



# COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

## Seventy-second Session

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## BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING PLATFORM

### Executive Summary

This document introduces the concept of biodiversity and biodiversity mainstreaming into agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It recalls the main outcomes of the UN Biodiversity Conference, held in 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, and presents the concept and objectives of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform (Platform). The aim is to inform the CCP regarding the establishment of the Platform.

### Suggested Action by the Committee

The Committee is invited to take note of the information received regarding the establishment of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform.

*Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:*

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## I. Introduction

1. This document introduces the concept of biodiversity and biodiversity mainstreaming. It recalls the main outcomes of the UN Biodiversity Conference, held in 2016 in Cancun, Mexico, the welcoming by the Conference, at its Fortieth Session, of FAO's initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform, and informs the CCP on the outcome of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors as a first activity of the Platform.

## II. Background

2. Biodiversity, or biological diversity, means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

3. Biodiversity is an important contributor to food security and improved nutrition. All agricultural sectors (crop and livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and on the ecosystem functions and services they underpin. At the same time, these sectors may affect biodiversity through various direct and indirect drivers.

4. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has placed biodiversity at the centre of many economic activities, particularly those related to sustainable agricultural sectors. It calls for the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and the promotion of fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed. Successful biodiversity mainstreaming should contribute to achieving relevant SDG targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets<sup>1</sup>, most of which are currently far from being achieved within their 2020 deadlines.

5. Biodiversity and ecosystem services are essential for ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition (SDG 2). All agricultural sectors (crop and livestock agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) rely on biodiversity and the ecosystem functions and services it provides. In addition to direct provision of food, biodiversity provides ecosystem services that benefit agricultural production indirectly through nutrient cycling, decomposition of organic matter, soil formation and rehabilitation, water purification, pest and disease regulation, and pollination.

6. Biodiversity plays an important role in the eradication of poverty (SDG1). Healthy ecosystems are essential to increase resilience and agricultural production in a context of global change, including climate change. A large number of the world's poor rely directly on biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their livelihoods are affected first and foremost by biodiversity loss. Producers in smallholder and traditional systems have historically used biodiversity, including agricultural biodiversity, as an insurance and coping mechanism to increase flexibility and to spread or reduce risk in the face of increasing uncertainty and shocks. A broader share of the human population would be affected by a decrease in the provision of ecosystem services related to food production, nutrition, water and sanitation. Biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors should contribute significantly to the achievement of SDGs 2, 14 and 15, and the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

7. The term 'mainstreaming' has a variety of definitions and interpretations across different sectors, and national needs and circumstances may determine how mainstreaming is defined and implemented. As one general example, the Global Environmental Facility Scientific and Advisory Panel has defined mainstreaming as "the process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies and practices of key public and private actors that impact or rely on biodiversity, so

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<sup>1</sup> There are 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, defined under five Strategic Goals: <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

that it is conserved and sustainably and equitably used both locally and globally”<sup>2</sup>. The same document notes that mainstreaming is a long-term process, a social experiment in changing the value structures of institutions and individuals with vital consequences for the natural world and the humans who rely on it. Good governance and strong institutions are key determinants of success.

### **III. FAO’s initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform**

8. FAO has a long-standing history in pursuing its goal to alleviate rural poverty and end hunger and malnutrition by promoting sustainable agricultural development and implementing ecosystem approaches. FAO has developed a number of different instruments, guidelines, tools and other technical materials that integrate biodiversity concerns and prove especially useful if implemented at national levels through coordinated efforts between agriculture and environment constituencies.

9. The Fortieth FAO Conference<sup>3</sup> welcomed the Organization’s initiative to act as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform<sup>4</sup> and requested FAO to facilitate, in collaboration with its partners, the integration, in a structured and coherent manner, of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels. The scope of the Platform is global, aiming to improve cross-sectoral coordination of policies and practices to mainstream biodiversity by a wide range of stakeholders. The global process is supported by regional and national activities. Addressing particularly SDGs 2, 14 and 15, the Platform has the objective of mainstreaming biodiversity through:

- Facilitating dialogue among governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders;
- Facilitating the exchange of information and data on biodiversity and biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices and policies among stakeholders;
- Translating knowledge into policy-related actionable recommendations for consideration by FAO’s Governing and Statutory Bodies.

10. The ultimate goal of the Platform is to promote and facilitate the adoption of good practices across all agricultural sectors that will support the conservation and sustainable use and management of biodiversity and increase the productivity, stability and resilience of production systems in an integrated approach. This will also require better coordination among the different agricultural sectors as none of the sectors may be able to address biodiversity in isolation.

### **IV. Multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors**

11. As one of the first major activities of the Platform, from 29 to 31 May 2018, FAO held a multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors (Dialogue). The Dialogue was co-organized with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In the run up to the event, an e-consultation via FAO’s Food Security and Nutrition Forum was held to gather comments and suggestions for the Dialogue.<sup>5</sup>

12. The Dialogue brought together about 250 experts and stakeholders representing a wide range of actors, including governments, the research sector, civil society organizations, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Huntley, B.J. and Redford, K.H. (2014). ‘Mainstreaming biodiversity in Practice: a STAP advisory document’. Global Environment Facility, Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> C 2017/33

<sup>4</sup> CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/3, paragraph 5

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/biodiversity-mainstreaming>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/multi-stakeholder-dialogue-on-biodiversity/en/>

13. The Dialogue confirmed the timeliness and necessity of mainstreaming, as a priority, biodiversity across the agricultural sectors. It also took stock of the state of current biodiversity mainstreaming efforts and experiences at different levels and identified areas of joint action in developing integrated approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, while increasing production to meet the growing demand for food. The Dialogue considered concrete future work of FAO acting as Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform in support of biodiversity mainstreaming within and across agricultural sectors at national, regional and global levels.

14. The Dialogue addressed the topic from different perspectives, in four different working groups: global governance; national policies and legislation; incentives and investment; and voluntary certification schemes. The results of the working group discussions were presented on 31 May 2018 to a high-level segment attended by representatives of agriculture and environment ministries.

15. The working group discussions as summarized by the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups<sup>7</sup> are given in the Appendix to this document.

## **V. Suggested Action by the Committee**

16. The Committee will be informed about the actions taken by the Secretariat for the establishment of the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform and the next steps envisaged to be undertaken.

17. The Committee is invited to take note of the received information.

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<sup>7</sup> H.E. Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran) and H.E. Martha Bárcena Coqui (Mexico), Mr Antonio Otávio Sá Ricarte (Brazil), H.E. François Pythoud (Switzerland) and H.E. Godfrey C. Magwenzi (Zimbabwe), Ms Gunnvor Berge (Norway) and Mr Brian Baldwin (International Agri-Food Network)

## Appendix

### **Joint Report of the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups of the multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming across agricultural sectors**

The Dialogue brought together a range of views of what the Platform should be and do. First, it should be complementary without duplicating other initiatives. Second, it should capitalize on the role of FAO as a neutral forum for policy dialogue, its convening and facilitation power at different levels, and its technical support and knowledge management functions.

The Dialogue emphasized that the Platform should explore a systemic approach with the Rio Conventions, reinforce synergies and use the Sustainable Development Goals to develop links and joint implementation goals. This will require a transformational change in and an integrated vision for agriculture and food systems. It is expected that outcomes of this Dialogue will be one of the highlights of the Fourteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Egypt, underpinning the mandate of the Cancun Declaration. Hope was expressed that the CBD COP 15 in China would become the 'Paris of biodiversity', stressing the linkages between biodiversity loss and climate change and the risks associated with inaction.

In response to the fruitful discussions held during the Dialogue, FAO will carefully consider specific actions with regard to biodiversity mainstreaming.

Three cross-cutting issues that ran across the debates of the four working groups were: i) the absolute need to prepare, at the latest by 2020, and in collaboration with partners and relevant stakeholders, a Biodiversity Strategy setting out future activities; ii) the catalytic role of knowledge management; and iii) the importance of metrics.

Knowledge management was stressed as a critical driver of change. The Platform was asked to facilitate sharing of information, including case studies and communities of practice on valuation, policies and legislation, and to promote learning among farmers, stakeholders and decision makers, recognizing the value of local and indigenous knowledge in using and preserving biodiversity.

Another area where support was requested was on data collection and on the development of metrics and indicators to measure impact and performance of management practices on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem level, involving research and other stakeholders, such as consumers and suppliers.

The suggestions fall in the following clusters:

#### *1. Global governance*

- The Biodiversity Strategy, in support of mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, would be reviewed by the Technical Committees, the Regional Conferences and the Conference; and serve to improve mainstreaming biodiversity across FAO's departments and work;
- Provide through the Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform a neutral forum for governments, communities of practice and other stakeholders along the food chain to build bridges between sectors, identify synergies, align goals and develop integrated cross-sectoral approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors;
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral dialogues at regional and national level with a view to identifying gaps and opportunities with a focus on processes, policies and legislation, including research, implementation and impact;
- Lead on developing a vision for sustainable food systems of the future, and a comprehensive global plan of action on biodiversity mainstreaming in food and agriculture systems;

- Strengthen coordination of work with other relevant international fora and instruments, in particular the CBD;
- Contribute to the CBD's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework towards the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, including baseline data and information for potential targets and commitments.

## 2. *National policies and legislation*

- Assist countries in raising awareness of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services and their essential role for human well-being and food and nutrition security;
- Monitor national and regional policy initiatives, governance mechanisms and regulatory approaches that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors; providing best practices and successful models;
- Develop new, update or complement existing instruments (such as codes of practice, guidelines, and standards) with a view to supporting countries in the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity across agricultural sectors more effectively;
- Support countries in the development and implementation of national biodiversity mainstreaming strategies, including policies, voluntary national commitments and regulatory measures;
- Identify and promote approaches and practices that effectively mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within and across agricultural sectors, across landscapes and seascapes (using experiences with agroecology and GIAHS) with a focus on strengthening research, training and extension systems.

## 3. *Incentives, investment and voluntary certification schemes*

- Contribute to the improvement of methods for valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services in national accounts, and to the removal of dis-incentives;
- Support countries in reviewing and revising incentive schemes for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in the agricultural sectors;
- Provide a neutral forum for the development of agricultural performance standards that may serve as a basis for responsible private investment and voluntary standards;
- Encourage responsible, biodiversity sensitive investment in agriculture and food systems to reduce biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems;
- Facilitate dialogue, trust and transparency among all stakeholders making use of and impacting on biodiversity, and foster systematic policy change and inclusive value chains;
- Encourage investment in neutral and responsive extension services for producers;
- Carry out an inventory of existing certification schemes in different agricultural sectors and regions.

To conclude, it was recognized that there is a need to develop a long-term vision on how to bring together biodiversity with sustainable food and agriculture to help us move together in our respective work. In this regard, participants called upon FAO to develop its biodiversity strategy.