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منظمة الأغذية
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Food and
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
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Объединенных
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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 148th Session of Council:

- 1) Fifth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- 2) Outcomes of the recent United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (COP11)
- 3) Sustainable Energy For All Initiative
- 4) Post-2015 Development Agenda
- 5) International Developments in Nutrition
- 6) Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth
- 7) International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition (Rome, May 2013)
- 8) International Year of Family Farming (2014)

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 148th Session of the Council for information only.



I. Fifth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

1. The Fifth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was held in Muscat from 24 to 28 September 2013, with the support of the Government of Oman. The Governing Body reconfirmed the importance of the Treaty as a main element of the International Regime on Access and Benefit-sharing, and made crucial decisions to enable the necessary evolution of the Treaty in the next biennium. A major breakthrough made at the Fifth Session was the establishment of an *Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing*. The Working Group will develop a range of measures that will:

- a) increase user-based payments and contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and foreseeable long-term manner; and
- b) enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System through additional measures.

2. Despite the ongoing economic crisis, the Contracting Parties demonstrated their commitment to further the Treaty's implementation and adopted the same effective level of budget for the 2014-15 biennium as compared to the 2012-13 period. In addition to the establishment of the Working Group, the Governing Body also agreed to strengthen policy and operational collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Global Crop Diversity Trust through the establishment of liaison officer positions, taking into account existing cooperation with the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Governing Body also adopted a resolution on Farmers' Rights and a Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture which will be implemented in cooperation with relevant FAO technical units and under Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) of the new FAO Strategic Framework. Furthermore, it has been announced that a third Call for Proposals for the Benefit-sharing Fund will be issued to assist farmers in developing countries conserve and use their plant genetic resources and adapt crops to climate change. In addition, initiatives for non-monetary benefit-sharing under the Treaty have also been endorsed by the Governing Body, including a platform for co-development and transfer of technology for smallholder farmers which will enable south-south and north-south technology transfer.

II. Outcomes of the recent United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (COP11)

3. In September 2013, the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat desertification (COP 11) made a number of decisions aimed at fostering implementation of the UNCCD 10 year Strategy. Notably, COP 11 established:

- *A Science-Policy Interface (SPI)* to enhance UNCCD as a global authority on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). On this issue, FAO welcomed the recognition by COP of the role of Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) of the Global Soil Partnership in providing scientific and technical advice to the UNCCD process through interaction with the referred SPI.
- *A Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP)* to enhance knowledge management. FAO will continue to support the UNCCD knowledge activities through its programme on best management practices and information systems on natural resources, to be implemented within Strategic Objective 2.
- *The housing of the Global Mechanism (GM)* in Bonn, with the support of a liaison office in Rome. FAO is ready to strengthen its cooperation with the GM and the Executive Secretariat within this new arrangement.

4. Progress was also made through the COP decision on assessing implementation of the Convention through a *performance and progress indicators methodology* and on *Follow up to Rio+20 Outcomes*. FAO will strengthen its support on these issues through, in particular, its programmes on

land degradation and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) assessment and implementation, forest and landscape restoration and sustainable forest management, at all levels and across regions, including the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands/World Overview of Conservation (LADA/WOCA) and the, Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative.

5. As no agreement was reached on the *concept of land degradation neutrality* in drylands or its operationality, work will continue on this issue. Discussions were held on the role of the private sector in the UNCCD and country Parties were invited, in the context of public-private partnerships, to support private sector investment in SLM in drylands.

6. In support of Rio+20 Outcomes, FAO will continue working with countries to emphasize the vital importance of soils, water and forests in development of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, FAO will revitalize its cooperation with the UNCCD Secretariat, based on key decisions of the COP 11, and taking advantage of its new Strategic framework.

III. Sustainable Energy For All Initiative

7. In 2012, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution declaring 2014-2024 the *Decade of Sustainable Energy for All*, which is of particular relevance to FAO's mandate as energy has a key enabling role in achieving food security and nutrition. In 2012, in line with the *Decade of Sustainable Energy for All*, the UN Secretary-General launched the *Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4ALL)*, guided by the UN Secretary-General's High Level Group, with the goal of achieving sustainable energy for all by 2030 by ensuring universal access to modern energy services, doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

8. Given the close links between energy and food security and in line with SE4ALL objectives, FAO has developed a multi-partner programme on *Energy-Food Systems for People and Climate (ESF)*, with the objective, at all relevant stages of the agri-food chain, of improving access to modern energy services, in particular through integrated food energy systems; improving energy efficiency; and diversifying the energy mix by gradually increasing the share of renewable energy. The ESF Programme is FAO's direct contribution to the achievement of the SE4ALL objectives and in this regard has agreed to co-chair two High Impact Opportunities (HIOs) within the SE4ALL Action Agenda, as well as relevant high impact initiatives (HIIs): *Water-Energy-Food Nexus*, together with the Government of Germany, and *Sustainable Bioenergy*, together with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the biotech company Novozymes.

IV. Post-2015 Development Agenda

9. As the 2015 target year for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, the UN system is deliberating on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and framework. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) supported 100 national dialogues and global thematic consultations on 11 themes, which fed into the High Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons' Report on Post-2015 and the UN General Assembly discussions in September 2013. In parallel, in the Rio+20 follow-up, the UN Member States Open Working Group (OWG) is working to define a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to succeed the MDGs. There has already been significant cross-pollination between the global consultations and the OWG deliberations, and these processes are expected to ultimately converge into one broad development agenda, producing a coherent set of goals for post-2015. The Rome-based agencies (RBAs) consider hunger, food security, nutrition, agriculture, as well as the *Zero Hunger Challenge*, as being able to provide a unifying framework to foster concurrence. The post-2015 process is highly complex as well as resource, and time, consuming.

10. It is important for FAO to be both selective and focussed in its engagement over the next two years to ensure that its areas of mandate and expertise are kept high on the agenda of decision-makers and that food security, agriculture and natural resource issues remain integral to future global goals. FAO established a Corporate Task Team to lead and coordinate its engagement, in close association

with a Technical Working Group covering all technical departments and units. FAO is also working closely with the other RBAs to ensure a systematic, pro-active and coherent engagement with the post-2015 and Rio+20 follow-up processes.

11. The Council at its 145th Session (3-7 December) received an update on the FAO and WFP co-chaired *Global Thematic Consultation on Hunger, Food and Nutrition Security*, organized in close collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the co-sponsorship of the Governments of Spain and Colombia. The outcomes of the Consultation were presented to Member States at a side event at the 145th Session of the Council ; they were widely disseminated and well received by numerous stakeholders, including decision-makers at the UN in New York. Similarly, during the 38th FAO Conference (15-22 June 2013), FAO hosted a follow-up side event on *Food Security and Nutrition in Post-2015*. In the context of the Open Working Group on SDGs, FAO has been actively involved in providing inputs on many inter-agency technical Issues Briefs and it co-led the briefs on sustainable agriculture (together with IFAD) and food security and nutrition (together with the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as co-leading the Issues Briefs on oceans and seas, forests and biodiversity. During the 40th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the RBAs organized a multi-stakeholder special event on *Natural resource management in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda* to promote better understanding of the synergies and potential trade-offs between food security goals and sustainable natural resource management, and the need to empower small scale food producers and food insecure communities in building sustainable and resilient food systems.

12. Members are increasingly expressing interest in the Post-2015 and Rio+20 follow-up processes, in particular in FAO's contribution and coordination with other UN agencies and in ways to ensure that food security, agriculture and sustainable natural resource management feature prominently in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The 2014 round of FAO Regional Conferences will provide an opportunity to update Members on these processes and seek their views and feedback, from a regional perspective.

V. International Developments in Nutrition

13. During 2013, a number of activities have been organized with the aim of raising nutrition higher up on the international development agenda. Among them is the Government of the United Kingdom's *Nutrition for Growth: Beating Hunger through Business and Science* (London, 8 June 2013) which launched the *Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition*. The Global Panel seeks to: provide global research and policy leadership to maximize the contribution of agriculture and food systems to improve nutrition and health outcomes, particularly of women and children; and to gather and examine the evidence on agriculture for improving nutrition and for providing global leadership for investments and policies in agriculture that supports nutrition and helps eradicate hunger. At the same event, the principals of the five UN Agencies with a mandate for nutrition (FAO, IFAD, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the World Health Organization (WHO)) jointly committed themselves to continue to assist nutrition efforts at country level, and to increase and enhance UN global collaboration and coordination, and signed their endorsement of the *UN System Network for Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)*, as well as its Work Plan for 2013, officially launched in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2013. Furthermore, the launch of the *Lancet Nutrition series 2013* updated evidence on nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific interventions.

14. All these efforts will be considered in the lead up to the *Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)* to be held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 19 to 21 November 2014, with a *Preparatory Technical Meeting (Rome, 13-15 November 2013)*. The ICN2 is a pro-active global political/policy response to tackling unacceptably high and persistent levels of malnutrition. The high level conference aims to identify a flexible policy framework that can address the major nutrition challenges, as well as priorities for international cooperation on nutrition. The active involvement of Member Countries is encouraged in the preparatory process, including through the 40th Session of the CFS (Rome, 7-11 October 2013) and its subsequent follow-up. In addition, practical linkages are

being made with the Milan EXPO 2015, the post-2015 UN development agenda and the *Zero Hunger Challenge*.

VI. Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth

15. The Global Oceans Action Summit for Food Security and Blue Growth, originally planned from 9 to 13 September 2013 (The Hague, the Netherlands) co-organized by the Government of the Netherlands and the World Bank, has been tentatively scheduled for May 2014. FAO has been invited and has accepted to become one of the Summit co-organizers.

16. Following the proposal to convene an action-oriented oceans Summit, a great deal of work is under way to build commitment for ocean action and to make the Summit a globally transformational event. As a result, momentum around action on oceans from governments, international organizations, private sector and civil society has been gathering pace. There has been significant progress in finding ways for these entities to work more in partnership and at a scale currently beyond their individual reach. As several key partners signalled that it was important to have sufficient time for capitalizing on these positive developments and preparations, the co-organizers agreed to tentatively schedule the Summit for May 2014 in order to fully capture the opportunities it presented.

17. FAO, as a co-organizer, remains strongly committed to the Summit as a platform for showcasing global commitment to healthy oceans and for mobilizing significant action at scale and is working closely with key partners.

VII. International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition (Rome, May 2013)

18. In May 2013, FAO hosted the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition with the objective of increasing understanding of the important role that forests, trees on farms and agro-forestry systems can play in improving the food security and nutrition of rural people, especially in developing countries and to explore ways to integrate this knowledge in policy decisions at the national and international levels. The conference highlighted the many ways in which forests, trees on farms and agro-forestry systems provide nutritious foods, energy, fodder, pollination, income generation and employment opportunities, as well as important ecosystems services beneficial for agriculture. Participants identified key challenges hindering these contributions, innovative approaches and emerging opportunities to strengthen the role of forests and trees outside forests in food security and nutrition.

19. The conference concluded that the role of forests and trees outside forests in the fight against hunger demands much greater attention and should be integrated with strategies for food security and nutrition. Key recommendations emerging from the conference included:

- i) the provision of secure land and forest tenure and equitable access to resources by applying the principles outlined in the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security;
- ii) the development of mechanisms for coordination across the agricultural, forestry, livestock, fisheries, energy, mining and other relevant sectors to ensure stronger coherence of food security and nutrition interventions and better policy alignment;
- iii) the promotion of policies that increase access by smallholders to credit, technology, extension services and insurance, as well as to markets for their forest and tree products and ecosystem services;
- iv) the achievement of gender equality in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of food security, nutrition and poverty alleviation policies and investment strategies; and
- v) the strengthening of mechanisms for the collection and timely dissemination of data on the contribution of forests and trees to food security and nutrition for use in policy making.

VIII. International Year of Family Farming (2014)

20. The 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2014 as “International Year of Family Farming” (IYFF)¹, and FAO was invited to facilitate its implementation. The IYFF 2014 was officially launched on 22 November 2013, at UN Headquarters in New York and on that occasion several Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Family Farming 2014 were nominated.

21. In the lead up to 2014, FAO is holding a series of regional dialogues with the participation of different actors (family farmers and relevant organizations, government representatives, private sector, civil society organizations, researchers, etc.) aimed at increasing the understanding of the family farming context in each region, including the identification of challenges and opportunities for policies and agricultural investments to support the achievement of food and nutrition security and effectively eradicate hunger and rural poverty, based on the search for a rural development based on the respect for the environment and biodiversity. The IYFF aims to become a tool to stimulate active policies for sustainable development of agricultural systems-based farmer families, communal units, indigenous groups, cooperatives and fishing families, based on the premise of combating poverty and hunger .

22. At the request of the International Steering Committee the topic of family farming will be included in the work programmes of the FAO Regional Conferences scheduled during 2014, thereby enabling a constructive dialogue with the participation of different stakeholders within the context of the celebration of the IYFF 2014.

¹ A/RES/66/222