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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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PREPARATION OF *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

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CGRFA 17

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its last session, welcomed the draft report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* (Report) and requested FAO to finalize it in 2018.¹
2. The finalized Report considers biodiversity in all sectors of food and agriculture (crop, livestock, forest, fisheries and aquaculture). It addresses not only the domesticated crops and livestock raised by farmers and livestock keepers, the trees planted and harvested by forest dwellers and the aquatic species harvested or raised by fishers and aquaculture practitioners, but also the myriad of other species of plants, animals and micro-organisms that underpin production, whether by creating and maintaining healthy soils, pollinating plants, purifying water, providing protection against extreme weather events, enabling ruminant animals to digest fibrous plant materials or delivering any of a range of other vital services. It also includes wild species (beyond the already-noted harvested aquatic species and forest trees) that are harvested for food and for other purposes. Finally, it includes micro-organisms used in food processing and in various agro-industrial processes. The main emphasis is, however, on interactions between the sectors and on components of biodiversity not covered in the Commission's sectoral global assessments².
3. This document briefly presents some of the key findings of the report and an overview of activities undertaken since the Sixteenth Regular Session to finalize the Report. It provides an update on the preparation of country reports, presents other sources of information used for the Report and describes the review and finalization of the Report and its In-brief version. Both the report and the In-brief version will be launched during the session.

II. THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

4. Sustainably using and conserving the biodiversity that supports agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture is vital to efforts to meet humanity's growing need for food, feed, fibre and fuel while protecting the planet for future generations. Biodiversity for food and agriculture (BFA) also provides a range of crucial services, such as pollination, pest control, soil health, habitat provisioning and much more. Furthermore, it makes production systems and livelihoods more resilient to shocks and stresses, including climate change, through, for example, habitats important to fisheries such as mangrove forests that protect against extreme weather, and breeds of animals and varieties of plants that are more resilient to drought.
5. The report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* is an essential step in creating a comprehensive picture of the state and use of this biodiversity, thus providing a strong foundation for the design of effective interventions towards more sustainable, resilient food systems. Five years in the making, the report engaged over 150 authors and reviewers, who based their analysis on 91 country reports prepared by over 1,300 contributors. This global and participatory report is a milestone in the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.
6. The Report details the many benefits biodiversity brings to food and agriculture; examines how farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisherfolk have shaped and maintained biodiversity; and identifies major drivers of change that need to be addressed. It identifies human actions that are rapidly diminishing biodiversity in food and agriculture production systems at genetic, species and ecosystem levels. Changes in land and water use, pollution, overexploitation, climate change, and growing populations are among the biggest contributors to the loss of this biodiversity.
7. The Report gives many examples of policies and practices that are bringing results. Crucially, it highlights policies, practices and options that improve the sustainable use of BFA, and so promote food security and nutrition, functional ecosystems, productivity and sustainability, resilience and

¹ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraphs 10 & 13.

² <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/assessments/global-assessments/sow/en/>

secure livelihoods. Such practices need to be scaled-up and replicated across the globe to use and conserve BFA.

8. The sustainable use and conservation of BFA face several challenges. The Report highlights the needs and priorities identified by countries on the assessment, monitoring, and management of BFA, and on enabling frameworks that should be established or strengthened.

9. The report consists of the following five parts.

Part A – Overview: Chapter 1 describes the context for the assessment and presents key concepts and definitions used. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the contributions that BFA makes to the supply of multiple ecosystem services, to livelihoods, to the resilience of production systems, to the sustainable intensification of food and agricultural production, and to food security and nutrition.

Part B – Drivers, status and trends: Chapter 3 discusses the major drivers of change affecting BFA. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the status and trends of BFA, including a discussion of the state of knowledge in this field.

Part C – State of management: Chapter 5 considers the state of use of BFA, including discussions of landscape, seascape and ecosystem approaches, diversification in production systems, and management practices that utilize BFA or are considered to promote its conservation and sustainable use. This chapter also addresses the roles of micro-organisms in food processing, in agro-industrial practices and in the digestive processes of ruminant animals. Finally, it includes a discussion of breeding (genetic improvement) activities for various categories of BFA. Chapters 6 and 7, respectively, address the state of characterization and conservation efforts for BFA.

Part D – Enabling frameworks: Chapter 8 describes the state of policies, institutions and capacities that support the conservation and sustainable use of BFA.

Part E – Conclusions: Chapter 9 presents a discussion of needs and challenges in the management of BFA.

III. PREPARATION OF COUNTRY REPORTS

10. At its last session, the Commission welcomed the draft Report³ and invited countries that had not yet done so to submit their reports, or amendments to reports already submitted, by 30 June 2017.⁴ By that date, 20 additional country reports were submitted, for a total of 91 officially endorsed country reports (Table 1).

11. Throughout the process, the Secretariat maintained frequent and regular contacts with countries to assist them in the preparation of their reports. With financial support from Germany, Norway and Spain, a total of 25 developing countries received financial support allowing them to involve stakeholders in the preparation of country reports and relevant consultations. With extra-budgetary and in-kind support from Germany and Spain, FAO organized regional consultations in 6 regions between March and May 2016, attended by 154 participants from 88 countries and 10 regional and international organizations.

IV. ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

12. The Report draws on information from country reports, *State of the World* reports in the plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources sectors⁵ and various Background Study Papers undertaken under the Commission's guidance, thematic studies, reports from international organizations, regional synthesis reports and other sources of information.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Inf.10 Rev.1

⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraphs 10–11.

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/assessments/global-assessments/sow/en/>

Table 1. Overview of country reports and their regional distribution

Region	Countries
Africa (19)	Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Asia ^{6,7} (9)	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam
Europe and Central Asia (23)	Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, ⁸ Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom
Latin America and the Caribbean (16)	Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, ⁴⁹ Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname
Near East and North Africa (13)	Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
North America (1)	United States of America
Pacific (10)	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga

Thematic studies

13. The Secretary commissioned five thematic studies, addressing the topics listed below, which are published on the Commission's website as they become available:

Biodiversity for food and agriculture and ecosystem services

Biodiversity for food and agriculture: the perspectives of small-scale food providers

The contributions of biodiversity for food and agriculture to the resilience of production systems

The contributions of biodiversity to the sustainable intensification of food production

Study on the linkages between protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture.

Reports from international organizations

14. In April 2016, FAO invited 55 international organizations to report on their activities related to the management of BFA and provided them with a standardized questionnaire for the preparation of their reports. Twenty-six organizations reported on their activities.¹⁰ In addition, Oxfam voluntarily provided a report entitled *Women's roles in biodiversity management from lessons to practice and impact: scaling up pathways in people's biodiversity management*, containing case studies from Peru, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

Regional synthesis reports

15. A series of informal regional consultations held in 2016 involved the preparation of a regional synthesis report for each region where consultations were held. The contents of these synthesis reports served as source material for the Report. The finalized regional synthesis reports are published on the Commission's website as they become available.

⁶ The Lao People's Democratic Republic submitted as a country report its National Agro-biodiversity Programme and Action Plan II (2015–2025). Selected information from this report is presented.

⁷ Selected information from the country report of Japan, submitted in 2018, is presented.

⁸ France submitted a draft report.

⁹ Information from Brazil was taken from a brief report. Brazil subsequently submitted a full report.

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.fao.org/cgrfa/topics/biodiversity/international-organizations/en/>

Other sources of information

16. The Report also takes into account other sources of information, including international databases,¹¹ global reports (including from FAO), scientific literature, national reports and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans prepared in support of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). More than 1 500 different references cited in the report indicate the breadth of the review and analysis conducted.

V. REVIEW PROCESS AND FINALIZATION

17. At its last session, in January 2017, the Commission requested the Secretariat to make the Revised Draft Report and a draft In-brief version available by 1 March 2018 and to invite Members and observers to provide comments on them by 16 June 2018.¹² FAO prepared the Revised Draft Report, based on the analysis of 91 country reports and other sources of information and in collaboration with external experts and partner organizations with a total of over 150 individuals who contributed as authors, contributors and reviewers. Their contributions are recognized in the Acknowledgements section of the Report.

18. By Circular State Letter C/CBD-8 of 28 February 2018, the Secretary invited Members and observers to provide comments on the Revised Draft Report, the different chapters of which started to become available on a password-protected website on 1 March 2018. The draft In-brief version of the Report became available for review on the same website in October 2018. Comments on the Revised Draft Report and the draft In-brief version were provided by 15 countries and 2 international organizations.

19. As requested by the Commission,¹³ FAO finalized the Report in 2018, taking into account comments provided by Member countries, observers, and internal and external reviewers. At the time of preparation of this document, the Report is undergoing final stages of proofreading, design and layout, for its launch during the Seventeenth Regular Session of the Commission in February 2018.

VI. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY AGENDA

20. At its last session, the Commission requested the Secretariat to present the final Report at relevant international meetings to inform and contribute to the global biodiversity agenda, in particular the implementation of relevant SDGs.¹⁴

21. Since the Commission's last session, the Secretariat continued reporting on the preparation of the Report at relevant international meetings, with a view to ensuring that it contributes to and is acknowledged as part of the global biodiversity agenda. Key messages of the final report were presented at a side event held on the occasion of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. The Conference of the Parties, in adopting Decision XIV/30,¹⁵ expressed its appreciation for the effective cooperation of FAO with the CBD and welcomed the progress in the development of the Report. The Conference of the Parties, in its decision on the process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework also referred to "[t]he State of the World reports and other assessment reports prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations" as "key sources of information that will be used in developing documentation related to the post-2020 process and in informing the activities carried out." Already at its 13th meeting, the Conference of the Parties

¹¹ In particular FAO's statistical database FAOSTAT,¹¹ the FAO/INFOODS Food Composition database for biodiversity,¹¹ the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System,¹¹ the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture¹¹ and the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.¹¹

¹² CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 12.

¹³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 13.

¹⁴ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 14.

¹⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XIV/30.

had invited the Commission to consider developing a global plan of action on the basis of *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* report.¹⁶

VII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

22. The Commission may wish to
- (a) Welcome the Report.
 - (b) Request the Secretariat to:
 - i. Disseminate widely the Report and communicate its key messages to relevant stakeholders, including through regional seminars (permitting available funds);
 - ii. Submit the Report to the Executive Secretaries of the CBD and other international organizations and instruments, for dissemination;
 - iii. Present the final Report at relevant international meetings to ensure that it informs and contributes to the global biodiversity agenda, in particular the implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goals.
 - (c) Call upon governments and donors to make available the financial resources necessary to translate and disseminate the Report and its in-brief version; and
 - (d) Invite countries to respond to the findings of their country reports, through adequate policies, programmes and activities at national and regional level, as appropriate.

¹⁶ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/3.