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STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In September 2007, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) held the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Technical Conference) in Interlaken, Switzerland. The International Technical Conference, hosted by the Government of Switzerland, welcomed *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (State of the World)* and adopted the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (Global Plan of Action)* and the *Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources (Interlaken Declaration)*.

2. The FAO Conference, at its Thirty-fourth Session, welcomed the *State of the World* and endorsed the *Global Plan of Action*.¹ The FAO Conference requested the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission) which had acted as preparatory committee for the *Global Plan of Action* and the *Interlaken Declaration*, "to oversee and assess the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, and to report back at the 2009 session of the FAO Conference on steps taken as a follow up to the Interlaken Conference."² As requested by the Conference, the document also addresses the important role of small-scale livestock keepers, particularly in developing countries, as custodians of most of the world's animal genetic resources for food and agriculture in the use, development and conservation of livestock resources.³

3. The *Global Plan of Action* notes the essential role of FAO in supporting country-driven efforts to implement the *Global Plan of Action*, in particular, in facilitating global and regional collaboration and networks, supporting the convening of intergovernmental meetings, maintaining and further developing the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS), developing communication products, providing technical guidelines and assistance, coordinating training programmes, promoting the transfer of technologies relating to sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources, and coordinating preparation of global status and trend reports on animal genetic resources.⁴ This document provides an overview of the activities, partnerships and projects undertaken by FAO in support of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* since its adoption in 2007.

II. FAO SUPPORT TO THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

4. The information on FAO's activities is presented in the order of the four Strategic Priority Areas of the *Global Plan of Action*. The *Global Plan of Action* contains: Strategic Priority Area 1) Characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and associated risks; 2) Sustainable use and development; 3) Conservation; and 4) Policies, institutions and capacity building. Part III of the *Global Plan of Action* deals with its implementation and financing.

Strategic Priority Area 1: Characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and associated risks

5. FAO, including the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency Joint Division for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (AGE), has collaborated with various organizations, including the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the Governments of Germany, and Australia, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and local scientists and farmers to undertake genetic and phenotypic characterization studies of indigenous breeds of livestock in 20

¹ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-5/09/Inf. 9

² Resolution 12/2007, paragraph 2.

³ C 2007/REP, paragraph 146.

⁴ Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, paragraphs 22–23, Strategic Priority 14, paragraphs 58–61.
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a1404e/a1404e00.pdf>

African, Asian, Near Eastern, Latin American and Southwest Pacific countries. The development of draft guidelines for phenotypic characterization was supported by the Government of Spain. The Guidelines are expected to be finalized upon review by expert workshops which will be held in the course of the next biennium.

6. FAO, in partnership with the joint International Society of Animal Genetics (ISAG)-FAO Advisory Group on Animal Genetic Diversity, continued to promote the international use of standard microsatellite marker sets for molecular genetic characterization of different animal species. This was done with support from the project “A Global View of Livestock Biodiversity and Conservation (GLOBALDIV)” funded by the European Commission.

7. The *Global Plan of Action* recommends that the Commission “regularly receive from countries status and trends reports on national animal genetic resources and factors influencing change, in order to review progress and further develop country-based early-warning and response systems for animal genetic resources”. The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group (Working Group) of the Commission, at its fifth session, recommended that the Commission request FAO to prepare status and trends synthesis reports to be made available to each regular session of the Commission.⁵ The reports should be based on up-to-date data and information provided by countries via DAD-IS, and should follow the structure of the document *Status and trends report on animal genetic resources – 2008*.⁶

8. The *Global Plan of Action* calls for the establishment or strengthening of early-warning systems. FAO therefore prepared options for the development of country-based early warning and response systems for animal genetic resources, for review by the Working Group at its fifth session. The Working Group noted its appreciation of the work undertaken by FAO and made several recommendations to the Commission. Guidelines to assist with national breed surveying and monitoring are currently being developed in collaboration with the Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. A first draft has been developed by a group of international experts.

9. The Working Group also recommended that the Commission request countries to investigate and report on the underlying causes of animal genetic erosion.⁷

10. FAO provided technical support to National Coordinators in the use of DAD-IS, including the updated DAD-IS manual, and supported regional workshops held in Chile, Ethiopia, Lithuania and Brazil and at the National Coordinator Workshop held prior to the fifth session of the Working Group.

11. FAO is a partner in the Farm Animal Biodiversity Information System Network (FABIS-net), funded by the European Commission, which supports the establishment of national information systems. At present, 16 countries have established national information systems within FABIS-net.

12. FAO is contributing to the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership Project which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have requested the project to provide input on animal genetic resources for the next issue of *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, which will be launched on 22 May 2010.

Strategic Priority Area 2: Sustainable use and development

⁵ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-5/09/REPORT.

⁶ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-5/09/Inf. 7.

⁷ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-5/09/REPORT.

13. FAO, with funding from the Government of Norway, developed guidelines on breeding strategies for the sustainable management of animal genetic resources. The guidelines are intended for use by policy-makers and organizations involved in livestock development. The breeding guidelines were reviewed by the Working Group, at its Fifth Session, for the information of and the endorsement by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
14. FAO and AGE supported regional and national technical cooperation projects on sustainable utilization of local breeds and genetic improvement of dairy cattle in Asia, Africa and Latin America. More than 35 countries have benefited from this assistance.
15. FAO also contributes to the ILRI-led and GEF-funded project on “Development and Application of Decision Support Tools to Conserve and Sustainably Use Genetic Diversity in Indigenous Livestock and Wild Relatives”, which promotes animal genetic resources activities in four Asian countries.
16. FAO, through its membership on the board of the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR), is responsible for establishing the ICAR Task Force for Animal Identification and Performance Recording in Developing Countries.
17. FAO collaborated in organizing regional workshops on animal identification, traceability and performance recording in the Near East (with ICARDA) and in East and Central Europe, and on animal genetic disease resistance and tolerance in France (with INRA).

Strategic Priority Area 3: Conservation

18. FAO is providing technical advice to the conservation project “*In-situ* conservation of endemic ruminant livestock in West Africa”, which is jointly financed by the GEF and the African Development Bank, in four West African countries.
19. A cryoconservation training workshop was held in the Tunisian National Gene Bank, with support by the United States Department of Agriculture and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). A draft of FAO guidelines on cryoconservation has been produced and was used as a reference manual for the workshop.

Strategic Priority Area 4: Policies, institutions and capacity-building

20. FAO continued to maintain DAD-Net as an informal forum to facilitate information exchange regarding animal genetic resources issues.
21. As of September 2009, 155 countries have nominated their National Coordinator. Brazil (EMBRAPA) was established as Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean. FAO continued its efforts to establish Regional Focal Points in Africa and Asia and contributed to annual meetings and training workshops convened by the European Regional Focal Point.
22. FAO contributed to various courses for researchers from developing countries organized by partner organizations (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, the European Master in Animal Breeding and Genetics, the GLOBALDIV project, ILRI and the Swedish Agricultural University).
23. FAO collaborated with the Farm Animal Breeding Technology Platform of the European Commission regarding priorities for supporting research on the management of animal genetic resources in Europe. As part of its ongoing interaction with the private sector, FAO organized a joint meeting with the European Forum for Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB), an umbrella organization of the European breeding industry.
24. The *Global Plan of Action* notes that the technical guidelines and assistance, and coordinated training programmes prepared by FAO have been instrumental in advancing work on animal genetic resources. The Global Plan of Action also states that this essential role should

continue in future to assist all countries to implement the *Global Plan of Action*. In response, FAO prepared guidelines to assist countries in the preparation of national strategies and action plans for animal genetic resources. The guidelines are intended for use by policy-makers. Upon review by the Working Group, FAO edited and finalized the draft guidelines, for the information of and endorsement by the Commission. Several European countries have prepared national strategies and action plans.

25. FAO supported animal genetic resources policy and strategy development in Eastern Europe and Africa.

26. Representatives of FAO attended as speakers at a number of scientific conferences and meetings addressing animal genetic resources as part of efforts to raise awareness of the importance of their proper management.

The roles of small-scale livestock keepers as custodians of animal genetic resources

27. In response to the request by the Thirty-fourth FAO Conference⁸, FAO made available a document on *The roles of small-scale livestock keepers in the development, use and conservation of livestock resources*.⁹

III. IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

28. The *Global Plan of Action* describes the essential role of the FAO in supporting country-driven implementation, in particular to facilitate collaboration and mobilize donor resources.¹⁰ The *Global Plan of Action* recommends that FAO ensure adequate regular programme support for the implementation¹¹ and pursue within relevant international mechanisms, funds and bodies, means by which they might also contribute to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.¹²

Modalities for evaluating progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action

29. The Thirty-fourth FAO Conference requested the Commission to oversee the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* within the context of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work.¹³ The *Global Plan of Action* notes that the Commission should agree on the modalities for the presentation of progress reports, as well as the criteria and parameters for the evaluation of progress in its implementation. To this end, FAO prepared a questionnaire to be used as a common format for preparing Country Progress Reports to enable FAO to prepare global Synthesis Progress Reports.

30. A questionnaire to support the preparation of Country Progress Reports on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* was reviewed by the Commission's Working Group, for information of and endorsement by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.¹⁴ Global Synthesis Progress Reports will be prepared by FAO in line with the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work and the Strategic Plan for its implementation.

31. FAO, in 2008, established a Programme Entity 2BA03 "Support to the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources" entirely devoted to the *Global Plan of Action*. In its Medium Term Plan 2010-13 and Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11, animal genetic resources-related activities are found under Organizational Result B3 – *Better management of*

⁸ CGRFA/WG-AnGR-5/09/Inf. 9.

⁹ CGRFA-12/09/Inf. 12.

¹⁰ *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, paragraphs 58–61.

¹¹ *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, paragraph 65.

¹² *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, paragraph 66.

¹³ C 2007/REP, paragraph 143.

¹⁴ CGRFA-12/09/Inf. 9.

natural resources, including animal genetic resources, in livestock production of Strategic Objective B – *Increased sustainable livestock production*.¹⁵ The biennial programme and budget planning cycle of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and the Commission's ten-year planning within the Multi-Year Programme of Work, provide a flexible and predictable framework to facilitate the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

32. The *Global Plan of Action* recommends the establishment of an FAO Trust Account.¹⁶ Some donors now provide programme funds to strengthen the synergies that exist between normative and operational activities and between global and country-level programmes to better assist Members in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Such programme funds are fully integrated with the major programmes defined in FAO's PWB for the 2008-09 biennium and approved by the Thirty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference, with particular emphasis on multidisciplinary initiatives. In FAO's new Strategic Framework, the animal genetic resources programme is also covered by the Impact Focus Area on *Global standard setting and implementation into national policies and legislation* (IFA-SNL).¹⁷

33. Trust funds for genetic resources have been established under the Strategic Partnership for Rural Development between Sweden and FAO, and under the FAO-Norway Partnership Cooperation Agreement. FAO is currently preparing a multi-donor trust fund programme to facilitate implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

Towards a funding strategy for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*

34. The *Global Plan of Action* notes that its implementation will require substantial and additional financial resources and long-term support for national, regional and international animal genetic resources.¹⁸ It requests the Commission to develop a Funding Strategy for its implementation.¹⁹ In response, FAO prepared a draft funding strategy for the *Global Plan of Action*, based on country needs and donor priorities and programmes. The Commission's Working Group reviewed the draft Funding Strategy and requested FAO to further develop the document, for consideration by the Commission, at its Twelfth Regular Session²⁰.

IV. INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

35. Following the recommendations of the International Technical Conference,²¹ the host country of the conference, the Government of Switzerland, and FAO reported on the outcomes of the conference to relevant intergovernmental conferences and meetings. The *Global Plan of Action* and the *State of the World* received worldwide recognition. Helpful in this regard have been translations of both documents into various languages. The Government of China undertook translation of the *State of the World* into Chinese. Arabic²² and French²³ versions have been prepared with funding from the United States of America, Norway and FAO. The Arabic version of the *State of the World* was prepared in collaboration with ICARDA. FAO and local donors are supporting the production of the *State of the World* in Spanish and Russian. All currently available language versions of the *State of the World* and its "in brief" version have also been

¹⁵ Draft Medium Term Plan 2010–13 and Programme of Work and Budget 2010–11, PC 102/3, FC 128/11 a Rev.1, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/017/k5475e.pdf>

¹⁶ Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, paragraph 68.

¹⁷ Draft Medium Term Plan 2010–13 and Programme of Work and Budget 2010–11, PC 102/3, FC 128/11 a Rev.1, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/017/k5475e.pdf>

¹⁸ Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, paragraph 64.

¹⁹ Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, paragraph 54.

²⁰ CGRFA-12/09/11.

²¹ ITC-AnGR/07/REP, paragraph 26.

http://www.fao.org/ag/AGInfo/programmes/en/genetics/documents/Interlaken/Final_Report_en.pdf

²² <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/a1250a/a1250a00.htm>

²³ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/a1250f/a1250f00.htm>

made available electronically. Several countries have prepared national language versions of the various Interlaken documents.

36. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its thirteenth meeting,²⁴ and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its ninth meeting, welcomed the *Global Plan of Action* as the internationally agreed framework for the management of animal genetic resources.²⁵

37. The *Global Plan of Action* was also welcomed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture²⁶ and the Seventh Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.²⁷ The Government of Switzerland and FAO presented the outcomes of the International Technical Conference to the Sixteenth Session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development,²⁸ and to the 2008 meeting of the Alpine Convention.²⁹

38. The *Global Plan of Action* also received support from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

39. The Conference may wish to:

- i) Welcome the progress made in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources* and encourage FAO to continue its activities in support of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*;
- ii) Note the outcomes of the Twelfth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (19-23 October 2009) which will be orally presented to the Conference;
- iii) Reiterate the importance of implementing the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, in order to contribute to global food security and sustainable rural development, and in particular to help achieve Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7;
- iv) Appeal to all FAO Members and to relevant international mechanisms, funds and bodies to give due priority and attention to the effective allocation of predictable and agreed resources for the implementation of activities within the Strategic Priority Areas of the *Global Plan of Action*;
- v) Request the Commission to continue overseeing the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, and to report back at the 2011 Session of the Conference on the status of implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, including with regard to the role of small-scale livestock keepers.

²⁴ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/2, <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-09/official/cop-09-03-en.doc>

²⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP9/L.34, <http://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop9/?m=COP-09&id=11644&lg=0>

²⁶ IT/GB-2/07/Report, <ftp://ftp.fao.org/ag/agp/planttreaty/gb2/gb2repe.pdf>, paragraph 16–18.

²⁷ Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Report on the Seventh Session, (21 April–2 May 2008), Economic and Social Council, paragraph 85

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/338/82/PDF/N0833882.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁸ http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/statements/swiss_6may_agriculture.pdf

²⁹ http://www.alpenkonvention.org/page7_fr