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Organización
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COUNCIL

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Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Executive Summary

In keeping with Action no. 2.31 of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal, 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 146th Session of Council:

- Benefit-sharing under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)
- International Day of Forests
- First Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
- Meeting of African and International Leaders: "New, unified approaches to end hunger in Africa"
- Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies

The above topics are presented to the 146th Session of the Council for information only.

I. Benefit-sharing under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

1. There has been a rapid expansion of benefits shared under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), both monetary and non-monetary, arising from the use of plant genetic resources. The Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty is currently funding nineteen projects under the Second Project Cycle of the Fund. This is a multilateral fund that channels financial resources to projects in developing countries for building food security by assisting farmers to adapt to climate change, conserve and sustainably manage their genetic diversity, as well as disseminate their knowledge and traditional practices. Donors such as Australia, Ireland, Italy, Spain and IFAD have contributed towards the USD 5,497,723, which represents a tenfold increase compared to the first cycle. The new benefit-sharing projects are now being implemented with more than 100 partner organizations in 36 countries across Asia, Africa, the Near East, Central and South America. As regards non-monetary benefit-sharing, upon request of the Governing Body of the Treaty, several Contracting Parties have put in place various initiatives on information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building related to the use of plant genetic resources.

II. Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

2. FAO and WHO are jointly organizing the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) to be held at FAO headquarters in Rome in 2014. A preparatory technical meeting is scheduled to be held in Rome from 13 to 15 November 2013.

3. The ICN2 will be a three-day inclusive intergovernmental conference at ministerial level which will seek to propose a flexible policy and institutional framework to adequately address the major nutrition challenges of our times. It will also seek to identify priorities for international cooperation on nutrition issues. ICN2 will bring together senior national policy-makers from agriculture, health and other relevant ministries and agencies, with leaders of United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, researchers, the private sector and consumers, to identify policy priorities on how national and global food and related systems can improve nutritional outcomes.

III. International Day of Forests

4. The UN General Assembly, through Resolution A/RES/67/200, proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests (IDF). This has been a successful conclusion of a long preparatory process dating back to the beginning of the 1970s when the European Confederation of Agriculture recommended the establishment of a World Forestry Day to highlight the significant role forests play for humanity through their direct and indirect beneficial effects.

5. At its 20th session in 2010, the Committee on Forestry (COFO) evaluated the opportunities offered by the International Year of Forests 2011 and recommended that Members and FAO consider strengthening the initiative and profile of the observation of an international day of forests. This recommendation was submitted to the 37th Session of the FAO Conference in 2011, which supported the establishment of an International Day of Forests with activities related to the celebration of the day to be coordinated by FAO.¹

6. On a parallel track, in 2011 the 9th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) recommended that the UN Economic and Social Council, and the UN General Assembly, support the establishment of an International Day of Forests. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests also expressed its support for the establishment of the IDF.

7. In the absence of a draft resolution, the UN General Assembly at its Session in 2011 could not take action. A draft resolution was subsequently submitted by Algeria, as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, to the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly which was adopted in December 2012. The

¹ C 2011/REP paras 74-77

resolution requested the UNFF Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO, to facilitate the implementation of the Day. In response to this request FAO had: developed an international logo for the Day; prepared a website to share information and disseminate tools in support of actions taken by Members; set-up regular communication with heads of relevant forestry bodies, inviting them to consider actions in support of the celebrations, in particular the global tree planting exercise and sharing this experience with the global community through the IDF website.

8. The main international event for 2013, under FAO's sponsorship, was the high level segment of the 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week held on 21 March, hosted by Algeria. In addition, FAO hosted a ceremonial event on the occasion of the Day at FAO headquarters, which was opened by the Director-General, with the participation of Members and Management who discussed forests in a landscape context. FAO also supported the celebrations at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Geneva. Furthermore, FAO requested members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to embark on a planning process for future celebrations of the International Day of Forests.

IV. First Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

9. In adopting Resolution 14/2011, the 37th Session of the Conference (June 2011), welcomed the decision to establish an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The Conference also mandated the Director-General to offer to establish and (co-) host, or otherwise support, IPBES together with other relevant international organizations, provided that costs were met through extra-budgetary resources. The Council, at its Session in June 2012, welcomed the close cooperation between UNEP, UNESCO, FAO and UNDP in the preparation of the IPBES Plenary sessions and their joint proposal for co-hosting the Secretariat of the Platform.

10. The first session of the Plenary of IPBES was held in Bonn, Germany, from 21 to 26 January 2013. The Plenary elected its Bureau and the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel, agreed upon a strategy for developing a programme of work for 2014-2018 and made progress in establishing rules of procedure, financial procedures as well as institutional arrangements for the Secretariat, to be located in Bonn. The Plenary also considered the revised joint proposal by the four UN bodies to jointly administer the Secretariat of IPBES which had been established as an "independent intergovernmental body". The Plenary did not approve the joint proposal for administering the Secretariat of IPBES, instead, it requested UNEP to provide the IPBES Secretariat, which would be accountable to the IPBES Plenary on policy and programmatic matters. The Plenary further requested the four UN bodies to establish an institutional link with the Platform through a collaborative partnership arrangement for the work of IPBES and its Secretariat. It requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in consultation with the Heads of UNESCO, UNDP and FAO, and the Bureau of the Plenary, to recruit the Head of the Platform's Secretariat, and, in collaboration with the UN bodies, to fill through recruitment or secondment Secretariat posts. In this regard, the Plenary invited FAO to second dedicated staff to the IPBES Secretariat.

V. High Level Meeting of African and International Leaders "New, unified approaches to end hunger in Africa", 30 June -1 July 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

11. The African Union Commission (AU), the Instituto Lula (IL) of Brazil and FAO announced in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21 November 2012 that they were joining hands to intensify their actions and bring their collective strength to bear on the efforts of governments and their development partners to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa. The three partners believe that, with strong political commitment manifested at the highest level, Africa can rise to the challenge and effectively strengthen resilience and sustainably reduce hunger. Given the primacy of agriculture in most African countries, it is imperative that the agriculture sector and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) be a key entry point in this regard. Indeed, the AU's thrust on "sustaining the CAADP momentum" over the next decade is testimony of Africa's continued political commitment to position agriculture as the continent's engine for growth, wealth creation and

the related objectives of increased employment, income generation, poverty alleviation and food and nutrition security.

12. In this context, the AU Commission, in collaboration with FAO, the NEPAD Agency and the IL, are organizing the High Level Meeting of African and International Leaders “New, unified approaches to end hunger in Africa” (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30 June-1 July 2013), which will serve as a high level advocacy multi-stakeholder platform for highlighting the major milestones of the AU/FAO/IL partnership in supporting Africa’s initiatives and programmes to eliminate hunger. The objective is to bring together African Heads of State and Government, regional economic commissions, international, regional and national partners, including the private sector and civil society, in order to renew the political resolve at the highest level and agree upon on a common set of principles, strategies and concrete actions to ensure a unified coordination of the different ongoing initiatives aimed at eradicating hunger in Africa. Innovative types of financing arrangements, diverse forms of public-private partnerships, new types of South-South cooperation and the Africa Trust Fund represent possible sources of funding that need to be tapped and used in the agricultural sector.

VI. Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies

13. In recognizing that persisting global hunger and malnutrition requires collective efforts, the Rome-based United Nations Agencies (RBAs), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), continue to work together to combine synergies and complementarities in many areas as well as within the context of ongoing high-level global processes, initiatives and events, such as the post-2015 UN development agenda, especially in the context of the Thematic Consultation on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition co-led by FAO and WFP, and the Expo Milan 2015, which has the theme "Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life". In addition, RBAs closely collaborate in a number of important for a such as CFS, HLTF and others. The Heads of RBAs meet on a regular basis, since January 2012, to discuss strengthening collaboration.

14. The RBAs continue to strengthen their collaboration also at country level, such as the exchange of development solutions regarding technology, knowledge and experiences, among countries in the global south, which is an integral part of eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in a sustained manner. In revitalizing its longstanding commitment to South-South Cooperation (SSC). FAO has been partnering with IFAD in the implementation of SSC initiatives, such as the "IFAD-FAO pro-poor policy formulation programme" or the "Market Oriented Smallholder Agricultural Project (MOSAP)" in Angola, and a SSC Programme in Sierra Leone focusing on rice production, aquaculture and agro-trade promotion systems.

15. FAO has also engaged with WFP and IFAD in the Purchase For Progress (P4P) pilot programme (2007-2013). FAO hosted the Fourth Annual Consultation of the P4P in January 2013, and, with the objective of reaching a more systematic engagement of the RBAs in the P4P, FAO has called for the development of a joint strategy to optimize the respective competencies of each agency.

16. RBA collaboration has featured prominently in the Horn of Africa (HoA) and the Sahel Regions, with a view to improved food and nutrition security and enhanced resilience of vulnerable livelihoods through agriculture-based interventions. Some examples of such collaboration in the Sahel include the joint FAO-WFP implementation of a programmes and projects, such as the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Roadmap and leading Food Security Clusters. In the HoA, FAO and WFP are working together on a number of initiatives, which include the development of a DRR/DRM roadmap for collaboration in different HoA countries.

17. To further enhance the spirit of collaboration and to highlight effective country-level partnerships, the RBAs have launched an initiative to award outstanding collaboration, such as the recent award to the RBA team in Mozambique. The initiative hopes to encourage further cooperation among the agencies to effectively leverage comparative advantages and knowledge for the advancement of food security and sustainable agricultural development.