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# COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MATTERS

## Ninety-seventh Session

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### Working arrangements and certification procedures under the Globally Important Agriculture Heritage System (GIAHS)

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative was launched by FAO in 2002. The FAO Governing Bodies considered the initiative and supported the overall concept of GIAHS, its goals and principles. However, while the institutional set-up and working arrangements of GIAHS have been effective for several years, they have not been explicitly approved by the Governing Bodies.

2. Given the increased relevance of the GIAHS initiative and the growing number of recognized GIAHS sites worldwide, it now seems appropriate to secure a formal approval by the Governing Bodies of the operational framework of GIAHS, including the governance structures, designation modalities and certification procedures.

3. The purpose of this document is to seek endorsement by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) of the GIAHS operational framework, with a view to its further review and approval by other relevant Governing Bodies. To this end, the document first provides a general background to the GIAHS initiative. Then the following sections address sequentially: the GIAHS working arrangements; the GIAHS certification procedures; previous consideration of GIAHS by the Governing Bodies; and further review by the Governing Bodies of the GIAHS operational framework.

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## II. BACKGROUND TO GIAHS

4. Communities of farmers, herders, fishers and forest dwellers have developed, for millennia, locally adapted ingenious agricultural systems that have led to food and livelihood security as well as the maintenance of natural and cultural diversity. Besides providing multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security, such systems have resulted in the preservation of significant agro-biodiversity, resilient ecosystems, outstanding landscapes, and a valuable cultural heritage. Through co-evolution processes of humanity and nature, GIAHS have been forged over centuries of cultural and biological interactions and synergies, capitalizing the accumulated experiences of rural communities and indigenous people across the world. As such, GIAHS represent a collective legacy of humankind of fundamental importance.<sup>1</sup>

### *Origin of GIAHS*

5. In order to safeguard the world's shrinking agricultural heritage systems, which are threatened by several factors such as inadequate management models and unsustainable technological changes that undermine family farming and traditional agricultural systems, FAO launched in 2002 an international partnership initiative on dynamic conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2004, the GIAHS initiative was registered in the Partnerships for Sustainable Development of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).<sup>2</sup>

6. In its capacity as Task Manager for Chapter 14 of Agenda 21 on "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development" (SARD), FAO was then facilitating the "SARD Initiative", an umbrella framework that emerged from dialogues on land and agriculture within the CSD in 2000<sup>3</sup> and the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in 2001<sup>4</sup>. The "SARD Initiative", which aimed to improve the living conditions of the rural poor and the sustainability of their environments, has been refined during the WSSD preparatory process. Thus GIAHS was initially designed as part of the efforts intended to achieve SARD objectives, through an overall approach that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, and culturally appropriate.

### *Concept of GIAHS*

7. As defined by FAO in 2002, GIAHS are "*remarkable land use systems and landscapes which are rich in globally significant biological diversity evolving from the co-adaptation of a community with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development*"<sup>5</sup>. This definition was

<sup>1</sup> P. Koohafkan and M.A. Altieri, *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems. A Legacy for the Future*, FAO, Rome, 2011. As the authors put it, the "Earth is dotted with a myriad of home-grown agricultural systems that are humanity's common heritage. These systems provided essential ecosystem goods and services and food security for millions of local community members and indigenous peoples, well beyond their borders."

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs>.

<sup>3</sup> *Commission on Sustainable Development, Report on the Eighth Session (30 April 1999 and 24 April - 5 May 2000)*, E/2000/29, E/CN.17/2000/20, Decision 8/4 "Agriculture".

<sup>4</sup> *The Place of Agriculture in Sustainable Development: The Way Forward on SARD*, Committee on Agriculture, 16<sup>th</sup> Session, Rome, 26-30 March 2001, COAG/01/7; *Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture, Rome, 26-30 March 2001*, CL 120/9, paras 48-56.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

conceptualized under a Project Development Facility (PDF) of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)<sup>6</sup>, which was followed by a Full Scale Project Implementation also supported by the GEF.<sup>7</sup>

8. In this context, concise vision and mission statements for GIAHS were also formulated in the following terms: (i) Vision: “*Dynamic conservation of all agricultural heritage systems and their multitude of goods and services for food and livelihoods security, now and for future generations*”; (ii) Mission: “*To identify, support and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their livelihoods, agricultural and associated biodiversity, landscapes, knowledge systems and cultures around the world*”<sup>8</sup>.

9. In this perspective, the concept of GIAHS is distinct from, and more complex than, a conventional heritage site or protected area/landscape. In essence, an agricultural heritage system is “*a living, evolving system of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape or biophysical and wider social environment*”<sup>9</sup>. This novel approach places agriculture on a par with culture. As such, GIAHS clearly fall into the remit of FAO’s mandate.

### ***Features of GIAHS***

10. The unique traditional systems prevalent at GIAHS sites exhibit remarkable features of global and local significance. Their salient characteristics have been described as follows:

- a) high levels of biodiversity that play key roles in regulating ecosystem functioning and in providing local, regional and global environmental services;
- b) agroecosystems nurtured by farmers’ knowledge, innovations and technologies;
- c) ingenious systems and technologies of biodiversity, land and water resource management and conservation that can be used to improve management of modern agroecosystems;
- d) agricultural systems that contribute to local and national food and livelihood security;
- e) farming systems that exhibit resiliency and robustness to cope with disturbance and change (human and climatic-environmental);
- f) systems regulated by strong cultural values and collective forms of social organization, including customary institutions for agroecological management, normative arrangements for resource access and benefit sharing, value systems, rituals, etc.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Examples of GIAHS***

<sup>6</sup> The PDF had two successive phases: (i) an identification phase (PDF-A) - *United Nations Development Programme Project Document: Globally Important Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, GLO/02/G41/A/1G/12, 2002; and (ii) a preparation phase (PDF-B) - *United Nations Development Programme/Global Environment Facility: Conservation and Sustainable Management of Globally Important Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, PIMS 2050, UNTS/GLO/002/GEF, 2004-2008. Initially UNDP was the implementing agency while FAO served as the executing agency.

<sup>7</sup> *FAO/Global Environment Facility Project Document: Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, GCP/GLO/212/GFF, 2008-2013.

<sup>8</sup> *GIAHS Partnership Framework* (as of 26 October 2012), GIAHS Scientific and Steering Committee Meeting, Rome, 29-30 October 2012.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

<sup>10</sup> P. Koohafkan and M.A. Altieri, *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems. A Legacy for the Future*, FAO, Rome, 2011.

11. There is a great variety of GIAHS types, with examples of creative agricultural heritage systems/sites in the hundreds. It is important to emphasize that the words “system” and “site” are often used interchangeably or in tandem, in particular for selection and designation purposes (see paras 22-25). In this document a reference to sites or systems should be considered as including both concepts. The systems/sites are classified based on the ingenuity of their management patterns, high levels of associated biodiversity, local food security, as well as their biophysical, economic and socio-cultural resources that have evolved under specific ecological and human conditions. The following categories of GIAHS have been singled out:

- i. Mountain rice terrace agro-ecosystems;
- ii. Multiple cropping/polyculture farming systems;
- iii. Understorey farming systems;
- iv. Nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral systems;
- v. Ancient irrigation, soil and water management systems;
- vi. Complex multi-layered homegardens;
- vii. Below sea level systems;
- viii. Tribal agricultural heritage systems;
- ix. High-value crop and spice systems;
- x. Hunting-gathering systems.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Principles of GIAHS***

12. A set of strategic principles has been developed within the conceptual framework of GIAHS.<sup>12</sup> These principles represent summary statements describing what is known about agricultural heritage systems and how they function. Underpinning the notion of GIAHS, they can serve as guidelines for policy makers, development agencies, and local communities. The first three, considered the “founding principles”, may be outlined as follows:

- a) the major custodians of the world’s GIAHS – their primary stewards – are those people who have developed and maintained the agricultural heritage systems, and continue to depend upon them for their livelihoods;
- b) the overarching objective of GIAHS is to preserve their adaptive capacity to sustainably provide crucial products and services at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- c) the disruptive forces of GIAHS that erode their viability must be tackled through concerted action to address the negative drivers and support the resilience of the systems.

## **III. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR GIAHS**

13. Arrangements for the operation of GIAHS, including the selection and designation of GIAHS sites, have been originally worked out through the above-mentioned GEF-supported projects

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

<sup>12</sup> P. Howard, R. Puri, L. Smith, M. Altieri, *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems: A Scientific Conceptual Framework and Strategic Principles*, FAO, Rome, 2008.

(para 7)<sup>13</sup>. Project GCP/GLO/212/GFF, which has a five-year duration (2008-2013) and is global in scope, covers 12 pilot sites representing five agricultural heritage systems in six countries from different regions of the world (Algeria, Chile, China, Peru, Philippines, and Tunisia). The project set out detailed arrangements for its implementation, which were replicated and refined under other GIAHS-supporting projects.<sup>14</sup> Over time, such arrangements firmed up and, with some adjustments, became the institutional framework of the GIAHS umbrella initiative.

14. As a result, the GIAHS governance structure, as currently reflected in the GIAHS “Partnership Framework”, consists of the following components: (i) International Steering Committee; (ii) Scientific Advisory Committee; (iii) National Steering Committees; (iv) Participating Countries; (v) Partners; and (vi) Secretariat.<sup>15</sup>

15. **International Steering Committee** (ISC). The ISC is the policy-making body of GIAHS. As such, it is mandated to provide overall strategic orientation for the objectives, priorities and activities of the programme, including selection criteria for GIAHS sites. Its membership is made of: (i) FAO, the implementing agency; (ii) the National Focal Point Institutions from participating countries; and (iii) representatives from financing institutions, international organizations and other stakeholders. The last meeting of the ISC, held in October 2012, was attended by 27 members, representing 11 countries and 8 organizations, in addition to FAO representatives.<sup>16</sup> ISC meetings have been held at uneven intervals, namely in 2002, 2004, 2009, 2011 and 2012<sup>17</sup>. However, ISC members have had other opportunities to meet informally, such as international fora dedicated to GIAHS.<sup>18</sup>

16. **Scientific Advisory Committee** (SAC). The SAC, originally called “Technical Committee” under project GCP/GLO/212/GFF, is tasked to provide technical guidance, scientific advice and independent opinions to the ISC and Secretariat on further development of the dynamic conservation

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<sup>13</sup> As documented by the respective terminal reports: (i) *Globally Important Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). Terminal Report*, UNTS/GLO/001/GEF, FAO, Rome, September 2003; and (ii) *Conservation and Sustainable Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, PIMS 2050, *Terminal Report*, UNTS/GLO/002/GEF, FAO, Rome, February 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Such as GCP/GLO/198/GER, *Supporting Food Security and Reducing Poverty in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania through Dynamic Conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)*, which is anchored in the global GIAHS initiative. A similar approach underpins two other projects: (i) GCP/RER/028/TUR, *Identification, Assessment and Stewardship of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in Azerbaijan and Turkey*; and (ii) GCP/GLO/469/IFA, *Strengthening Partnership for Scaling up Sustainable Livelihood in Small Scale Farming and Indigenous Communities* (GIAHS support in Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia and Indonesia).

<sup>15</sup> *GIAHS Partnership Framework* (as of 26 October 2012).

<sup>16</sup> *Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Partnership Initiative* (as of 24 October 2012), GIAHS website at: <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

<sup>17</sup> The five meetings were the following: (i) First Stakeholder Workshop and Steering Committee Session, Rome, 5-7 August 2002; (ii) Second International Workshop and Steering Committee Meeting, Rome, 7-9 June 2004; (iii) Steering Committee Meeting, held during the International Forum on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 21-23 October 2009; (iv) Steering Committee Meeting, held during the International Forum on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, Beijing, China, 9-12 June 2011; and (v) Scientific and Steering Committee Meeting, Rome, 29-30 October 2012. Under GCP/GLO/212/GFF, the ISC was expected to meet annually.

<sup>18</sup> Examples of these included: the International Forum on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, Rome from 24-26 October 2006; the Symposium on GIAHS and Biodiversity Conservation at Eco Summit 2007, 25 May 2007; and the International Forum on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, Noto, Ishikawa, Japan, 31 May - 1 June 2013.

and adaptive management of GIAHS, as well as for the selection of new GIAHS sites. It is composed of experts – scientists, academia, researchers, practitioners – selected on the basis of their competence and experience in GIAHS-related matters. SAC meetings, which sometimes coincide with those of the ISC, are held when needed and as resources allow, including through electronic means and teleconferences. The last meeting of the SAC, held in October 2012, was attended by 17 experts from 8 countries and 9 institutions.<sup>19</sup>

17. **National Steering Committees (NSCs).** Country-based, multi-stakeholder NSCs are established to provide general oversight for the execution of GIAHS projects at the national level. Their functions include overall policy direction and coordination of interagency efforts related to project activities. Chaired by senior officials of the relevant government agencies, NSCs comprise representatives of the institutions concerned, including non-governmental and private entities with a stake to the projects.<sup>20</sup>

18. **Participating Countries.** GIAHS member countries collaborate in the promotion of the initiative and to support its core activities. Active member countries are those where the initiative is already being implemented through ongoing projects with designated sites. They include Algeria, Chile, China, India, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania, and Tunisia. Other countries are involved in GIAHS supporting activities or pipelines projects, such as Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, and Turkey. Another group of countries where potential GIAHS sites have been identified include Brazil, France, Guinea, Iraq, Italy, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, Vanuatu, and Venezuela.<sup>21</sup> Annexes 2 and 3 list countries engaged in GIAHS efforts with, respectively, designated sites and potential sites.

19. **Partners.** GIAHS partners are international and national, governmental and non-governmental, public and private. They form an open and flexible group of institutions with different mandates and constituencies, which share the vision of GIAHS and contribute to the realization of its objectives.<sup>22</sup> They comprise a wide range of entities, including: (i) UN and other global and regional institutions, such as UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, United Nations University (UNU), GEF, IFAD, Bioversity International, World Conservation Union (IUCN), Wageningen International, Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO); (ii) academic institutions such as the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier, Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, University of California at Berkeley, University of Kent, University of Tuscia (Italy); (iii) farmer organizations such as Via Campesina; (iv) non-governmental organizations such as the Roman Forum; (v) a large number of national and local institutions from participating countries, including women organizations, youth organizations, cooperatives, producer groups, farming communities, research centres, etc. Besides in-kind assistance provided by international and national institutions, the GIAHS initiative is financially supported by

<sup>19</sup> *Mandate and Terms of Reference of the Scientific Committee of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Partnership Initiative* (as of 24 October 2012), GIAHS website at: <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

<sup>20</sup> *GIAHS Partnership Framework* (as of 26 October 2012).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

<sup>22</sup> *GIAHS Partnership Framework* (as of 26 October 2012).

various resource partners which mainly include: GEF, Germany (Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection), IFAD, ISESCO, Turkey, UNU, and UNESCO.<sup>23</sup>

20. **Secretariat.** The GIAHS Secretariat consists of the Global Project Implementation Unit (GPIU) that was set up through project GCP/GLO/212/GFF. Located at FAO headquarters in Rome, the Secretariat is composed of the Global Coordinator (originally known as the “Chief Technical Advisor”), a Technical Officer and Support Staff.<sup>24</sup> Additional support is contributed at country level by technical staff from decentralized offices. The Secretariat performs a variety of functions, ranging from day-to-day management of the GIAHS initiative, including development of interventions, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on activities, to oversight of technical implementation, assistance to participating countries and interested stakeholders, liaison among members and partners, promotion of coordination and collaboration, preparation of documents, organization and servicing of meetings, etc.<sup>25</sup>

#### IV. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR GIAHS SITES

21. Certification of a GIAHS site is the last step of a phased process starting with the preparation of a proposal, and followed by the submission of an application for GIAHS designation. Thereafter the proposal is evaluated through FAO, and subsequently presented to the Steering Committee for approval. If it is found that the necessary requirements are met by the candidate site, the application is accepted. The proponent is then informed accordingly, and a date is set for the awarding of a certificate for the designated site. To assist applicants in this regard, guidelines have been developed for the different phases of the designation process<sup>26</sup>, which may be summarized as follows.

22. **Proposal formulation.** The potential site/system is identified and described in terms of ecosystem characteristics, overall management, and rationale for intervention. The selection of the site/system is based on the five criteria mentioned below (para 26). An action plan for the proposed site/system is then prepared, with active participation of stakeholders to ensure their inclusiveness, in line with the principles of free, prior and informed consent.

23. **Submission of application.** The proposal is submitted to FAO through the appropriate ministry. It is presented according to a dedicated template with the following entries: (i) name/title of the agricultural heritage system; (ii) requesting institution (country, location); (iii) accessibility of the site to capital or major cities; (iv) approximate surface area; (v) agro-ecological zones; (iv) topographic features; (vii) climate type; (viii) approximate population; (ix) livelihood sources; (x)

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<sup>23</sup> Detailed information on partners is available on the GIAHS website at: <http://www.fao.org/giahs> A “Consultative Group” for policy advice was initially established under project GCP/GLO/212/GFF, with membership comprising UNESCO, Bioversity International, World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, Convention on Biological Diversity, IUCN and other key partners. The Consultative Group was to communicate electronically and to meet “as project resources may allow”. Its functions are presently carried out by the ISC and the SAC.

<sup>24</sup> There is also a position of “Communication and Participation Officer” which is filled on a part time basis.

<sup>25</sup> *GIAHS Partnership Framework* (as of 26 October 2012).

<sup>26</sup> *Procedures for application and designation of a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, October 2012 (<http://www.fao.org/giahs>). More detailed guidance is available in a handbook entitled: *A methodological framework for the dynamic conservation of agricultural heritage systems*, 2011 (<http://www.fao.org/giahs>).

ethnicity/indigenous people; and (xi) summary information on the essential values and fundamental characteristics of the agricultural heritage site/system.

24. **Proposal review.** The proposal is then reviewed, either by an FAO evaluation team or by a commissioned organization, which may involve a field visit to the candidate site as needed.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter a response is sent by FAO, through the appropriate channels, to the requesting institution. The latter is then required to present the proposal at a meeting of the Steering Committee for final screening and approval of the site if it is deemed suitable for GIAHS designation.

25. **Formal designation.** Following the outcome of the review phase, an official notification is sent by FAO to the requesting institution informing of the acceptance of the proposal and for the formal awarding of a designation certificate for the recognized site/ system at a mutually agreed date. The certificate bears the logos of FAO and GIAHS. It is dated and co-signed by the Director-General of FAO (or his representative) and by the Chairperson of the GIAHS Steering Committee. The name and location of the designated site/system are placed in the centre of the certificate, with the following recognition: *“Is certified as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System for present and future generations. This system provides an outstanding contribution to promoting food security, biodiversity, indigenous knowledge and cultural diversity for sustainable and equitable development”*.

26. **Selection criteria.** Taking into account the remarkable features and the great variety of the agricultural heritage systems illustrated above (paras 10 and 11), five criteria have been developed and used for the selection of GIAHS sites, namely: (i) food and livelihood security; (ii) biodiversity and ecosystem functions; (iii) knowledge systems and adapted technologies; (iv) culture, value systems and social organizations; and (v) remarkable landscapes, land and water resources management features. These criteria, which are spelled out in Annex 1, have been formulated and fine-tuned through GIAHS-supporting projects, especially under GCP/GLO/212/GFF, with inputs by the Steering and Scientific Committees. They are deemed to represent the totality of the functionalities, goods and services provided by the agricultural heritage systems.<sup>28</sup>

## V. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION OF GIAHS BY THE GOVERNING BODIES

27. Stemming from GIAHS-supporting projects, the working arrangements and certification procedures described above reflect the consolidated practice of experience gained, globally and locally, through the initiative management and project implementation. In place for several years and operating on a regular basis, such arrangements and procedures are publically available and largely documented, in particular through various project agreements and documents accessible on the FAO website. To date, however, they have not been formally reviewed and approved by the FAO Governing Bodies.

28. Nevertheless, GIAHS as a concept has received general support from the Membership of the Organization on various occasions. Originally, GIAHS emerged from the wider SARD Initiative, whose facilitation by FAO, as Task Manager for Chapter 14 (SARD) of Agenda 21, was endorsed by

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<sup>27</sup> In fact, so far field visits have been undertaken to all candidate sites during the review phase.

<sup>28</sup> *Procedures for application and designation of a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, October 2012.



COAG<sup>29</sup> and Council<sup>30</sup>. Subsequently, the GIAHS initiative itself and its underlying objectives have been supported in principle by the same Governing Bodies in 2005, first by COAG in April<sup>31</sup>, then by Council in June<sup>32</sup>.

29. More recently, GIAHS was considered by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2013, which had already noted the importance of *in situ* conservation through sustainable management of ingenious agricultural heritage systems.<sup>33</sup> GIAHS was also examined in 2012 by the Programme Committee, which underlined the need to take into account joint programmes by FAO and its Members in relation to GIAHS.<sup>34</sup> In addition, GIAHS was further discussed by COAG and Council in 2013. COAG identified safeguarding and supporting GIAHS as a priority technical area for the future work of the Organization<sup>35</sup>; and Council requested that GIAHS continue to receive adequate funding.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, the importance of crafting measures to protect GIAHS was stressed by Conference at its last session in June 2013.<sup>37</sup>

30. A number of side events dedicated to GIAHS advocacy have also been arranged on the margins of formal sessions over the last few years. Examples of such events include in particular: (i) “Cherishing our agricultural heritage systems for climate change adaptation and mitigation”, the theme of an international forum on GIAHS convened as a special side event at the World Forestry Congress held in Buenos Aires in October 2009; (ii) “GIAHS and the future we want”, a side event led by FAO at Rio+20 in June 2012; (iii) “GIAHS: ensuring food security and nutrition in a changing climate”, a side event organized at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on World Food Security in Rome in October 2012; and (iv) “Agricultural heritage: looking beyond food production and ecosystem services”, a GIAHS side event which took place during the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Rome in April 2013.<sup>38</sup>

31. In addition, GIAHS was referred to as an achievement in different documents prepared for formal sessions, including the following: (i) the Programme Implementation Reports of 2002-03 (C 2005/8) and of 2010-11 (C 2013/8), which were presented to various Governing Bodies, including Council and Conference; and (ii) the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report 2010 of the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 (PC 106/7 - FC 138/6), and the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report 2012 of

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<sup>29</sup> *Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture, Rome, 26-30 March 2001*, CL 120/9, paras 48-56.

<sup>30</sup> *Report of the Council of FAO, Hundred and Twentieth Session, Rome, 8-23 June 2001*, CL 120/REP, paras 29, 32 and 35.

<sup>31</sup> *Report of the Nineteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture, Rome, 13-16 April 2005*, CL 120/9, paras 20-27.

<sup>32</sup> *Report of the Council of FAO, Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session, Rome, 20-24 June 2005*, CL 128/REP, para 32.

<sup>33</sup> *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Ninth Regular Session, Rome, 14-18 October 2002*, CGRFA-9/02/REP, paras 39-40.

<sup>34</sup> *Report of the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee (5-9 November 2012)*, CL 145/6, para 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Report of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture (Rome, 21-25 May 2012)*, C 2013/22, para 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the Council of FAO, Hundred and Forty-sixth Session, Rome, 22-26 April 2013*, CL 146/REP, para 9.

<sup>37</sup> *Report of the Conference of FAO, Thirty-eighth Session, Rome, 15-22 June 2013*, C 2013/REP, para 43.

<sup>38</sup> Side events on GIAHS have also been arranged by FAO in connection with meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity held in 2010 (Nagoya, Japan) and in 2012 (Hyderabad, India).

the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 (PC 113/5 - FC 148/9), which were submitted to the joint meetings of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee in March 2011 and March 2013, respectively.

32. Moreover, in line with COAG advice and Council guidance, GIAHS was lately integrated in the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15, through Strategic Objective 2: *“Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner”*.<sup>39</sup> This is also consistent with project GCP/GLO/212/GFF, which specified that an “interim Secretariat will be established during the project, which will be mainstreamed in FAO program of work and budget”.

## VI. FURTHER REVIEW BY THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE GIAHS OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

33. Over the course of the past decade, GIAHS has gained considerable recognition both globally and domestically. In the international arena, appreciation for GIAHS was expressed in various intergovernmental fora, such as the Conferences of the Parties of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2008<sup>40</sup>, and of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010.<sup>41</sup> GIAHS was also acknowledged by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 67/228 on “Agriculture development and food security” adopted on 21 December 2012<sup>42</sup>, and now features on the post-Rio+20 UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.<sup>43</sup> At the national level, 25 GIAHS sites (listed in Annex 2) have already received an official designation certificate, and many more candidate sites (illustrated in Annex 3) are being considered for future recognition. Moreover, in order to further scale up the status of their sites, several countries have adopted GIAHS-specific national policy and/or regulatory frameworks.<sup>44</sup>

34. Such achievements of the GIAHS initiative have been substantiated by the mid-term evaluations (MTE) of the above-mentioned GIAHS-supporting projects. The MTE of the global project (GCP/GLO/212/GFF) emphasized the significance of the project “in particular with respect to obtaining global recognition of the GIAHS concept”. It recommended that, “through formal

<sup>39</sup> More precisely as part of Organizational Outcome 1, *“Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve the provision of goods and services in agricultural sector production systems in a sustainable manner”*, with Provisional Indicator 1.2 setting of a percent of target countries having implemented or scaled-up systems or approaches to foster adoption of sustainable practices, including GIAHS (C 2013/3). Under the previous MTP-PWB of 2011 (C 2011/13) and of 2009 (C 2009/15), GIAHS was only listed among the trust fund projects being active during the biennium.

<sup>40</sup> Resolution X.31 invited Parties to consider recognition or protection of rice paddies “through mechanisms such as the FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems Programme”.

<sup>41</sup> Decision X/34 called for strengthening approaches which promote the sustainability of agricultural systems and landscapes such as “the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations”.

<sup>42</sup> The resolution took “note of the report of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on its 144<sup>th</sup> session, which stresses the importance of the Organization’s support to globally important agriculture heritage systems”.

<sup>43</sup> At: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&menu=1348&nr=1544>.

<sup>44</sup> For example, a Decree on the protection of Oasis Ghout in El-Ougla site was passed in Algeria; Regulations on National Important Agricultural Heritage Systems were adopted in China; an Agricultural Heritage Policy was approved in the Republic of Korea; and a Charter on Oases was enacted in Tunisia.

governance steps”, GIAHS be elevated “to a programme level” within FAO. The MTE of the Kenya-Tanzania project (GCP/GLO/198/GER) found GIAHS to be “a highly appropriate initiative for FAO to be engaged in”.<sup>45</sup> Considering that the project has sown the seed of the GIAHS concept in the two countries, the MTE recommended that GIAHS goals and principles be effectively mainstreamed into their national policies. It also advised that the selection criteria should be “more clearly articulated for easier adaptation to country-specific conditions”, and that the designation process should be “more transparent”.<sup>46</sup>

35. In the light of the accomplishments of the GIAHS initiative, and so as to ensure the continuance of its activities in the long run, its operational framework should be formally approved by the Governing Bodies. To achieve this, different options have been envisioned, including the drafting of a GIAHS convention.<sup>47</sup> While clearly supportive of a regulatory underpinning for GIAHS, the Steering Committee cautioned against embarking on a treaty-making path, which would inevitably involve lengthy, arduous and costly negotiations.<sup>48</sup>

36. In the circumstances, it appears that a resolution of the FAO Conference would provide a suitable basis for anchoring the GIAHS initiative within the Organization and for securing its international status. As an authoritative decision of the highest policy-making Governing Body of FAO, a Conference resolution would properly uphold and govern GIAHS, addressing formally its essential features, governance structures, working arrangements, designation modalities and certifications procedures. It should be noted that Conference resolutions have been used in the past for similar purposes.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, which is comparable in nature to GIAHS, was established by UNESCO through a resolution of its General Conference.<sup>50</sup>

37. In terms of its contents, the proposed Conference resolution would indicatively be structured as follows: (i) a preamble recalling the origin, concept and benefits of GIAHS, delineating its main goals, principles and characteristics, underlining its wide recognition and growing relevance at the global, national and local levels, and acknowledging the need to provide for its operational framework;

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<sup>45</sup> *Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Project - GCP/GLO/212/GFF. Evaluation Report*, Rome, April 2013.

<sup>46</sup> *Supporting Food Security and Reducing Poverty in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania through Dynamic Conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) - GCP/GLO/198/GER. Evaluation Report*, Rome, March 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Such a convention could be modeled after the UNESCO *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage* (1972). Other options include: an additional protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity; a soft law instrument such as a voluntary undertaking; a policy declaration, etc. For an in-depth review of the regulatory and policy options that were considered for GIAHS, see: S.R. Harrop, *Globally Important Ingenious Agricultural Heritage Systems - An examination of their context in existing multilateral instruments*, August 2005 (<http://www.fao.org/giahs>).

<sup>48</sup> This view was expressed at the 2006 International Forum on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, and was reiterated at the Steering Committee meetings of 2009 and 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Examples include: (i) Resolution 3/2001, *Adoption of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Interim Arrangements for its Implementation*; (ii) Resolution 3/95, *Broadening of the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover genetic resources relevant to food and agriculture*; and (iii) Resolution 8/83, *International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources*.

<sup>50</sup> Resolution 2.313, *Intergovernmental Programme on Man and the Biosphere*, Sixteenth Session of the General Conference, Paris, 12 October - 14 November 1970. Under the MAB Programme, biosphere reserves are created by countries as sites of excellence aimed at fostering harmonious integration of people and nature for sustainable development ([www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme)).

(ii) operative provisions covering the essential aspects of the GIAHS operational framework as outlined above, including governance structures, appointment procedures for members of the committees, secretariat functions, working arrangements, selection criteria, designation process, certifications procedures, etc.; and (iii) an annex containing the full set of the selection criteria for GIAHS sites.

38. The text of the proposed Conference resolution would essentially reflect the arrangements and procedures currently in place, and would incorporate any required adjustments and additions arising from the experience gained through the implementation of GIAHS projects or recommended by their evaluations, as well as those deemed appropriate by the Governing Bodies in further reviewing the GIAHS initiative. Provision could also be made for a *GIAHS Registry* to be kept by FAO, in which all designated GIAHS sites/systems would be recorded. The ensuing obligations to maintain the designated sites by the States concerned could be considered for future development as appropriate. In addition, the resolution could foresee the adoption of operational procedures and/or practical guidelines, as needed, under the authority of the GIAHS Steering Committee.

39. If this proposed course of action is considered appropriate, a draft resolution would be prepared along the lines indicated above. It would be reviewed and endorsed by the CCLM in 2014<sup>51</sup>, for subsequent discussion and approval by Council<sup>52</sup>, and eventual consideration and adoption by Conference at its 39<sup>th</sup> Session in June 2015. To prepare for this by allowing focused debates on programmatic and technical aspects of GIAHS, it would be useful to request the Programme Committee<sup>53</sup> and COAG<sup>54</sup> to devote a discussion on GIAHS by their membership prior to the CCLM's next review of the matter.

## VII. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE CCLM

40. The CCLM is invited to review this document and endorse the proposed course of action for the formal approval of the GIAHS operational framework through a resolution of the FAO Conference, making such adjustments and providing such guidance as deemed necessary.

41. In particular, the CCLM may wish to endorse the above delineated approach, setting out that:

- a) A resolution of the FAO Conference would provide a suitable basis for anchoring the GIAHS initiative within the Organization and for securing its international status;
- b) The resolution would essentially reflect the arrangements and procedures currently in place, and would incorporate any required adjustments and additions arising from experience gained through GIAHS implementation or deemed appropriate by the Governing Bodies in further reviewing the GIAHS initiative;
- c) Drafted along these lines, the resolution would be reviewed and endorsed by the CCLM in 2014, for subsequent discussion and approval by Council, and eventual consideration and adoption by Conference in June 2015. Prior to the CCLM's next review of the matter, and to

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<sup>51</sup> Possibly at its 99<sup>th</sup> session in October 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Possibly at its 150<sup>th</sup> session in December 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Possibly at its 115<sup>th</sup> session in May 2014.

<sup>54</sup> At its 24<sup>th</sup> session in September 2014.

prepare for it, the Programme Committee and COAG would discuss and advise on the programmatic and technical aspects of GIAHS.

## Annex 1

Selection Criteria for GIAHS Sites<sup>55</sup>

<b>1. Food and livelihood security</b>	The proposed agriculture system should contribute to food and livelihood security of local communities (often indigenous), representing the majority of their livelihood provisions. This includes provisioning and exchange among local communities to create a relatively stable and resilient food and livelihood system.
<b>2. Biodiversity and ecosystem function</b>	Agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources (species, varieties and breeds), as well as other biodiversity such as wild relatives, pollinators and wildlife associated with the agricultural system and landscape. The system/site should be endowed with globally (or nationally) significant biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture (e.g. endemic, rare, endangered species of crops and animals).
<b>3. Knowledge systems and adapted technologies</b>	Maintain invaluable knowledge, ingenious technology and management systems of natural resources, including biota, land, water; and social organizations and institutions, including customary institutions for agro-ecological management, normative arrangements for resource access and benefit sharing, etc.
<b>4. Cultures, value systems and social organizations (Agri-Culture)</b>	Cosmo-vision, value systems and <i>agri-cultural</i> practices associated with environment and agricultural calendar; festivities and rituals as knowledge transfer. Local institutions play a critical role in balancing environmental and socio-economic objectives, in creating resilience and in the reproduction of all elements and processes critical to the functioning of the agricultural system. Some may ensure conservation of and promote equity in the use and access to natural resources; some transmit traditional knowledge systems and critical values that promote custodianship of biodiversity, land and water; some facilitate planning, cooperation and innovation/ adaptation. Such institutions may take the form of ceremonial and religious beliefs and practices, including taboos, ceremonies and festivities; of customary law and conflict resolution, including on resource tenure; of kinship, marriage and inheritance systems; of forms of leadership, decision-making and cooperation; of oral and written traditions; of games and other forms of education and instruction; of division of roles and distribution of labour, including gender roles and specialized functions; etc (intangibles).
<b>5. Remarkable landscapes, land and water resources management features</b>	Landscape features resulting from human management that provide particularly ingenious or practical solutions to environmental or social constraints, such as land use mosaics, irrigation/water management systems, terraces, particular ecosystem adaptive architecture, which might provide for resource conservation/efficiency or provide habitats for valued biodiversity, recreational values collective or non commercial valuable uses (aesthetic, artistic, educational, spiritual, and/or scientific values of ecosystems).

<sup>55</sup> Source: *Procedures for application and designation of a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, October 2012 (<http://www.fao.org/giahs>).

## Annex 2

Countries with GIAHS designated sites<sup>56</sup>

Countries	Designated sites	Year of designation
<i>Algeria</i>	1. Oases of the Ghout System	2011
<i>Chile</i>	2. Chiloé Agriculture System	2011
<i>China</i>	3. Rice-Fish Culture in Longxian Village	2005
	4. Wannian Traditional Rice Culture	2010
	5. Hani Rice Terraces	2010
	6. Dong's Rice-Fish-Duck System	2011
	7. Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem	2012
	8. Aohan Dryland Farming System	2012
	9. Ancient Chinese Torreya of Kuaijishan	2013
	10. Urban Agricultural Heritage - Xuanhua Grape Gardens	2013
<i>India</i>	11. Saffron Heritage of Kashmir	2011
	12. Traditional Agriculture Systems, Koraput	2012
	13. Kuttanad Below Sea Level Farming System	2013
<i>Japan</i>	14. Noto's <i>Satoyama</i> and <i>Satoumi</i>	2011
	15. Sado's <i>Satoyama</i> in Harmony with Crested Ibis	2011
	16. Aso Grasslands, Kumamoto Prefecture	2013
	17. Traditional Tea-Grass Integrated System ( <i>Chagusaba</i> ), Shizuoka Prefecture	2013
	18. Kunisaki Peninsula Usa Integrated Forestry, Agriculture and Fisheries System, Oita Prefecture	2013
<i>Kenya</i>	19. Oldonyonokie/Olkeri Maasai Pastoral Heritage Site	2011
<i>Morocco</i>	20. Oases System in Atlas Mountains	2011
<i>Peru</i>	21. Andean Agriculture System	2011
<i>Philippines</i>	22. Ifugao Rice Terraces	2011
<i>Tanzania</i>	23. Engaresero Maasai Pastoralist Heritage Area	2011
	24. Shimbwe Juu Kihamba Agro-forestry Heritage Site	2011
<i>Tunisia</i>	25. Gafsa Oases	2011

<sup>56</sup> Source: <http://www.fao.org/giahs>

## Annex 3

Countries with GIAHS potential sites<sup>57</sup>

Countries	Potential sites
<i>Azerbaijan</i>	1. Ancient agricultural systems
<i>Bangladesh</i>	2. Floating gardens
<i>Brazil</i>	3. <i>Terra preta</i> (Amazonian dark earths)
<i>Ecuador</i>	4. Cacao system
<i>Egypt</i>	5. <i>Siwa</i> oasis
<i>Ethiopia</i>	6. Coffee production system
<i>France</i>	7. Agrarian system of the Wayana, French Guyana
<i>Guinea</i>	8. Tapade cultivation system
<i>Indonesia</i>	9. Agricultural Saujana heritage 10. Bali <i>Subak</i> system 11. Javanese rice terraces 12. Fishing system 13. Forestry system
<i>Iraq</i>	14. Marsh Arabs and marshland agriculture
<i>Iran</i>	15. Qashqai nomadic pastoralism 16. Estahbanat rainfed fig system 17. Qanat irrigation systems and homegardens
<i>Italy</i>	18. Lemon gardens in southern regions
<i>Madagascar</i>	19. Mananara rice terraces and agroforestry
<i>Mali</i>	20. West African Sahelian floodplain recession agriculture
<i>Mexico</i>	21. Chinampa agricultural system 22. Milpa solar system
<i>Netherlands</i>	23. Polder systems
<i>Republic of Korea</i>	24. Jeju Batdam agricultural system 25. Traditional irrigation management system of Gudeuljangnon terraced rice paddies

<sup>57</sup> This indicative list is not exhaustive. Source: <http://www.fao.org/giahs>



<i>Romania</i>	26. Mobile Pastoral Systems
<i>Russian Federation</i>	27. Udege forest management (Kamtchatka) 28. Traditional reindeer herding in the Arctic region, Siberia
<i>Slovakia</i>	29. Traditional agro-ecosystems in the Carpathians region
<i>South Africa</i>	30. Limpopo sorghum - pearl millet cultivation systems
<i>Spain</i>	31. Saltworks of Valle Salado de Añana
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	32. Tank system 33. Wewe irrigation system
<i>Thailand</i>	34. Teak forestry system of Mae Hong Son
<i>Turkey</i>	35. Rice Production Systems 36. Natural Dying and Weaving Systems 37. Traditional Cheese Production Systems 38. Fig Production Systems 39. Grape Production Systems 40. Olive Production Systems
<i>USA</i>	41. Little Colorado river watershed, Arizona
<i>Vanuatu</i>	42. Pacific Islands taro based homegardens