 agreed to start work on identifying scope and processes to evaluate the work management of Codex, including the functioning and composition of the Executive Committee.

II. Global Health Security Agenda

5. The Global Health Security agenda (GHSa) brings some 40 countries, international organizations and public and private stakeholders together to seek an accelerated progress toward a world safe and secure from infectious disease threats, and to promote global health security as an international security priority. The prevention and reduction of the likelihood of outbreaks, whether natural, accidental, or intentional, remains a priority. With most new human pathogens coming from animals (e.g., Ebola, SARS, H5N1 avian influenza, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, etc), the more cost effective approach is to tackle the disease at source, through strengthened veterinary systems and animal husbandry practices, market hygiene and by ensuring food safety. Rapid, effective response requires multi-sectoral, international coordination and communication. The objectives of the GHSa seek to prioritize coordinated action with specific, measurable steps focused on preventing epidemics, detecting biological threats early, and rapidly responding to disease outbreaks. The GHSa is intended to directly support the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR) and other relevant global health security frameworks. On 13 February, 2014, representatives from 29 nations, FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the European Union launched the GHSa aimed at garnering commitments to promote the multi-sectoral approach across the government spectrum at the highest level to meet the GHSa overall objective. The GHSa consists of

officials from all relevant sectors of government, including health, foreign affairs, development, agriculture/veterinary, defence, and national security.

6. In order to encourage progress toward these goals, the “Action Packages” concept was developed to facilitate regional and global collaboration toward specific GHSA objectives and targets. FAO has offered GHSA leaders a listing of its platforms, tools and guidelines that could assist nations’ progress towards a safer and healthier world.

III. UNSG's Climate Summit (New York, 23 September 2014)

7. The UNSG organized a Leader's Summit on Climate Change to catalyze action in the lead up to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC CoP20) to be held in Peru in December 2014, with the objective of achieving a legally binding agreement on climate change at CoP 21 in Paris in 2015. The Summit brought together Heads of State from all regions, as well as High Level representatives from the private sector and civil society. Concrete initiatives and activities have been announced across eight thematic areas, including Energy, Forest and Agriculture. The FAO Director-General was invited to address a Ministerial Roundtable. In his address, the Director-General highlighted the inter-linkages between the thematic areas on the agenda, focused on forests and agriculture in a changing climate and drew specific attention to the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, which was formally launched during the Summit, with the official inauguration meeting held on 24 September 2014 in New York. Furthermore, the Director-General was invited to address the high-level private sector luncheon. Progress on the main outcomes of the Summit will be monitored in preparation for Conference of the Parties in Paris in 2015.

IV. Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 12) / Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (COP MOP)

8. The 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 12) and the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties (COP-MOP) to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity took place from 6 to 17 October 2014 in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea.

9. COP 12 focused on the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Topics of particular relevance to FAO included:

- Marine and coastal biodiversity – closely related to FAO’s work on capacity development and improved fisheries management, implementing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries with an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- Sustainable use of biodiversity: bush meat and sustainable wildlife management – reflecting the collaboration between FAO and the Convention’s on the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), for which FAO provides the Secretariat; and
- Ecosystem conservation and restoration – relevant to FAO’s Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Mechanism launched during COFO 22 as a major FAO programme to contribute to ecosystem restoration.

10. Following the Nagoya Protocol’s entry into force on 12 October 2014, COP MOP considered inter alia: cooperative procedures and institutional mechanisms to promote compliance with the Protocol; cooperation with other international organizations; measures to assist in capacity-building; and measures to raise awareness of the importance of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture are at the core of FAO mandate, following the entry into force of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2004. In 2013, FAO’s Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture established a geographically balanced Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing and mandated it to produce Draft Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

V. Enhancement of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing: International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

11. As part of its inter-sessional activity for the 2014-2015 biennium, the “Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing” (Working Group) held its first meeting in May 2014. The Working Group reviewed the factors leading to the current short-fall of user-based income to the Benefit-sharing Fund and the six innovative approaches, identified during the last biennium, for generating income for the Fund. These approaches will continue to be reviewed at the second meeting scheduled in December 2014, with the outcome of the studies undertaken by the Secretariat to decide on the measures to be proposed to the Governing Body. The Working Group also requested the Co-Chairs to continue the established practice of consulting with stakeholder groups, in a formal, transparent and inclusive manner and to report back on progress at the second meeting. It further urged Contracting Parties to provide support and financial resources for the third meeting.

12. The Third Call-for-Proposals for the Benefit-sharing Fund was issued in March 2014 with the aim of investing more than USD 10 million in projects in developing countries. The submission phase was closed in July 2014 and a total of 395 pre-proposals were received. An independent Panel of Experts screened the pre-proposals prior to extending an invitation to develop full project proposals. In this regard, the Helpdesk of the Benefit-sharing Fund organizes regional workshops assisted applicants with the submission of full proposals.

13. For non-monetary benefit-sharing, the Global Information System under the International Treaty facilitates the exchange of information, based on existing information systems, on scientific, technical and environmental matters related to crop diversity, with a view to solving problems related to agricultural productivity in developing countries. An expert consultation with representatives from Contracting Parties of all FAO Regions, will be organized in January 2015, in order to assess needs, determine information gaps and advise on a vision paper for the consideration of the Governing Body. Within the Global Information System, a specific area will be dedicated to phenotypic and genotypic data under DivSeek, which is a community-driven initiative of plant scientists, genebanks and users of plant genomic data to link large-scale sequencing and phenotyping data to publicly available germplasm accessions. ITPGRFA and the Global Crop Diversity Trust have jointly established the Joint Facilitation Unit.

14. To promote coherence and mutual supportiveness between the relevant Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) instruments, the Secretariats of the ITPGRFA and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), have jointly organized a range of activities to further understand the interface between the ITPGRFA and the Nagoya Protocol and have identified major issues related to the harmonious implementation of the two international instruments, in particular by discussing ways of improving coordination and collaboration at both national and international levels.

VI. Open Working Group on sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Development Agenda

15. The Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concluded its work in July 2014, with a final report containing 17 goals and 169 targets. FAO continued to provide regular technical support throughout the OWG’s negotiation phase, and collaborated closely with IFAD, WFP, as well as several state and non-state actors in the areas of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. In particular, through a series of joint workshops, the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) developed common targets and indicators for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, which were well received by Members and were reflected in the OWG’s Final Report. The OWG presented its report to the UN General Assembly in September 2014 and negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda will continue until September 2015.

16. Members have expressed keen interest in the Post-2015 process, in particular with regard to FAO's contribution and coordination with other UN agencies, especially the RBAs, in ensuring that food security, agriculture and sustainable natural resource management continue to feature prominently on the new agenda. Moving into the next and final phase of the Post-2015 Development Agenda process, discussions will primarily centre on the implementation of the new SDGs. The post-2015 framework is expected to complement existing work on the MDGs and will become an important factor in determining UN System activities at country level, with post-2015 targets informing UN Country Teams in the development of future United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), as well as other UN programming frameworks.

VII. Global Migration Group

17. Migration is an increasingly relevant area of work for FAO. In its revised Strategic Framework, and respective Programme of Work 2014-2015, FAO renewed its commitment to address migration issues and in particular migration and remittances were incorporated in Strategic Objective 3 "Reduce Rural Poverty" as part of FAO's integrated approach for rural poverty reduction and programme of action for this strategic objective. Subsequently, an integrated set of activities is foreseen, including: enhanced collection of evidence on labour migration and the impact of migration and remittances on rural livelihoods; technical support and capacity development to governments and rural stakeholders; strengthened policy dialogue; and a more systematic contribution to existing global cooperation mechanisms.

18. In June 2014, FAO became an official member of the Global Migration Group (GMG) thereby gaining access to the main body for dialogue on migration issues at global level. Participation in GMG also gives FAO the necessary visibility and recognition to expand work in this thematic area as it is an effective channel to interact more systematically with other UN agencies through information exchange and engagement collaborations at global and country level. FAO participates in relevant meetings, both at managerial/strategic and technical/operational levels, especially through the FAO Liaison Offices in New York and Geneva.

19. FAO and IFAD submitted a technical joint note to European Union (EU) Development Cooperation (DEVCO) in July 2014 on the issue of migration and remittances, with the objective of moving forward towards the formulation of a joint FAO-IFAD proposal based on a common approach. Both agencies have acknowledged the need to address the plight of young migrants undertaking sea crossings across the Mediterranean in an effort to reach Europe, by addressing the persistent root causes of migration including rural poverty in Africa. The joint note sets a particular focus on food security and youth employment through agro-entrepreneurship and diaspora investments in rural areas, and sets out four priority areas for action, namely: financial inclusion and rural investments; youth entrepreneurship and employment; skills development; and policy coherence. These priorities build on the respective comparative advantages and areas of strength of the two organizations.

20. The Italian Presidency of the EU during the second semester of 2014 offered a positive context for further collaboration in this thematic area. In particular, a workshop was organized by the Italian Foreign Ministry and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Rome from 2 to 3 October 2014 on "Integrating Migration into Development: Diaspora as a Development Enabler". At a more global level, FAO and IFAD collaborate within GMG, KNOMAD (a World Bank-led multi-donor fund), as well as in other relevant working groups such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Global Forum on Remittances and Development (GFRD).

VIII. Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to end Hunger in Africa by 2025 within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Framework

21. In November 2012, the African Union Commission (AUC), FAO and the Lula Institute of Brazil announced they were joining efforts to help eradicate hunger and undernourishment in Africa. The three parties agreed to convene a high-level meeting in July 2013 with African and International

Leaders on “Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to end Hunger in Africa by 2025 within the CAADP Framework”. The meeting resulted in a Declaration to End Hunger in Africa by 2025, as well as an indicative Road Map for implementation. The Declaration was subsequently endorsed by the AU Executive Council in January 2014 and by the AUC Ministerial Meeting in April 2014, before adoption by AU Heads of State in Malabo in June 2014. The Commitment to End Hunger in Africa by 2025, as articulated in the Malabo Declaration, forms part of the seven commitments of the Accelerated African Agriculture Growth and Transformation Goals. As the Declaration has now become part of this larger post-Malabo frame of reference, the implementation of its Road Map will serve to contribute to the larger implementation strategy to be developed under the Malabo Declaration.

22. The initial Road Map Action Plan developed during the June 2014 meeting constitutes the regional component of the FAO Regional Initiative on the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025. The implementation of the Action Plan will translate the Commitment to End Hunger by 2025 into concrete interventions at country level and will require the strengthening of the partnership with the AU, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and the Lula Institute, as well as with other strategic partners at national, regional and global levels. The work undertaken within the framework of the Commitment to End Hunger by 2025 will strengthen FAO’s programme of work and partnership in the Africa Region, will enhance existing processes and increase human and institutional capacities for achieving tangible results and impact.