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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 3.1 of the Provisional Agenda

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

Fourth Session

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its Fourteenth Regular Session in April 2013, considered draft strategic priorities for action on forest genetic resources and agreed on them as the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources* (Global Plan of Action).¹ Subsequently, the FAO Conference adopted the Global Plan of Action at its Twenty-eighth Session in June 2013.² The strategic priorities of the Global Plan of Action were identified based on the information gathered for *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*³ and the recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (the Working Group) at its Second Session in January 2013.

2. At its Fourteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to develop an implementation strategy for the Global Plan of Action.⁴ The Working Group considered a draft implementation strategy for the Global Plan of Action and made several recommendations at its Third Session in July 2014.⁵ The Commission, at its Fifteenth Regular Session in January 2015, then agreed on the *Strategy for the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources* (the Strategy).⁶

3. This document summarizes the activities undertaken, since the Third Session of the Working Group in July 2014, by FAO in collaboration with its partners as a follow-up to the Global Plan of Action and the adoption of the Strategy. Countries, regional networks on forest genetic resources and relevant international organizations are expected to report their activities in this regard in 2017.⁷ Based on these reports, FAO will prepare the First Implementation Report of the Global Plan of Action for the Seventeenth Regular Session of the Commission in 2019.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

Awareness raising and information sharing

4. As requested by the Commission at its Fifteenth Regular Session⁸, FAO has made country reports prepared for *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* available on its web site⁹. The summaries and main conclusion of seven expert-led thematic studies were published in a special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*¹⁰. This special issue was prepared in collaboration with Bioversity International, the World Agroforestry Centre and a total of 54 experts around the world. FAO also published, in collaboration with Bioversity International, a thematic study on the role of forest genetic

¹ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 52.

² C 2013/REP, paragraph 77.

³ FAO 2014. *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e.pdf>

⁴ CGRFA-14/13/Report, paragraph 53.

⁵ CGRFA/WG-FGR-3/14/Report, paragraphs 13-15.

⁶ CGRFA-15/15/Report, Appendix E.

⁷ CGRFA/WG-FGR-4/16/4, Appendix.

⁸ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 44.

⁹ Country Reports, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e/i3825e01.htm>

¹⁰ Global Forest Genetic Resources: Taking Stock (special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*) (open access). <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03781127/333>

resources in ecosystem restoration.¹¹ Presently, FAO is finalizing another four thematic studies¹² for publication.

5. FAO has continued its efforts to increase international awareness of the Global Plan of Action as well as the importance of forest genetic resources. A side event on the Global Plan of Action was organized by Bioversity International, with technical inputs from FAO, during the World Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), held in Salt Lake City, USA in October 2014. In May 2015, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Institute for Forests (EMBRAPA Florestas) and FAO organized an International Symposium on Forest Biotechnology for Smallholders in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. Bioversity International and FAO also organized a side event on forest genetic resources at the XIV World Forestry Congress, held in Durban, South Africa in September 2015. Furthermore, a World Café session held during the XIV World Forestry Congress focused on building resilience with forest genetic resources. In October 2015, FAO briefed the Annual Meeting of the OECD Scheme on Forest Seed and Plant on the Global Plan of Action and its implementation. Furthermore, FAO organized, in Prague in collaboration with the Czech Republic, a workshop on forest policy and forest genetic resources for selected Eastern European and Central Asian countries in October 2015. FAO will continue, together with its partners, organizing or contributing to this type of events to increase awareness on the conservation, sustainable use and development of forest genetic resources, subject to the availability of financial resources.

Monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action

6. At its Fifteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to continue developing targets and indicators for forest genetic resources and prepare a draft schedule for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, as well as guidelines for preparing strategies to implement the Global Plan of Action at the national and regional levels.¹³ Draft targets and indicators¹⁴ and a draft schedule¹⁵ for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action will be presented to the Working Group for its consideration at this session. Furthermore, the Working Group will consider a document¹⁶ on the preparation of guidelines for the development of national strategies for the conservation, sustainable use and development of forest genetic resources.

Regional collaboration and networks

7. Regional networks on forest genetic resources play an important role in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and FAO has continued its efforts to strengthen these networks. In September 2014, the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutes (APAFRI) and Bioversity International organized, with technical inputs from FAO, a regional workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the national coordinators of the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN). The workshop identified regional priorities for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in the Asia-Pacific region. Bioversity International organized a similar workshop in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia in October 2014 for the Latin America Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN). In Europe, FAO continued its collaboration with the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) which has also identified regional priorities for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. Furthermore, FAO provided inputs to a planning workshop for the establishment

¹¹ Bozzano et al. (eds) 2014. Genetic considerations in ecosystem restoration using native tree species. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3938e.pdf>

¹² Graudal et al., Indicators of forest genetic diversity, erosion and vulnerability; Alfaro et al., Role of forest genetic resources in adaptation to biotic and abiotic factors in a changing climate; Dawson et al., The value of trees and tree genetic resources for the livelihoods of rural communities in the tropics; Ratnam et al., Effects of management practices on forest genetic diversity.

¹³ CGRFA-15/15/Report, paragraph 20 and Appendix E.

¹⁴ CGRFA/WG-FGR-4/16/3.

¹⁵ CGRFA/WG-FGR-4/16/4

¹⁶ CGRFA/WG-FGR-4/16/5.

of a regional training centre on forest genetic resources in China under the umbrella of APFORGEN. The workshop, held in Binzhou City in December 2015, was organized by APAFRI and Bioversity International in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Forestry and a private Chinese company working on tree breeding and ecological restoration.

8. Currently, Bioversity International and FAO are collaborating in organizing a regional workshop for the national coordinators of the Sub-Saharan Africa Forest Genetic Resources Programme (SAFORGEN) with an aim to identify regional priorities for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action in Sub-Saharan Africa. The workshop will be held in Douala, Cameroon in April 2016. FAO will continue supporting, and collaborating with, the regional networks to strengthen their role in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, subject to the availability of financial resources.

Integration of forest genetic resources within the FAO Forestry Programme

9. FAO has continued integrating forest genetic resources within its Forestry Programme. In the area of forest health, FAO has contributed to the work of regional networks dedicated to combat invasive species affecting forest genetic resources. These networks raise awareness, facilitate information sharing and resource mobilization, and bring together experts, institutions and other stakeholders concerned with forest invasive species. In November 2014, FAO organized a regional seminar in Beijing, China for the national focal points of the Asia Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN) in collaboration with the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In addition, FAO organized a regional seminar in Budapest, Hungary in June 2015 for European and Central Asian countries to promote the implementation of phytosanitary standards in forestry. In February 2016, FAO also conducted, under the umbrella of APFISN, a three-day workshop on the management of transboundary forest invasive species in Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines. Currently, FAO is preparing a meeting for the Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa that will be held in South Africa in April 2016. FAO and its partners also intend to rejuvenate the Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS) and Red de Países del Cono Sur sobre Especies Exóticas Invasoras a Ecosistemas Forestales which includes the South Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay) and Bolivia.

10. As part of the Action Against Desertification initiative, which aims to restore drylands and degraded lands in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific to tackle the detrimental social, economic and environmental impact of land degradation and desertification, FAO and its partners have explored ways to reinforce national tree seed systems. In January 2016, FAO and the National Agency of the Great Green Wall of Nigeria organized a regional workshop in Abuja, Nigeria to develop detailed plans for large-scale restoration efforts in West Africa. In February 2016, FAO conducted, in collaboration with the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), a similar regional workshop in Nairobi, Kenya for East African countries. In addition to discussing how to meet the increasing demands for forest reproductive material created by extensive restoration efforts, these workshops also analysed issues related to the deployment of germplasm and species across different sites, and how to match the needs of local communities with those of large-scale restoration programmes.

Funding

11. Efforts need to be made at national, regional and international levels to ensure that strategic priorities are successfully translated into actions through existing or new programmes and projects. Securing adequate and sustainable funding, particularly for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, is crucial. FAO has explored the interest of different donors to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. However, to date no extra-budgetary funds have been received for this purpose. FAO will continue its efforts in this regard. When possible, countries may consider directing their resources, including official development assistance, to programmes and projects that contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. Countries may also seek financial support for projects on forest genetic resources through the decentralized FAO Technical Cooperation Programme.

III. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

12. The Working Group may wish to take note of the activities reported and provide guidance to the Commission on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the Strategy.
13. The Working Group may wish to recommend that the Commission:
 - i) call upon countries to continue implementing the Global Plan of Action to contribute to sustainable forest management and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 15;
 - ii) encourage countries to support, as appropriate, the regional networks on forest genetic resources and forest invasive species, and contribute to the activities of these networks to strengthen regional collaboration in these areas;
 - iii) request FAO to continue coordinating and supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, in collaboration with regional networks and relevant international organizations;
 - iv) encourage donors to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action; and
 - v) request FAO to continue pursuing extra-budgetary funds to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.