



NOW from NORTH AMERICA



5 June is World Environment Day, and the first International Day for the Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing | 8 June is World Oceans Day

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“We have to conserve and manage our natural resources in a much more sustainable way. We have to protect the ecosystem functions of biodiversity, such as water quality, nutrient cycling, soil health, rehabilitation of degraded areas and habitat for wild species, biological pest control and also pollination.”

**José Graziano da Silva,
Director-General of FAO**

Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on
Biodiversity Mainstreaming across
Agricultural Sectors, 31 May 2018

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Reader,

As the challenges from climate change, conflicts and the depletion of natural resources intensify, it is important that the world moves from rhetoric to action, breaks the silos, and works together towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This has been the underlying theme across our activities in the month gone by.

Ahead of the Global Landscapes Forum in Washington DC, we co-hosted the second High-Level Speaker Series on Integrated Landscape Management with EcoAgriculture Partners to look at creative strategies to reorient capital towards land restoration and regeneration.

The Symposium on Geographical Indications for Food hosted in partnership with the World Food Law Institute and the American Society of International Law explored the topic of local origin, community development, and intellectual property rights in adding value for producers along the value chain.

We celebrated the inaugural World Bee Day with a discussion on the critical importance of pollinators in ensuring food security, featuring a keynote address from Stanislav Vidovič, Ambassador of Slovenia to the US.

June has a variety of events lined up, ranging from a congressional briefing on innovations in agricultural development to a roundtable on biofortification, and a special screening of the food waste documentary - Wasted! - at the Danish Embassy. A busy summer ahead!

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and write back to us with your ideas and feedback.

Thank you,

Vimlendra Sharan

Director, FAO Liaison Office for North America

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

Exploring the Potential of Geographical Indications



Panelists at the Geographical Indications for Food Symposium.

31 May 2018, Washington, DC - FAO North America in collaboration with the World Food Law Institute (WFLI) and the American Society of International Law hosted a [Geographical Indications for Food Symposium: Exploring Local Origin, Community Development, and Intellectual Property Rights](#) at the historic Cosmos Club. The symposium was the conclusion of a series of roundtable discussions that provided an analysis of the legal, policy and community development aspects of geographical indications (GI).

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, emphasized that the symposium serves as an opportunity to advance the discussion on geographical indications by exploring possibilities for rural development. The event was moderated by Marsha Echols, Director of the WFLI.

David Muls, Senior Director of the World Intellectual Property Organization's Department of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications, noted in his keynote address that the interest in geographical indications is increasing globally, and emphasized that policy coherence is needed to make geographical indications more traceable, predictable and transparent.

Florence Tartanac, Senior Officer of FAO's Market Linkages and Value Chains Group under the Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN), attended and presented key findings from the recently launched report, [Strengthening Sustainable food systems through geographical indications: An analysis of economic impact](#).

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion on the impact, benefits, and costs of GI implementation featuring Fabio Parasecoli (New York University), Ernesto Tavoletti (University of Macerata), and Florence Tartanac (FAO).

Jim Smith, Executive Director of American Origin Products Association, underlined that the purpose of geographical indications is to ensure an economic incentive for producers to invest in local products. The session continued with three different international case studies presented by Alberto Hart of the Embassy of Peru, Sylvain Maestracci of the Embassy of France, and Takuma Nakagawa of the Embassy of Japan.

Wes Rist from the American Society of International Law moderated a discussion on US-based case studies. The discussion featured Glenn Roberts, founder of Anson Mills, which leads the production of certified organic Carolina Gold rice; Wendy Brannen who shared the story behind Georgia's Vidalia sweet onions; and Sarah Roller, who highlighted approaches of marketing food products based on the geographic origin in the US. [Read full article](#)

World Bee Day: A Call for Action to Save Pollinators



Left to right: Val Dolcini, Leda Huta, Nabeeha Kazi, Ambassador Stanislav Vidovič, Vimlendra Sharan, and Jay Evans.

24 May 2018, Washington, DC - FAO North America marked the inaugural [World Bee Day](#) by hosting a roundtable discussion on the vital role of pollinators in ensuring food diversity and the threats they face from human activity. The event, moderated by Nabeeha Kazi, President and CEO of Humanitas Global, featured a keynote address by H.E. Stanislav Vidovič, Ambassador of Slovenia to the US.

"Without bees, it would be impossible to achieve a world without hunger. FAO estimates that 75% of all crop species grown for human consumption depend on pollinators," said Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America. He also recognized the leadership of the Government of Slovenia which was instrumental in establishing the international day through the United Nations.

"Bees are endangered. In Europe, nearly 10% of bee species are facing extinction," said Ambassador Stanislav Vidovič. "Slovenia has a long tradition of beekeeping, one out of 200 Slovenians are involved in beekeeping."

Carolina Starr, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services Expert at FAO, joined remotely from Rome and highlighted FAO's [International Pollinator Initiative](#) and the need for more data to fill in the knowledge gap for FAO member countries.

"From backyard gardeners to farmers and everyone in-between, we have guides to protect and support pollinators" said Val Dolcini, President and CEO of Pollinator Partnerships.

Leda Huta, Executive Director of the Endangered Species Coalition, illustrated that over 69 pollinator species are currently endangered in the US. She added that habitat loss, pesticides and climate change are important reasons why pollinator species are becoming endangered.

Jay Evans, Research Leader of the Bee Research Lab at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA-ARS) highlighted the US Government's work supporting pollinators and the honeybee industry.

The event also featured mural artist Matt Willey who is currently working on a beehive installation in front of the UN in New York. Ivan Moore from the Center of Food Safety showcased Wild Bee ID, an app for identifying bees and bee-friendly plants. [Read full article](#)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH AMERICA

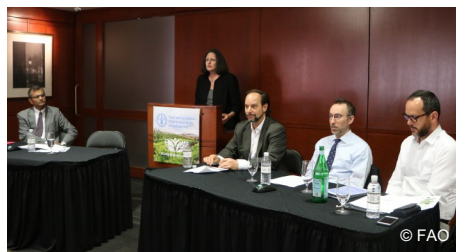
Daniel Gustafson Highlights the Importance of Resilience to End Hunger



29 May - 1 June 2018, Washington, DC – FAO North America and the Global Food Security Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) co-hosted a luncheon roundtable with Daniel Gustafson, FAO Deputy Director-General for Programs. Attendees included senior leaders from non-profit organizations, multilateral institutions and think-tanks. Gustafson's remarks were centered around the recently released [2018 Global Report on Food Crises](#) which noted that an estimated 124 million people in 51 countries are facing crisis level food insecurity (IPC level 3) or worse. He briefed participants on the critical role FAO is playing in building resilience in countries affected by conflict, natural disasters, and climate change, which are key contributing factors to the increased number of people facing acute food insecurity. He also highlighted FAO's priorities in the coming years to successfully deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2 to end hunger.

While in Washington, DC, Gustafson also met with senior officials at the US Department of State, US Agency for International Development, US Department of Agriculture, as well as the World Bank.

Strategies to Reorient Capital Towards Sustainable Landscapes



Left to right: Vimlendra Sharan, Sara Scherr, Rob Parenteau, Kari Cohen and Christian Del Valle.

29 May 2018, Washington, DC - FAO North America and EcoAgriculture Partners co-hosted the second High-level Speaker Series entitled [Towards Sustainable Landscapes Investing: Creative Strategies to Reorient Capital for Restoration and Regeneration](#) at The George Washington University, ahead of the Global Landscapes Forum held on 30 May. The event, moderated by Sara Scherr, President and CEO of EcoAgriculture Partners, looked at the state of investments in sustainable landscapes, as well as barriers and solutions.

Vimlendra Sharan, Director of FAO North America, emphasized that “the landscape approach is gathering momentum and to keep the momentum going, we need adequate, timely and sustainable investments.”

Christian Del Valle, Founder and Managing Partner of Althelia Ecosphere and Althelia Climate Fund, noted how much of the GDP is at risk if we fail to meet the climate agreement, and how only a few actors are involved in making a business case for integrated landscapes.

Kari Cohen, Director at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, provided an overview of the Department's landscapes initiatives to preserve habitats, and tools to drive private funding towards sustainable agriculture and land conservation.

Rob Parenteau, Principal at MacroStrategy Edge, highlighted the importance of selecting appropriate integrated investments at the landscape level, and shared existing financial mechanisms that can support integrated landscapes. [Read full article](#)

Partner Corner: World Food Law Institute

In this section, FAO's Liaison Office for North America invites a different partner organization each month to comment on how the partnership has benefitted both organizations.



The World Food Law Institute fosters analysis and understanding of international agricultural and food law, regulations and policy. The Institute uses a multidisciplinary approach to promote food security and social development in the agricultural and agribusiness sectors, especially for the millions of people living and working in rural areas around the world.

The World Food Law Institute and the Howard University School of Law have collaborated with FAO to promote multidisciplinary events and exchanges about current issues in global food policy and law bringing together experts and policymakers from the public, private, diplomatic, non-profit and academic sectors. The topics for discussion have ranged from food safety, private standards, and aquaculture, among others, to this year's geographical indications theme.

The Institute and FAO continue to collaborate to encourage Howard students and recent Howard law school graduates to develop interest and practical experience in international food law.

Professor Marsha Echols, Director of the Institute, said in concluding the 2018 World Food Law Symposium, “The Institute welcomes our cooperation with FAO and looks forward to co-sponsoring a Legal Research Intern from Howard at FAO headquarters and to other joint projects promoting world food law and development.”

Website: worldfoodlawinstitute.net

FAO NORTH AMERICA EVENTS & TAX CORNER

EVENTS IN JUNE

What	When	Where	RSVP
Research & Technology: Providing “Bang for the Buck” in Global Agricultural Development	Wednesday, 20 June 2018	Senate Visitor Center Room 212-10 Washington, DC	Register
Roundtable on Property Rights and Integrated Landscape Management	Tuesday, 26 June 2018	FAO Liaison Office for North America , 2121 K St. NW, 800B Washington, DC	Register
Biofortification: Better Crops, Better Nutrition	Thursday, 28 June 2018	FAO Liaison Office for North America , 2121 K St. NW, 800B Washington, DC	Register
Solutions to Food Waste	Friday, 29 June 2018	Embassy of Denmark Washington, DC	By invitation only

TAX CORNER

This section provides important updates from the tax unit located at the FAO Liaison Office for North America, which processes tax reimbursement requests by FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) staff members.

Important Dates from the Tax Unit

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allows tax payers who are based overseas (i.e. outside of the U.S.) an additional 2 months to file their federal income tax forms. For the 2017 tax year, the deadline is **15 June 2018**. The [IRS states the following](#),

“To use this automatic 2-month extension, you must attach a statement to your return explaining which of the two situations listed earlier qualified you for the extension.”

However, [taxpayers should further note](#):

“Even if you are allowed an extension, you will have to pay interest on any tax not paid by the regular due date of your return.”

Of course, this deadline is wholly different than the FAO Tax Unit deadlines. FAO/WFP/IFAD staff members who are eligible for the tax reimbursement program should review these internal deadlines carefully.

For staff members claiming reimbursement *who have received a 2017 tax advance*, the FAO Tax Unit deadline to create a 2017 tax reimbursement is 17 September 2018.

For staff members who have **NOT** created/received a 2017 tax advance, the deadline to create the 2017 tax reimbursement is **30 November 2020**.

Please email the Tax Unit if you have questions: low-ustax-settlement@fao.org.

FAO GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

International Partnership to Address Human-Animal-Environment Health Risks Gets a Boost



Left to right: WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, OIE Director General Monique Eloit, and FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

30 May 2018, Divonne-les-Bains/Rome - FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) have agreed to step up joint action to combat health threats associated with interactions between humans, animals and the environment. In a Memorandum of Understanding, FAO, OIE and WHO agreed to strengthen their long-standing partnership, with a strong focus on tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR). AMR is a high priority for the three organizations, who are working together to develop global systems for AMR surveillance and use of antimicrobials, a global antimicrobial stewardship program, and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the global action plan. A current comprehensive framework of international standards on responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials is regularly adapted to keep up with the development of scientific knowledge. [Read more](#)

FAO Working to Advance the Global Biodiversity Agenda



29-31 May, Rome - FAO is helping shift agricultural production onto a more sustainable track that promotes healthy and thriving ecosystems while also producing ample and nutritious food through the [Biodiversity Mainstreaming Platform](#). A three day meeting was convened to advance discussion on the platform, which was established in December 2016 at the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP13). A group of 250 Ministers, policymakers, experts, and private and civil society representatives provided a number of suggestions for the Organization's future work on biodiversity. FAO's Platform aspires to be a resource for helping countries transition to more sustainable forms of agriculture, fisheries and forestry which incorporate biodiversity objectives into policies and approaches. [Read more](#)

Building Rural Communities' Resilience is Crucial in Conflict-Ridden Near East



10 May 2018, Rome - Conflict has increased food insecurity in the Near East and to reverse this situation it is crucial to strengthen the resilience of poor, rural communities, including through social protection systems, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva urged at the opening of FAO's Regional Conference for the Near East. The conference was attended by ministers and other top officials from more than 30 countries. "Even in conflict situations, there is much we can do to keep local food systems functioning and bring hope to affected populations. We need to keep farmers on their farms producing food," Graziano da Silva said. [Read more](#)

Report Sounds Alarm on Soil Pollution



2 May 2018, Rome - Soil pollution poses a worrisome threat to agricultural productivity, food safety and human health, but far too little is known about the scale and severity of that threat, warns a new FAO report released at the start of [Global Symposium on Soil Pollution](#). Industrialization, war, mining and the intensification of agriculture have all left a legacy of soil contamination across the planet, while the growth of cities has seen soil used as a sink for ever greater amounts of municipal waste. [Read more](#)

Bees Must Be Protected for the Future of Our Food



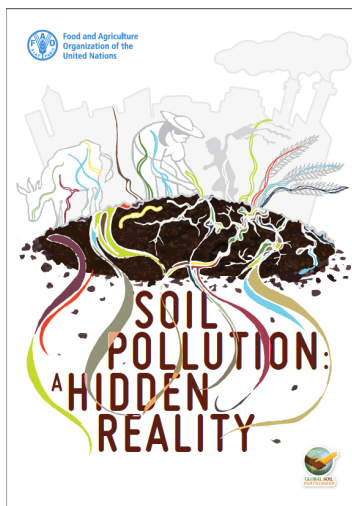
19 May 2018, Ljubljana - On the first World Bee Day, FAO urged countries and individuals to do more to protect bees and other pollinators to avoid a sharp drop in food diversity. Bees are under great threat from the combined effects of climate change, intensive agriculture, pesticides, biodiversity loss and pollution.

In Slovenia for the official ceremony to mark World Bee Day, FAO's Director-General José Graziano da Silva said countries need to shift to more pollinator-friendly and sustainable food policies and systems. "We cannot continue to focus on increasing production and productivity based on the widespread use of pesticides and chemicals that are threatening crops and pollinators," Graziano da Silva said. [Read more](#)

LATEST FAO PUBLICATIONS

BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

Biodiversity is the sum of all terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, species and genetic diversity. It includes the variability within and among living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are part. FAO recognizes biodiversity as being integral to agriculture, and is committed to working with governments and other key actors to mainstream biodiversity as a vital element of sustainable agriculture. See [publications](#)



SOIL POLLUTION: A HIDDEN REALITY

Launched during the [Global Symposium on Soil Pollution](#) (Rome, 2–4 May), this report on soil pollution explains how to manage and remediate polluted soils. It includes risk assessment approaches and suggests changes to agronomic practices. [Press release](#)

WHY BEES MATTER: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEES AND OTHER POLLINATORS FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Launched on the occasion of the first observance of World Bee Day, this [brochure](#) aims to raise awareness on the role of bees and other pollinators in increasing food security and fighting hunger as well as in providing key ecosystem services for agriculture.



MAKING FOREST CONCESSIONS IN THE TROPICS WORK TO ACHIEVE THE 2030 AGENDA: VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES

Released during the [United Nations Forum on Forests](#) (New York, 7–11 May), the Voluntary Guidelines show how to make forest concessions an effective economic instrument capable of delivering sustainable forest management and generate socio-economic benefits to relevant stakeholders, thereby contributing to Agenda 2030. [Press release](#)

FAO AND THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has deep roots in North America. The Organization was conceived of during a meeting in Hot Springs, Virginia, United States in 1943 and its first headquarters was located in Washington, DC. In 1945, FAO was formally established as a specialized agency by the newly created United Nations during its very first session, which was held in Quebec City, Canada. FAO's headquarters was permanently moved to Rome, Italy in 1951. The FAO Liaison Office for North America based in Washington, DC continues to strengthen the Organization's partnership with Canada and the United States.

FAO shares with Canada and the United States a vision of how to achieve a world without hunger and poverty. Both member states have been working closely with FAO since its inception more than 70 years ago. Canada and the United States both play critically important leadership roles within FAO and they are also among the Organization's largest financial supporters.

FAO's Liaison Office for North America works to support and implement FAO policies and programs through strategic partnerships with governments and other key stakeholders based in Canada and the United States, including civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, research centers and think tanks, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and the media.



[Read more](#) about the United States and FAO.



[Read more](#) about Canada and FAO.

CONTACT US

FAO Liaison Office for North America

2121 K Street, NW.
Suite 800B.
Washington, D.C.
20037 USA

+1 (202) 653-2400
FaoLow@fao.org

[www.fao.org/
north-america](http://www.fao.org/north-america)

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