

The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture



Biodiversity, the variety of life on earth, is vital to social and economic development and fundamental to humanity's survival. Biodiversity for food and agriculture includes the biological diversity present in agricultural, pastoral, forest and aquatic production systems or of importance to them: the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels that sustain the structure, functions and processes of production systems. This diversity has been managed or influenced by farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisherfolk over many hundreds of generations and reflects the diversity of both human activities and natural processes.

The first report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*

Conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity for food and agriculture requires a comprehensive understanding of the state and use of all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture requested FAO to prepare the first ever report on *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* (report) to bring together the available information on all aspects of biodiversity for food and agriculture. The report will use an ecosystem approach and specifically look at the contribution that biodiversity for food and agriculture as a whole makes to food security, livelihoods and environmental health and to the sustainability, resilience and adaptability of production systems. It will provide the first integrated description of the status of plant, animal, forest and aquatic genetic resources and will also include available baseline information on the state of diversity of all the other organisms associated with production systems, such as micro-organisms, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds and wild plants and mammals that are found in and around production systems and which provide many of the important ecosystem services that support food and agricultural production.

The report will answer the following **questions**:

- What is the current status of biodiversity conservation and its use for food security and nutrition, ecosystem functioning and sustainability?
- What trends can be identified in the conservation and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture and in the effects of major drivers of change?
- How can conservation and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture be improved and its contributions to food security and nutrition, ecosystem functioning, sustainability and improving the livelihoods of farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisher folk be enhanced?

The report will draw on information from other State of the World reports as well as on country reports providing information on key topics, such as ecosystem services, relevant international information sources and available scientific and related literature. In addition, a number of thematic studies will be commissioned on key themes.



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Expected outcomes

The report will be instrumental in providing the knowledge necessary for informed decision-making, particularly in the agriculture and food sector, on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture, and to identify actions and policies that enhance the contribution of biodiversity for food and agriculture to improving food security. It will serve as a major milestone in the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.

A Contribution to our knowledge of biodiversity for food and agriculture

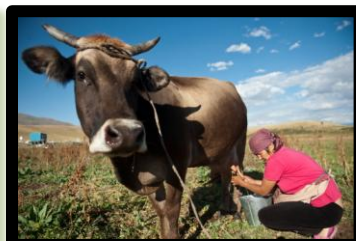
The report will:

- Document the current state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture and of its conservation and use in a comprehensive and integrated way;
- Identify major drivers and their effects on biodiversity in and around production systems;
- Document the links that are known between biodiversity for food and agriculture and the delivery of ecosystem services and functions and the benefits of diversity use;
- Assess the contribution made by biodiversity for food and agriculture to sustainable production, resilience and adaptability, and the livelihoods and incomes of small scale producers;
- Identify actions that can support the improved conservation and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture;
- Document the state of institutional settings, the provisions/measures in place in favour of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including lessons learnt.

A guide to action

The report will provide:

- Ways of mainstreaming biodiversity into food security, rural development, climate change, and biodiversity conservation debates;
- An integrated framework to upscale the maintenance and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture at the country level;
- Strategies, actions and practices that can improve realization of the multiple benefits that diversity provides to production through, for example, the role of biodiversity in sustainable intensification strategies or climate smart agriculture;
- Improved access to the information needed to support resource allocation decisions based on integrated analysis of all aspects of biodiversity for food and agriculture;
- Ways of supporting the continuing role of farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and fisherfolk around the world in the maintenance of biodiversity for food and agriculture, and of improving the contribution that it makes to their livelihoods;
- Information and proposed actions that can support the achievement of the Aichi Targets (particularly Targets 7 and 13).



Working together



The Commission laid great stress on the development of collaboration with all relevant stakeholders – national, regional and international – as part of the process of preparing the report. FAO and the Commission Secretariat is therefore working actively to build the partnerships needed to bring together all the information and provide a compelling account of the state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture. An account that can make a real difference in strengthening the contribution of this biodiversity to human well-being and a healthy planet.

Process

2014: Preparation of country reports and thematic studies

2015: (Sub-)Regional discussions

2016/2017: Presentation of the report to the Commission

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture with its 177 member countries offers an intergovernmental forum where global consensus can be reached on sectoral and cross-sectoral policies relevant to biodiversity for food and agriculture. The Commission's mandate covers all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture. Its main objectives are to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for present and future generations. The Commission oversees and guides the preparation of periodic global assessments as well as negotiates global action plans, codes of conduct and other instruments (e.g. the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. The sectoral and cross-sectoral assessments of genetic resources for food and agriculture are prepared by FAO through a participatory, country-driven approach. The reports on the state of the world's genetic resources are assessments of the state of the resources, their use, the drivers of genetic erosion and the challenges and opportunities to conserve and use these resources in a sustainable manner to contribute to food security and nutrition. Existing assessments cover plant, animal and forest genetic resources, while reports on the state of aquatic genetic resources and on the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture are under preparation.



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