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Progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources

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

Paul Boettcher

Animal Production Officer

Animal Production and Health Division (NSA)

Tel. +39 06 570 55620

I. Introduction

1. Animal genetic resources (AnGR) are the animal species that are used, or may be used, for food production and agriculture, and the populations within each.¹ These resources, and their diversity, are an essential part of the biological basis for world food security and contribute to the livelihoods of more than 1 billion people. The FAO Members have recognized the importance of AnGR and FAO's programmes and budgets have included AnGR activities for decades.

2. The activity of FAO on AnGR contributed to the realization that the diversity of AnGR was in decline. In the early 2000s, the Animal Production and Health Division (NSA), upon the request of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), undertook the first global assessment of animal genetic resources, compiling information from 169 countries on the status of their AnGR and their capacity for AnGR management. This assessment resulted in *The State of the*

¹ FAO. 2007. *The state of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*. Rome. 524 pp. (also available at <https://www.fao.org/3/a1250e/a1250e.pdf>).

World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.² The assessment also confirmed that the diversity of AnGR was in decline and that many countries, particularly developing countries, lacked the technical capacity to manage AnGR.

3. In response to this assessment, FAO Members developed the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (Global Plan of Action)³ which was adopted in September 2007 through the Interlaken Declaration and was subsequently endorsed by the 34th Session of the FAO Conference.⁴ The Global Plan of Action includes 23 strategic priorities for action across four strategic priority areas, which may differ in importance and relative priority across countries. In 2017, Members reaffirmed⁵ their commitment to implementing the Global Plan of Action.

4. The Interlaken Declaration recognized that the main responsibility for implementing the Global Plan of Action rests with national governments. It acknowledged the essential role of FAO in supporting country-driven efforts in implementing the Global Plan of Action. It further invited the Commission, with its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) to oversee, assess and report on progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. The most recent report was presented at the 18th Regular Session of the Commission in September 2021. This document⁶ provides a brief summary on the status of implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including FAO's recent activities in support of Members.

5. Every five years, FAO invites countries and international organizations to submit progress reports on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.⁷ The most recent invitation requested reports by 31 July 2019.⁸ FAO received 104 country progress reports,⁹ four regional progress reports¹⁰ and 14 reports from international organizations,¹¹ demonstrating a high level of interest in the implementation and reporting process.

6. Most of the countries providing progress reports have continued to strengthen their activities in the various strategic priority areas of the Global Plan of Action. Implementation was generally reported to be at a high level in Europe and the Caucasus and in North America; a medium level in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean; and a low level in the Near East and Southwest Pacific regions. Certain countries in all regions reported a high level of implementation. International organizations continue to make significant contributions to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. In general, these actors stress the involvement of local stakeholders to ensure ownership and maximize impact. The results reported by countries on progress in implementing the Global Plan of Action are encouraging, but the task of improving the management of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture requires continued attention and effort. The reasons for this shortfall continue to include a lack of financial resources and institutional and human capacity. More details can be found in the Synthesis progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources – 2020.¹²

² FAO. 2007. *The state of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*. Rome. 524 pp. (also available at <https://www.fao.org/3/a1250e/a1250e.pdf>).

³ FAO. 2007. *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration*. Rome. 48 pp. (also available at <https://www.fao.org/3/a1404e/a1404e.pdf>).

⁴ C 2007/REP, paragraph 142.

⁵ C 2017/REP, paragraph 54b.

⁶ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-11/21/Inf.2.

⁷ FAO. No date. Animal genetics: Global Policy: Reporting System. In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <https://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/global-policy/reporting-system/en/>

⁸ CSL C/AGA-5 of 4 March 2019.

⁹ FAO. No date. Animal genetics: Global Policy: Reporting System: Countries. In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <http://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/global-policy/reporting-system/countries/en/>

¹⁰ FAO. No date. Animal genetics: Global Policy: Reporting System: Regions. In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <http://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/global-policy/reporting-system/regions/en/>

¹¹ FAO. No date. Animal genetics: Global Policy: Reporting System: International organizations. In: *FAO* [online]. Rome. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <http://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/global-policy/reporting-system/international-organizations/en/>

¹² CGRFA-18/21/10.2/Inf.5.

II. FAO support to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources

7. FAO continued to assist countries in the implementation of all strategic priority areas of the Global Plan of Action by providing institutional and technical support, facilitating research, and building capacity.

8. One of FAO's major activities is the maintenance and development of the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS).¹³ This included: (i) development and refinement of procedures for data exchange; (ii) translation of the web interface; (iii) creation of data fields for monitoring the diversity of managed honeybees; and (iv) creation of tools allowing the calculation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators 2.5.1b and 2.5.2.¹⁴ Details of these activities are available online.¹⁵ Every two years, FAO uses the information in DAD-IS to report on the status and trends of AnGR.¹⁶

9. FAO continued to work with various partners to support countries in the characterization, inventory and monitoring; sustainable use; and conservation of AnGR. Along with the Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (CJN), 61 countries were supported through 49 projects. Twelve national and regional training events were held. FAO developed two technical guidelines on management of AnGR, on cryoconservation¹⁷ and on genomic characterization.¹⁸ FAO continued its work in support of pastoralists and other small-scale livestock-keepers. FAO maintains its recognized technical competence in the management of animal genetic resources by contributing to research and development projects, organizing and leading sessions at international scientific conferences, and publishing scientific papers. FAO served as guest editor for the special issue, "Sustainable Management of Animal Genetic Resources"¹⁹ in the open-access scientific journal, *Sustainability*.

III. Activities planned for the biennium 2022-23

10. FAO will continue to support countries in implementing the Global Plan of Action. At its 18th Regular Session, the Commission called upon countries (i) to continue implementing the Global Plan of Action, and (ii) to consider developing national and regional strategies for the sustainable and culturally sensitive use of livestock, including AnGR, with a view to making agrifood systems more sustainable and resilient to meet future challenges. They requested FAO to provide complementary technical and policy support.

¹³ See <http://www.fao.org/dad-is>.

¹⁴ FAO. 2020. *SDG Indicators 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 – Plant and animal genetic resources* [online]. Rome. [Cited 14 January 2022]. <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA8356EN/>

¹⁵ See CGRFA-18/21/10.2/Inf.3.

¹⁶ CGRFA-18/21/10.2/Inf.6.

¹⁷ CGRFA-18/21/10.2/Inf.1.

¹⁸ CGRFA-18/21/10.2/Inf.2.

¹⁹ See https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/Animal_Genetic_Resources_sus.