
Opening statement

By

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Thank you Chair!

Excellencies, Director General, distinguished delegates, dear friends,

I wish to thank Kent for giving me the opportunity to deliver a few opening remarks.

This year saw the launch of two first-ever country driven assessments: *The State of the World's Biodiversity for food and Agriculture*, and *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The report on *The State of the World Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*, which involved over 1 500 individuals, reports from 91 countries and 27 international organizations, analyses the current status and trends of biodiversity for food and agriculture and the drivers of change affecting it. Since its launch, the Report has attracted worldwide media attention, during its first week alone we had over 530 articles in the world's major news outlets, and we now found research papers reflecting on it and using its data.

The report throws a new light at the interdependence of the different sectors of genetic resources and biodiversity for food and agriculture. Biodiversity is integral to ecosystem health, essential to the sustainable increase of food production and necessary to build resilient livelihoods. More than 75% of the world's food crops depend, to some extent, on pollination. Soil organisms and natural enemies of plants play a key role for crop production.

The report also shows that the way we grow food has major implications on food systems, and on all biodiversity. Management practices and land-use changes associated with food and agriculture are causing pollution, over-use of external inputs and over-exploitation. The report shows that management practices and approaches that rely on the maintenance of abundant and diverse biological communities are attracting growing interest and in many cases are becoming more widely adopted.

The report relies in significant parts on other global assessments prepared by FAO under the guidance of its Commission, including *The Second Report on the state of the World's PGRFA* that was launched in 2010. Global assessment play a key role for the Commission's work and, in the case of the assessments of PGRFA, for the work of the Treaty.

Preparations for the Third Report on PGRFA are underway. FAO Members will soon be invited to report through the WIEWS on the status and trends of their PGRFA and on activities taken to implement the Second GPA. I wish to invite Contracting Parties of the Treaty to contribute to the SoW PGR-3 as actively and enthusiastically as they contributed to previous versions of the report.

I would also like to invite Contracting Parties to contribute to the Commission's work towards the development of a follow-up policy response to the findings of the SoW-BFA. This will help to not only highlight the concrete needs and actions to be taken, but to increase awareness among policy-makers and relevant stakeholders of critical importance to biodiversity for food and agriculture, including PGRFA.

The continued collaboration between the Commission and the Treaty on matters of common interest is of vital importance if we are to meet the expectations of our Parties and Members.

In moving forward, I will leave you with one tiny quote:

As Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." We also heard a proverb at the 15th Anniversary celebration on Saturday that says: "yesterday's utopia can become today's reality".

I thank you for your attention and I wish you a successful meeting.