



COUNCIL

Hundred and Fifty-fourth Session

Rome, 30 May - 3 June 2016

Developments in *Fora* of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Executive Summary

In keeping with established practice, 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 154th Session of Council:

- 1) Report on Global *Fora* on Climate Change and Biodiversity
 - i) 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors
 - ii) 4th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
 - iii) Outcome of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Paris, France, 30 November-12 December 2015)
- 2) Outcome of the First Meeting of the UN Forum on Forests' Ad Hoc Expert Group of the International Arrangement on Forests Strategic Plan (New York, 25-27 April 2016)
- 3) Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators (IAEG-SDGs): Global Indicator Framework (GIF) for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- 4) United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)
- 5) International Year of Pulses
- 6) Update on the Impact of El Niño and the Potentially Developing La Niña
- 7) Outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, 23-24 May 2016)

Suggested action by the Council

The above topics are presented to the 154th Session of the Council for information only.



I. Report on Global *Fora* on Climate Change and Biodiversity

i) 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): Mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors

1. The 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016) will address inter alia mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity across relevant sectors, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Mexico, as host country, will also organize a high-level ministerial segment from 2 to 4 December 2016, which will focus on the same issue.

2. In preparation for COP13, FAO participated in the 19th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the CBD (Montreal, Canada, 2-15 November 2015) and reported on FAO's Five Principles for Sustainable Agriculture for the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Target Seven on sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry¹. FAO also participated in the subsequent 20th meeting of the SBSTTA (Montreal, Canada, 25-30 April 2016) and provided information on FAO's work relevant to biodiversity, including on the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning², adopted by the FAO Conference at its 39th Session (June 2015)³ and on the preparation of the report on The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

3. COP13 provides an important and timely opportunity for the Organization to showcase the role of agriculture in managing natural resources and biodiversity in a sustainable manner, taking full account of the various ecosystem functions that underpin agricultural production, and to build a strategic alliance for FAO's vision for sustainable food systems and agriculture. During the preparatory phase, FAO and the CBD Secretariat are holding regular consultations to improve collaboration to the mutual benefit of agriculture and the environment.

ii) 4th Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

4. The Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)⁴ held its 4th Session in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 22 to 28 February 2016. For the first time, the IPBES Plenary approved two summaries for policy-makers (SPM): the methodological assessment of scenarios and models of biodiversity and ecosystem services and assessment of pollinators, pollination and food production. FAO contributed to the latter, including through the FAO-led International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators, also known as the International Pollinators Initiative (IPI), as well as through hosting an authors' meeting in July 2015.

¹ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/19/INF/4/Rev.1, see: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-19/information/sbstta-19-inf-04-rev1-en.pdf>

² UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/4, see: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-20/information/sbstta-20-inf-04-en.pdf>

³ C 2015/REP, paragraph 52(b)

⁴ The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is the intergovernmental body which assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society, in response to requests from decision makers. IPBES is placed under the auspices of four United Nations entities: FAO, UNESCO, UNEP and UNDP and administered by UNEP.

5. The pollinator and pollination assessment highlights a number of ways to effectively safeguard pollinator populations and recommends inter alia the promotion of sustainable agriculture with a view to diversifying the agricultural landscape and making use of ecological processes as an integral part of food production. The pollinator and pollination SPM provides an important summary of the available scientific knowledge and may help policy-makers in developing science-based policy responses. The SPM will be submitted, for information, to the 25th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) (Rome, 26-30 September 2016). The SPM will also be presented to the 16th Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) (Rome, 30 January – 3 February 2017) for consideration.

6. The IPBES Plenary also approved, in principle and subject to availability of funding, to undertake a thematic assessment of invasive alien species and their control as well as a global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services, both pertinent to FAO's mandate. The global assessment, to be started in 2016, is expected to be launched at the 7th Session of the IPBES Plenary in 2019. The scoping report, which sets out the scope, geographic coverage, rationale, utility and methodological approach, includes a reference to FAO assessments, including The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture to be launched in 2017, as a pertinent and timely contribution to the IPBES global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

7. Finally, the IPBES Plenary also acknowledged progress made in the assessment of land degradation and restoration, for which FAO continues to provide support in collaboration with the Global Soil Partnership and its International Technical Panel on Soils.

iii) Outcome of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Paris, France, 30 November-12 December 2015)

8. The 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Framework Convention) was held in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015, during which the 195 Parties adopted a new global climate change agreement, the "Paris Agreement". The Paris Agreement was opened for signature and ratification on 22 April 2016 and will formally enter into force when at least 55 Parties to the Framework Convention accounting in total for at least 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions ratify the Agreement. As countries move forward to implement the agreement, FAO is well placed to support Members during this phase.

9. Agriculture and sustainable development feature prominently in the Paris Agreement. The Preamble also recognizes the 'fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse effects of climate change'. This reinforces the language under the Framework Convention to ensure that food security is not threatened in responding to climate change exigencies. The Agreement specifies that efforts aimed at strengthening the global response to climate change are intrinsic to sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

10. Forestry also features prominently in the Paris Agreement, which outlines the need for Parties to take action to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests. Parties are encouraged to implement and support, including through results-based payments, the REDD+ activities: reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

11. Prior to COP21, countries had outlined their proposed actions regarding climate change through the "Intended Nationally Determined Contributions" (INDCs), which set out adaptation and mitigation actions together with the associated financing needs. Many FAO Members may require

assistance in implementing actions set out in their INDCs, as the agricultural sectors are a major component of most INDCs submitted by developing countries with respect to adaptation, mitigation and finance. In this regard, FAO is identifying opportunities to assist Members in the refinement and implementation of their NDCs, although additional funds would be required to deliver this support at scale.

II. Outcome of the First Meeting of the UN Forum on Forests' Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests' Strategic Plan (New York, 25-27 April 2016)

12. The United Nations Forum on Forests' (UNFF) Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG), established through ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, met in New York from 25 to 27 April 2016, during which the Expert Group made proposals for incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN Forest Instrument, and for developing a Strategic Plan for the period 2017-2030 and a Quadrennial Programme of Work for the period 2017-2020 for the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF).

13. The Expert Group also made recommendations for the structure and key components of the plan and work programme, highlighting their role for the enhanced contribution of forests to sustainable development, providing strategic guidance and translating this guidance into concrete actions. The objective of the IAF Strategic Plan is to improve coherence, enhance synergies and reduce fragmentation of forest issues at the global level, reflecting a coherent approach and integrating existing forest-related objectives, targets, actions and other commitments into an appropriate structure for forests.

14. The Expert Group also outlined the importance of establishing appropriate frameworks for reviewing progress by the United Nations Forum on Forests in the implementation of the UN Forest Instrument, and in the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, in particular the forest-related SDGs and targets. It was recognized that the review framework should be designed to effectively provide input to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

15. Based on the outcome of the meeting, the co-Chairs will prepare a zero-draft document by July 2016, for further consideration and discussion at the 2nd meeting of the AHEG in October 2016, and for approval by the special session of the UN Forum on Forests in early 2017.

16. The Strategic Plan and the Quadrennial Programme of Work are pertinent to FAO's normative and operational mandate related to forests, and as Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, FAO is responsible for coordinating the input of 14 key international organizations related to forestry. As a recognized source of quality information on forests, due to its global and regional coverage, FAO is well-placed to play an important role in supporting both the development of the Strategic Plan, as well as the Quadrennial Programme of Work, and their implementation by Members.

III. Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators (IAEG-SDGS): Global Indicator Framework (GIF) for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

17. The 47th Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) (New York, 8-11 March 2016) approved the Global Indicator Framework (GIF) for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a practical starting point and requested the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to continue working to improve and refine the GIF.

18. Subsequently, the 3rd meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG) (Mexico City, 30 March - 1 April 2016) agreed on the next steps in the development of the GIF and further agreed that each indicator would have an

international agency as ‘custodian’ responsible for collecting data from national official sources and disseminating them globally, providing the storyline for the annual global SDG progress report, working on further methodological development and contributing to building the necessary statistical capacity at country level. Moreover, the custodian agency should coordinate with other agencies and stakeholders interested in contributing to indicator development. For their part, countries were encouraged to establish national dissemination platforms for all SDG indicators and to allow general access to their data and metadata.

19. Consequently, the SDG indicators have been provisionally classified into three tiers, according to their methodological development and country availability. FAO was identified as custodian for 20 SDG indicators, and as the contributing agency for an additional five indicators. The global indicators will be the basis for the annual SDG progress reports of the UN Secretary-General.

IV. United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)

20. In November 2014, the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), co-hosted by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), adopted two outcome documents: the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and its companion Framework for Action. The Rome Declaration invited the UN General Assembly to consider declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition, which was subsequently adopted on 1 April 2016 by the UN General Assembly through Resolution 70/259⁵, together with the endorsement of both outcome documents of ICN2. The Resolution calls upon FAO and WHO to lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and invites governments and other relevant stakeholders, such as international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia, to actively support the implementation of the Decade, including through voluntary contributions, as appropriate. The Decade aims to increase activities at the national, regional and global levels to implement the actions recommended in the Framework for Action, while contributing to attain the corresponding targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21. Arrangements are underway both at FAO and WHO for a virtual launch of the Decade in July 2016, followed by a global launch in September 2016 in New York in conjunction with the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly. On this occasion, Member Nations, international and regional organizations, non-State actors, as well as other relevant fora, will indicate how they intend translating global commitments into concrete country commitments and actions to support the achievement of the objectives of the Decade. FAO and WHO will be responsible for identifying and developing a Programme of Work for the Decade, along with its means of implementation, on the basis of the Rome Declaration and its Framework for Action, as well as the commitments made at the Decade’s launch, using coordination mechanisms such as the Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) and multi-stakeholder platforms such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

22. Resolution 70/259 invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to inform the General Assembly on the implementation of the Decade, on the basis of biennial reports jointly compiled by FAO and WHO. Accordingly, FAO and WHO will prepare progress reports every two years, with inputs from other relevant organizations and fora, including CFS, working together in a collaborative and inclusive manner in support of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025).

V. International Year of Pulses

23. Following Resolution 6/2013 adopted by the 38th FAO Conference in June 2013, the UN General Assembly, at its 68th Session declared 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP). The

⁵ *United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)*, A/RES/70/259 (www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/259&referer=/english/&Lang=E).

main objective of the IYP is to raise awareness of the contribution of pulses to food security and nutrition, more specifically to: i) increase the knowledge and information on pulses, their attributes and their ability to provide solutions to health, trade and environmental sustainability issues; and ii) strengthen local, national, and regional capacities to formulate and implement policies and programmes to improve nutritional status.

24. An International Steering Committee, co-chaired by Pakistan and Turkey, and composed of FAO Members, farmers' organizations, agricultural research organizations, civil society and private sector representatives, was set up in 2015 and has been meeting regularly since then to oversee and guide the implementation of the IYP.

25. The outputs of the IYP 2016 Action Plan implementation include:

- i) Multi-donor Trust Fund: in accordance with the UNGA Resolution, the IYP 2016 is entirely funded by voluntary contributions.
- ii) IYP Special Ambassadors: six Special Ambassadors, one for each geographic region, were identified and these support FAO in raising public awareness for the important contribution of pulses to food security and nutrition.
- iii) Regional and Global activities: the planned activities aim to provide an overview of the opportunities, challenges and existing policies regarding the production and trade of pulses, as well as to initiate discussions on existing knowledge gaps and research needs.
- iv) Food Composition Database: FAO is developing the Pulses Database, that will include a user food composition database on pulses, as well as pulses recipes selected for their nutrient contents.
- v) Outreach: FAO is producing an IYP cookbook, and fact sheets on the main IYP key messages. FAO is also carrying out promotional and awareness raising activities such as the production of educational material for children, regular updates on the IYP website and social media, as well as displays during FAO meetings.

VI. Update on the Impact of El Niño and the Potentially Developing La Niña

26. The impact of the 2015-2016 El Niño weather phenomenon has been one of the most intense and widespread of the past one hundred years. It is known that the agriculture, food security and nutritional status of more than 60 million people around the globe is affected as a direct result of the El Niño related droughts, floods and extreme hot and cold weather, and this figure is increasing. Of the almost USD 3 billion required to meet the humanitarian demands of El Niño-affected countries, almost 80 percent is due to food security and agricultural needs. As such, this is overwhelmingly a food and agriculture crisis and is perhaps the most serious crisis the world has faced this century.

27. The worst is not over yet. While the El Niño is likely to decline in strength over the coming months, this does not mean that the danger has passed. Harvests in several parts of the world have already failed and are forecast to fail in others, resulting in a dramatic increase of acute household food insecurity. In addition, livestock has been weakened or died, and inland and coastal fisheries have also been affected. Furthermore, as El Niño continues to impact global temperatures, the possible emergence of a La Niña weather phenomenon, also linked to floods, droughts and hurricanes in different parts of the world, is increasingly predicted and will also continue to affect agriculture and food security.

28. The regions most affected include the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, the Dry Corridor of Central America, Caribbean Islands and Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands. Many countries within these regions have already declared a national state of emergency. In many of the affected countries, FAO is using early warning information to design and implement early action and response plans. El Niño response plans developed to date remain drastically underfunded. FAO's funding gap is USD 232 million needed for emergency and recovery responses in 29 high priority countries, not taking into account the "at risk" countries.

29. On 17 March 2016, humanitarian and development agencies came together in Rome in a landmark event to take stock of the impact of the El Niño crisis globally, to raise awareness of the extensive humanitarian needs which still exist and to pledge to work closely together in the future to address similar events. During the meeting, the organizing agencies, WFP, IFAD, OCHA and FAO, committed to developing a protocol outlining steps to be taken collectively, within defined timelines, to ensure early and coordinated action to future El Niño and La Niña events. The document will include such steps as collective analysis, joint scenario planning, early engagement with resource partners and early investment in preparedness and resilience initiatives.

VII. Outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, 23-24 May 2016)

30. The United Nations Secretary-General convened the World Humanitarian Summit on 23 and 24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Summit provided an important opportunity to summon the international community to initiate change in the way crises were addressed and affected populations were supported. Hosted by the Government of Turkey, the Summit brought together over 6 000 participants that included 55 Heads of State and Government, the UN system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and private sector actors. The Summit's commitments reinforced support from all stakeholders to go beyond meeting humanitarian needs, by changing people's lives through ending needs. Global leaders recognized that humanitarian emergencies could no longer be viewed in isolation from broader sustainable development efforts. Summit commitments gave impetus to the new way of working put forward in the Agenda for Humanity.

31. For FAO, the Organizational approach to promoting the joint efforts of the development and humanitarian communities through the resilience lens, was reconfirmed at the Summit. The Summit's commitments underscored the need to build and sustain the conditions for peace, security and respect for human rights, and to prioritize investments in prevention and resilience, with the ultimate objective of ending future humanitarian needs.