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COUNCIL

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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:

- 1) United Nations Biodiversity Conference and Outcome of the 7th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
- 2) UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
- 3) Outcomes of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) Conference of the Parties (29 April – 10 May 2019), Geneva.

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 162nd Session of the Council for information only.

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I. United Nations Biodiversity Conference and Outcome of the 7th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

1. The United Nations Biodiversity Conference was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, from 17 to 29 November 2018. The Conference included the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was held in parallel with the meetings of the COP serving as Meetings of the Parties to the Protocols of the CBD.¹
2. COP 14 agreed to accelerate action to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted in 2010 for the 2011–2020 period. It also agreed on a process for developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework anticipated to be agreed upon at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in Beijing in 2020.
3. Prior to COP 14, Egypt convened a high-level segment on 14 to 15 November 2018. Ministers at the high-level segment adopted the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration: Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet. The Declaration invites, *inter alia*, the General Assembly of the United Nations to convene a summit on biodiversity at the level of heads of State before COP 15, in order to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.² Prior to COP 14, on 13 November 2018, Egypt also hosted an African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity, which resulted in the African Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience.³
4. COP 14 addressed a plethora of issues directly relevant to FAO, including the conservation and sustainable use of pollinators, biodiversity and climate change, sustainable wildlife management, marine and coastal biodiversity, invasive alien species, health and biodiversity and “digital sequence information” on genetic resources. It also expressed its appreciation for the effective cooperation of FAO with the CBD, and, in this regard, welcomed specific activities of FAO, including: the operationalization of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform; the progress in the development of the recently launched report on *The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*; the commitments of the Global Soil partnership and its Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils to promoting soil biodiversity; the initiative of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to develop a work plan on microbes and invertebrates; the efforts made to improve the consistency of reporting on national data on primary forest area reported under the Global Forest Resources Assessment of FAO; and the work of FAO on the indicator on the proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture.
5. COP 14 invited FAO to facilitate the implementation of the Plan of Action 2018-2030 for the International Initiative on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators.⁴ FAO is also invited to consider the preparation of a report on the state of knowledge on soil biodiversity covering current status, challenges and potentialities. COP 14 also requested its Executive Secretary to continue to work with FAO to promote mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, to review, in consultation with FAO, the implementation of the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity, and to continue to work with FAO on the Global Forest Resources Assessment.
6. Resolution 14/2011 adopted by the FAO Conference at its 37th Session in June 2011 welcomed the decision of Governments to establish an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The IPBES Plenary, at its first session in January 2013, requested the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide the Secretariat for IPBES and invited

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2018>

² [CBD/COP/14/12](#).

³ [African Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity](#) and [Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience](#)

⁴ [CBD/COP/14/6](#).

UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an institutional link with the Platform through a collaborative partnership arrangement for the work of IPBES and its Secretariat. In response to this request, the four UN entities entered a Collaborative Partnership Arrangement with the IPBES Plenary.⁵

7. The 7th Session of the Plenary of IPBES was held in Paris from 29 April to 4 May 2019.

8. The Plenary approved the summary for policymakers of the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services⁶ and accepted its individual chapters and their executive summaries on the understanding that the Secretariat would subsequently revise the chapters to ensure their consistency with the summary for policymakers as approved. The global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services adds an important element to the growing body of evidence for the importance of biodiversity to efforts to achieve the Zero Hunger objective and meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Assessments undertaken by FAO, such as the recent report on [The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture](#), the global assessment released by IPBES and assessments by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other instruments and organizations underline the urgent need for improving the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and stress the importance of cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration among decision-makers and other stakeholders at all levels.

9. On-going thematic assessments of IPBES address (i) invasive alien species and their control and (ii) the sustainable use of wild species. The Plenary also adopted decision IPBES-7/1 on the rolling work programme of IPBES for the period up to 2030. The initial three priority topics of the new work programme include: (1) understanding the importance of biodiversity in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (2) understanding the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and determinants of transformative change and options for achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity; and (3) measuring business impact and dependence on biodiversity and nature's contribution to people. The Plenary also agreed to the preparation of a technical paper on biodiversity and climate change, and requested the IPBES Secretariat to explore, with the IPCC Secretariat, possible joint activities on biodiversity and climate change, including the possibility of jointly preparing the technical paper, and to report to the next session of the Plenary.

II. UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

10. On 1 March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution [A/RES/73/284](#) proclaiming 2021–2030 the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, within existing structures and available resources, with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration.

11. By the terms of the text, the General Assembly stressed that ecosystem restoration and conservation contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as other related United Nations major outcome documents and multilateral environmental agreements, including the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

12. By other terms of the text, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to implement measures, such as mainstreaming ecosystem restoration in policies and plans to address current national developmental priorities and challenges due to the degradation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity loss and climate change vulnerability, thereby creating opportunities for ecosystems to increase their adaptive capacity and opportunities to maintain and improve livelihoods for all.

⁵ [Decision IPBES-2/8](#): Collaborative partnership arrangement to establish an institutional link between the Plenary and the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme

⁶ [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services](#) – Advance unedited version

13. The General Assembly invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and FAO to lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Rio conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations system within their mandates and existing resources, and through voluntary contributions, as appropriate.

14. The resolution further invited Governments, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to actively support the implementation of the Decade, including through voluntary contributions, as appropriate.

15. FAO is working closely together with UNEP and other key partner organizations to prepare a strategy for the implementation of the Decade. Initial consultations have been held with the three Rio Conventions Secretariats. A wide range of consultations with Members and other relevant stakeholder groups will take place between now and January 2021 to maximize partnership opportunities and to inform the emerging implementation strategy. FAO and UNEP also aim to draw lessons from past UN Decades and seek collaboration with ongoing Decades.

III. Outcomes of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS) Conference of the Parties (29 April – 10 May 2019), Geneva

16. The 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade was held jointly with the Conferences of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention and the Basel Convention⁷. The Triple COP was held from 29 April to 10 May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

17. Delegates adopted 17 decisions for the Rotterdam Convention, including decisions on the listing of two new chemicals in Annex III of the Convention, on enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention, on technical assistance, and on a Memorandum of Understanding⁸ between FAO, UNEP and the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention.

18. A decision was adopted to develop procedures and a mechanism on compliance⁹. This outcome is a pivotal step towards enhancing the implementation of the Convention at global scale.

19. By deciding to list phorate¹⁰ (an insecticide) and hexabromocyclododecane¹¹ (an industrial chemical) in Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention, the COP also agreed to include these substances in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure, and therefore facilitating communication and information-sharing on their trade. No consensus was reached on the listing of carbosulfan, fenthion and paraquat formulations, which will now be further considered at the next meeting of the COP.

20. Delegates welcomed the offer of the Government of Kenya to organize the next triple meetings of the Conferences of the Parties, back-to-back in Nairobi in May 2021.

21. FAO Members are invited to comment on the outcome of the 9th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention.

⁷ <http://www.brsmeas.org/2019COPs> - Meeting Documents

⁸ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/22/Rev.1 - Memorandum of understanding between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme and the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention

⁹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/14/Add.1/Rev.1 - Procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Rotterdam Convention: Proposal to add a new Annex VII on procedures and mechanisms on compliance with the Rotterdam Convention

¹⁰ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/8 - Inclusion of phorate in Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention

¹¹ UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.9/7 - Inclusion of hexabromocyclododecane in Annex III to the Rotterdam Convention