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CONFERENCE

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Evaluation of the International Year of Pulses 2016

Executive Summary

This report highlights the processes put in place to celebrate the International Year of Pulses (IYP) 2016 and presents the overall outcomes and challenges of the Year. The overarching objective of the IYP was to raise awareness on the many benefits of pulses for food and nutrition security by opening up opportunities for information exchange, improving mutual understanding through education and communication activities, promoting appropriate policies and developing the necessary skills to enhance the production and trade of pulses.

The attention of the Conference is drawn to the importance of the IYP legacy activities.

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to:

- a) endorse the present evaluation report, noting the substantial achievements made at all levels in the context of the International Year of Pulses (IYP) 2016;
- b) endorse the World Pulse Day to be celebrated on 10 February as per declaration of the Government of Burkina Faso;
- c) encourage FAO Member Nations and other relevant stakeholders to support the IYP legacy activities beyond 2016, highlighting in particular the importance of pulses for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

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I. Background

1. Following a proposal from Pakistan and Turkey, the FAO Conference endorsed Resolution 6/2013 at its 38th Session and forwarded to the United Nations General Assembly, which declared 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP 2016).
2. FAO hosted the Secretariat of the IYP 2016 and facilitated its implementation under the guidance of an International Steering Committee (ISC) established in April 2015. The ISC was co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Pakistan and Turkey to FAO, and was composed of representatives from FAO Members, civil society, farmers' organizations, the private sector, FAO technical divisions, research centres, IFAD, WFP and Bioversity International.
3. Since its official launch in November 2015, the International Year of Pulses has prompted several activities worldwide; all of which have successfully disseminated knowledge of the benefits of pulses and fostered dialogue on the development of policies that promote their production, consumption and trade.
4. In particular, the IYP 2016 aimed at focusing attention on:
 - a) the role that pulses play in addressing the future global food security challenges as well as their contribution to balanced and healthy diets;
 - b) the nitrogen-fixing properties of pulses, which can help to increase soil fertility and have a positive impact on the environment;
 - c) the contribution of pulses in climate change adaptation and mitigation;
 - d) the identification of best practices and research needs on the nutritional content, processing and consumption of pulses.
5. The International Year of Pulses contributed in many ways to the achievement of the SDGs. Pulses are more drought-tolerant than major staple grains and add significant amounts of nitrogen to the soil. Given their versatility, poor farmers can easily grow them, resulting in stable livelihoods and additional income, thus contributing to SDG2 (*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*) and SDG8 (*Provide Opportunities for Decent Work and Economic Growth*).

II. Progress in the implementation of the Action Plan for the International Year of Pulses

6. An action plan was prepared in collaboration with members of the IYP 2016 Steering Committee (SC) in order to provide a set of guidelines, activities and events to be implemented during the year.
7. The main activities of the Action Plan included:
 - a) regional and global consultations with pulse experts, policy makers, producer and trade organizations;
 - b) global and regional awareness campaigns – through online fora, web and social media;
 - c) a food composition database of pulses;
 - d) research, production of documents and scientific studies – “The Global Economy of Pulses” and “Pulses and their by-Products as Animal Feed”.
8. In line with the UNGA Resolution, all activities arising from the implementation of the IYP were met through voluntary contributions. A multilateral Trust Fund was established to pool together funds from various donors. These include: the Government of Turkey; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC); Colfiorito Fertitecnica (Italy).

9. Within the scope of the IYP Action Plan, the International Year has been promoted worldwide through various channels, highlighting the importance and the benefits of pulses. The IYP website, released in March 2015, has been the main IYP communication tool. Fully translated in seven languages, it has received half a million visits and its average traffic has increased by 145 percent compared to the previous international years. The corporate FAO social media, with over 1.7 million followers, were used to promote the IYP including multimedia with interviews, videos and audio files.

10. Publications, leaflets and factsheets have been released on the IYP key messages. Other complementary communication tools included: a blog with over 30 submissions from all around the world, weekly posts, educational materials for children, recipes collection, a cookbook and infographics.

11. In order to promote the IYP and draw attention to its activities, FAO appointed six IYP Special Ambassadors (SAs), one for each FAO region, with the objective of supporting FAO in raising public awareness on the important contributions of pulses. The SAs were also involved in activities aimed at increasing opportunities for dialogue, participation and access to information on pulses, as well as motivate relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the IYP to encourage connections throughout the food chain, further global production of pulses, crop rotations and address the challenges in the trade of pulses.

12. In response to the 155th Council recommendations and based on the results of the consultations held during the IYP 2016, FAO is putting forth the following legacy activities proposals for consideration:

- a) *Pulses Action Network* – Among the activities included in the work programme of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, is the creation of thematic Networks such as the one on “Fruit and Vegetables” facilitated by FAO-ESN. A similar network on “Pulses” can be established, under the leadership of FAO Members who have been instrumental in the implementation of the IYP.
- b) *Compilation of agricultural practices including pulse crops in Sub-Saharan Africa* – This collection will compile information about promising strategies to support pulse cultivation and utilization on smallholder farms in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- c) *Publication on under-utilized pulse species* – The publication will compile information on agronomy, nutrition and trade of under-utilized pulse species such as African yam bean and winged bean.
- d) *Revision of FAO’s pulse statistics* – The revision will improve the classification by disaggregating classes, and differentiating between two distinct genera which have different environmental and market niches.

13. IYP 2016 National Committees are encouraged to continue promoting the messages and themes of the IYP beyond 2016. Drawing on the outcomes of the International Year, particularly the issues identified during regional and international consultations, it is recommended that governments and other key pulse actors from farmers’ organizations, agricultural research, academia and private sector, establish multi-stakeholder fora to facilitate information exchange and policy dialogue at national and regional levels on pulse production, consumption and trade.

III. Progress on the Celebration of World Pulse Day

14. The closing ceremony of the IYP was hosted by the Government of Burkina Faso and was held in Ouagadougou on 10 and 11 February 2017. A declaration for the institutionalization of a World Pulse Day to be celebrated on 10 February was presented during the ceremony.

IV. Challenges

15. The main challenge identified within the IYP is related to funding. Although the required funding to cover most of the activities in the Action Plan was raised, the process was slow and cumbersome. In spite of the positive response from interested partners, the fundraising aspect was labour-intensive and long delays were experienced due to administrative procedures for the funding agreements and the transfer of funds. For future international years, it is recommended to initiate fundraising well before the start of the international year, identifying potential stakeholders in advance.