

October 2006

ENGLISH ONLY



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Fourth Session

Rome, 13 – 15 December 2006

REPORT ON REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF *THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION*

Table of Contents

Para

I.	INTRODUCTION	1-4
II.	THE PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS	5-9
III.	MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS	10-17

Appendix 1:

GUIDING QUESTIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE E-MAIL CONFERENCES

REPORT ON REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE *STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) requested the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to prepare a draft of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*. A first *Draft Report on the Strategic Priorities for Action* was reviewed by the Commission during its Tenth Regular Session, in 2004.¹ As this *Report* had been prepared on the basis of the available 133 Country Reports, the Commission noted that the *Report* would need to be further developed and structured as additional Country Reports and reports from international organizations became available. The further development of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* is described in detail in document “*Progress report on the preparation of the State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources and the Strategic Priorities for Action*”². The Commission requested FAO to conduct regional consultations³ to review the revised draft of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*.

2. Due to the lack of financial resources to hold regional consultation meetings, the primary mechanism for conducting regional consultations to review the second draft *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*⁴ were electronic mail (e-mail) conferences, starting in September 2005. The e-mail conferences were moderated by the Global Focal Point with the support of FAO’s network of regional facilitators. These consultations enabled participating country representatives, both technicians and policy analysts, to undertake a critical review of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*. It also provided an important opportunity to identify regional priorities and to further strategies for regional cooperation. In addition to the e-mail conferences, the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* was reviewed as a part of the agenda at a number of scheduled meetings where animal genetic resources issues were being addressed.

3. Based on the consultations, Subregional Reports are being prepared that will be included as annexes to *The State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources*. These will contain a short description of farm animal genetic resources in the region and of the main livestock production systems, an evaluation of the importance of the livestock sector to the region’s economy and food security, and will describe specific issues concerning regional priorities and regional cooperation in the management of farm animal genetic resources.

4. The current document provides a detailed report of the process for undertaking the regional consultations and presents the main outcomes regarding the review of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*, which arose from the consultation processes.

¹ CGRFA-10/04/Inf. 9

² CGRFA/WG-AnGR-4/06/2

³ CGRFA-10/04/REP. Para. 58

⁴ available at DAD-IS library at <http://www.fao.org/dad-is/>

II. THE PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

5. To develop a strategy for undertaking the regional consultations, a meeting of regional facilitators for animal genetic resources and FAO staff was convened in Rome from 2 to 4 August 2005. Eight experts from different regions and seven FAO staff participated. They decided that the format for the consultations would be regional e-mail conferences, moderated by FAO. It was also decided that the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* would be reviewed during meetings which had been scheduled in 2005 and 2006 where various aspects of animal genetic resources were being discussed, including the establishment of Regional Focal Points. Such meetings were considered an excellent opportunity to involve a wide range of stakeholders and experts in the consultation process.

Electronic Conferences

6. In order to facilitate discussion during the email conferences, they were carefully planned and implemented, and were supported by the regional facilitators and National Coordinators for Animal Genetic Resources. The conferences were orchestrated using the four main themes that are presented in the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*: (Inventory and characterization; Sustainable use and development of animal genetic resources; Conservation of animal genetic resources; and Policies, institutions and capacity building). A set of guiding questions was developed under each of the themes to stimulate and facilitate review of the *Report* (Appendix 1). Approximately one theme was addressed per week, with each conference lasting about 4 to 6 weeks.

Table 1: Regional e-mail conferences to review the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*, by opening date

Region	Language of the Conference	Invitations to participants	Opening	Closure
East Africa	English	30/09/2005	06/10/2005	21/11/2005
Eastern Europe and the Caucasus	English and Russian	30/09/2005	06/10/2005	21/11/2005
South West Pacific	English	30/09/2005	06/10/2005	21/11/2005
Central Asia	English/Russian	04/10/2005	20/10/2005	09/12/2005
South Asia	English	04/10/2005	20/10/2005	09/12/2005
Southern Africa	English	13/10/2005	20/10/2005	05/12/2005
Europe	English	17/10/2005	25/10/2005	09/12/2005
West Africa	French	16/11/2005	18/11/2005	23/12/2005
Central America	Spanish	17/11/2005	22/11/2005	23/12/2005
South America	Spanish	16/11/2005	22/11/2005	23/12/2005

7. As indicated in Table 1, ten regional e-mail conferences were undertaken during the last quarter of 2005, following established FAO procedures. Invitations were sent out by the moderator to potential participants from national and international organizations that were identified by National Coordinators and by the regional facilitators. In total, 622 potential participants were contacted. Of those, 267 subscribed, and 121 persons sent a total of 290 messages. As indicated in Table 2, representatives from 56 countries participated in the conferences.

Table 2: Country of origin of the participants in the e-mail conferences

Region	Contributions	Participating Countries
East Africa	24	Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda
Central America	34	Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, Panamá
Central Asia	5	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan
Eastern Europe and the Caucasus	15	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine
Europe	7	Austria, Czech Republic, France
South America	57	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Perú, Venezuela
South Asia	21	Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
South West Pacific	4	Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Salomon Islands
Southern Africa	46	Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe
West Africa	77	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Cost, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo

8. Undertaking consultations using e-mail conferences proved to be challenging. Significant effort was required to encourage participation. The regional facilitators were very active during the first phase of the conference process, contacting people and sending out communications and reminders. Despite this effort, participation in the e-mail conferences was less than desirable, and e-mail conferences did not take place in the following five regions as the minimum number of subscribers was not achieved: the Caribbean, North America, East Asia, South-East Asia, and North Africa-Middle-East. There are a number of factors that could have affected participation in the email conferences. In a number of countries, Internet facilities are not readily available or are subject to frequent interruptions. Language barriers may have played a role in limiting participation. The greatest obstacle may have been that many individuals still appear to prefer face-to-face meetings, rather than distant communication using e-mail conference procedures.

Regional Meetings

9. As a second component of the consultation process, the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* was considered at several relevant meetings that were taking place in 2005 and 2006, involving 104 countries, as shown in Table 3. While not specifically convened to review the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*, time was made available to review the *Report*. Both the *Report* and guiding questions were provided to the participants in advance of the meetings. Meeting reports were made available to FAO.

Table 3: Regional meetings where the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* was considered, in chronological order

Region/sub-region	Date	Countries
Eastern and Southern Africa	19 September 2005, Arusha, Tanzania	Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
West Asia and the Near East	15-17 November 2005, Aleppo, Syria	Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Turkey
South America	8-9 December 2005, Montelimar, Nicaragua	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, México, Guyana, Haití, Dominican Rep., Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú, Venezuela
Europe	19-20 January 2006, Brussels, Belgium	80 participants representing 30 European countries and their Standing Zootechnical Committees, the European Commission, research institutes, universities and NGOs attended the workshop
East Asia	15 February 2006, Beijing, China	People's Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea
South Pacific	25-26 May 2006, Nadi, Fiji	Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu
Central Asia - Caucasian	28-30 June 2006, Almaty, Kazakhstan	Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

III. MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

10. Detailed analysis of the main outcomes resulting from the regional consultations are presented in the “*Compendium of priorities from regional consultations*”⁵ and in the Subregegional Reports which will be provided as annexes to *The State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources*. A summary of some of the main findings regarding the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* is provided in the following section.

11. The guiding questions that addressed the four main themes of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action* were useful in stimulating responses from consultation participants. Some themes generated greater interests than others. A significant number of individuals commented on Part one - Inventory and Characterization. Sustainable use and Development of Animal Genetic Resources, and the Conservation of Animal Genetic Resources proved to be of the greatest overall interest to participants, producing the largest number of responses. The number of contributions declined for the last part, Policies, Institutions and Capacity building. This may be explained by the high level of participation of animal genetic resources technicians and researches in the consultation, and the relatively low rate of participation of policy-makers.

12. Most of the comments received from the consultations were of a general nature. The reviewers seemed to support the overall contents of the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*, as nearly all of the proposed activities, programmes or actions that were received during the consultations were already addressed in the *Report on Strategic Priorities for Action*.

13. Lack of awareness and understanding of the roles, values and functions of animal genetic resources was stressed as a major issue during the consultations. Reviewers felt that improved understanding of animal genetic resources would be essential to promote further development of livestock policies in support of efforts to better use and develop animal genetic resources.

14. A number of individuals commented on the importance of National Focal Points and Regional Focal Points. In terms of National Focal Points, the most common comment received was that the National Focal Point worked well during the preparatory phases of the Country Report for Animal Genetic Resources. However, afterwards, functional capability declined due to a lack of adequate financial resources. Also, a number of respondents indicated that the operation of National Focal Points is adversely affected by the high rate of rotation among civil servants involved in the process, including National Coordinators.

15. Several respondents stressed that National Focal Points are an essential elements in establishing national and regional networks among all stakeholders; and a number of participants indicated that financial support from FAO for further enabling National Focal Points was highly desirable.

16. Regional capacity building and networking were other commonly referred to issues during the consultation. A number of participants stressed the important role that a Regional Focal Point could play in their regions. Regional Focal Points were widely recognized as necessary to facilitate capacity building processes thereby supporting national efforts to better manage animal genetic resources.

17. Unfortunately, participants did not clearly express views on how best to establish Regional Focal Points. Collectively, respondents identified a number of institutions that could cooperate in regional efforts to advance the management of animal genetic resources, stressing the need to build on existing infrastructure. Nearly all participants considered that their own country could not host the Regional Focal Point due to budget constraints. However, a few positive indications of countries or networks willing to host or act as Regional Focal Points were registered.

⁵ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-4/06/Inf. 4

APPENDIX 1

GUIDING QUESTIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE E-MAIL CONFERENCES

Part I. Inventory and characterization

Goal 1: Improving the understanding of the status and characteristics of animal genetic resources to enable their sustainable use, development and conservation.

Background

Most countries indicated in their Country Reports the need to increase the present knowledge on the situation and characteristics of their Animal Genetic Resources. This knowledge is the basis for making decisions to allow the sustainable management, development, conservation and efficient utilization of Animal Genetic Resources.

In order to realize this, it is necessary to identify and register all species and their breeds that are being utilized, including those in production systems with low external inputs and also those that are not being presently used but that have a potential for food and agriculture.

All this work has to be carried out in an institutional framework and with defined standards as the basis for national databanks to be used by the public and integrated to other systems of control, such as veterinary services. This national infrastructure will allow for other regional integration through the exchange of information or breed evaluation, definition of breed standards and characteristics and establishing the best possible alternatives for use and conservation of Animal Genetic Resources.

- Which are presently the main restrictions at national and regional levels to carry out species and breeds inventories?
- What actions can be taken at national and regional levels to carry out these inventories, allowing countries with similar species and breeds to develop regional strategies for use, management and conservation?
- How can FAO facilitate the implementation of national priorities on breed inventories, monitoring and characterization? Are there other organizations that should assist in this regard?
- Which regional activities (training, networking, research projects, databases, information systems, among others) do you suggest, to enhance national breed inventories, monitoring and breed characterization?

Part II. Sustainable use and development of animal genetic resources

Goal 2: Enhancing the use and development of animal genetic resources in all relevant production systems as part of efforts to achieve food security and alleviate poverty.

Background

As stated in the country reports, local breeds are mostly found in marginal areas, where access to natural, financial and technical resources is limited and logistical support from private and public institutions is poor.

It is in these same regions where one can find large concentrations of rural populations with access to very few resources and capacity. As a result it is here where the levels of under-nutrition are the highest.

These populations raise local breeds in production systems with very little or even without any external inputs, basically using their animals for subsistence. During the last couple of years the

number of local breeds has drastically fallen because of their low production levels and due to a lack of market opportunities for products deriving from these breeds.

Considering that in most cases these livestock populations have not been characterised either phenotypic or genetically, their true potentials are not known. Since many of these populations are currently at risk, livestock communities could decide to completely abandon their livestock related activities, and, because there are no other production alternatives in their habitat they might start migrating within their countries.

- What measures could be implemented in the short term to ensure the conservation of these breeds, assuming these breeds largely contribute to improving the nutrition level of rural communities and that niche market opportunities exist that can justify their preservation from a production point of view?
- Products of some animal species are recognised for the variety of their characteristics, which is why they are highly valued and requested for. What type of marketing activities could be put into practice so that this form of valorisation of breeds becomes an additional incentive to conserve them?
- How can some of the more advanced sustainable production techniques complement local knowledge of rural and indigenous communities that keep local species/breeds, while preserving their traditions, but at the same time improving their quality of life?
- Considering that there are similar AnGR among countries that require regional actions for their use, development and conservation, what activities would you propose to undertake in the short and medium term?
- Do you consider the establishment of “centres of excellence” for species/breeds that can coordinate research activities and facilitate the exchange of experiences between countries that own similar AnGR viable? If yes, what would they be like, where would they be located and how would you establish them?
- What institutions could provide the help the countries and the region need to improve the use and development of their AnGR?
- How do you think national experiences could be shared in the region to support breeding associations, to develop standardized registration systems for production, to implement sustainable programs of genetic improvement for local and exotic breeds and to increase the contribution of animal production to national economies?

Part III. Conservation of animal genetic resources

Goal 3: Conserving animal genetic resources to ensure their availability for future use and development in all production systems

Background

The country reports clearly showed that next to financial limitations the two main barriers to the development and implementation of sustainable management and conservation of AnGR in the majority of developing countries and a large part of countries in economic transition, are the shortage of human resources in terms of technical capacity and the lack of awareness amongst nearly all sectors in society.

Although a number of technicians in developing countries did receive technical training over the last few decades, training is considered of higher priority in the short term, due to the need for more technicians to develop and coordinate activities in various areas of animal genetic resources.

It is noteworthy that the conservation of AnGR is seldom included in animal sciences oriented university programmes.

The country reports demonstrated how little knowledge the majority of the strategic decision makers and society as a whole have on the true value and functions of AnGR in relation to the economy and in terms of maintaining the social and demographic balance in developing countries. This lack of understanding is a limiting factor to the better use of AnGR as well as to the implementation of conservation work.

Another important conclusion that was drawn from the country reports is that most countries do still not have a national AnGR program in place.

How to develop and improve the knowledge of political decision makers and of society as a whole on the contribution of AnGR, and in some cases mainly of native breeds, to food security and to social stability in their country?

Next to the AnGR sector, what other sectors of the production chain can contribute to the sustainable use and conservation of AnGR, especially of those species/breeds at risk of extinction?

- What would be the most appropriate strategy to train a significant number of technicians in the SHORT TERM in sustainable management and the conservation of AnGR?
- How can one make use of the available technologies and structures in the region to train technicians in the use and conservation of AnGR?
- In terms of education, what needs to be done to ensure that future generations, mainly those living in urban areas, have a better understanding of the importance of AnGR and in particular of those species/breeds that are part of the country's cultural heritage and traditions. How would you implement such an educational program?
- At national level, do you think the establishment and/or strengthening of coordinating structures, the main function of which is to advice and participate in activities related to the use and conservation of AnGR, is necessary and viable?
- How would these coordinating structures function, how would they be integrated with similar structures on a regional level, what activities would they develop and what would be their financial source?
- Do you consider joint conservation actions amongst countries of your region and/or international organisations a priority?
- What type of collaboration do you consider important and how do you propose to establish this form of collaboration?
- Do you think it is necessary and possible to establish regional gene banks? What legal framework needs to be in place to formalize the activities of these gene banks?
- How can FAO and/or other institutional organizations support your government to improve awareness on the roles and values of AnGR, among decision makers, other stakeholders and the public in general?

Part IV. Policies, institutions and capacity building

Goal 4: Enhancing institutional development and capacity building to achieve the successful implementation of national programmes for animal genetic resources

- Does your country have a functioning National Focal Point in place? If not, what were the main constraints to establishing the Focal Point or to ensuring its functioning?
- Is there any regional cooperation (informal and formal networks) for research in the area of sustainable animal genetic resources management? How can such networks be established or be supported?

- How can FAO facilitate the mobilisation of resources from donors to implement in a short period of time the priorities identified in Country Reports?
- What is your position in terms of setting up a Regional Focal Point?
- Is your country capable and willing to allocate enough resources to support the establishment and maintenance of a Regional Focal Point? If yes, what facilities are already available and what kind of additional support would you need?
- Is there any regional organization that can foster the establishment of a Regional Focal Point?