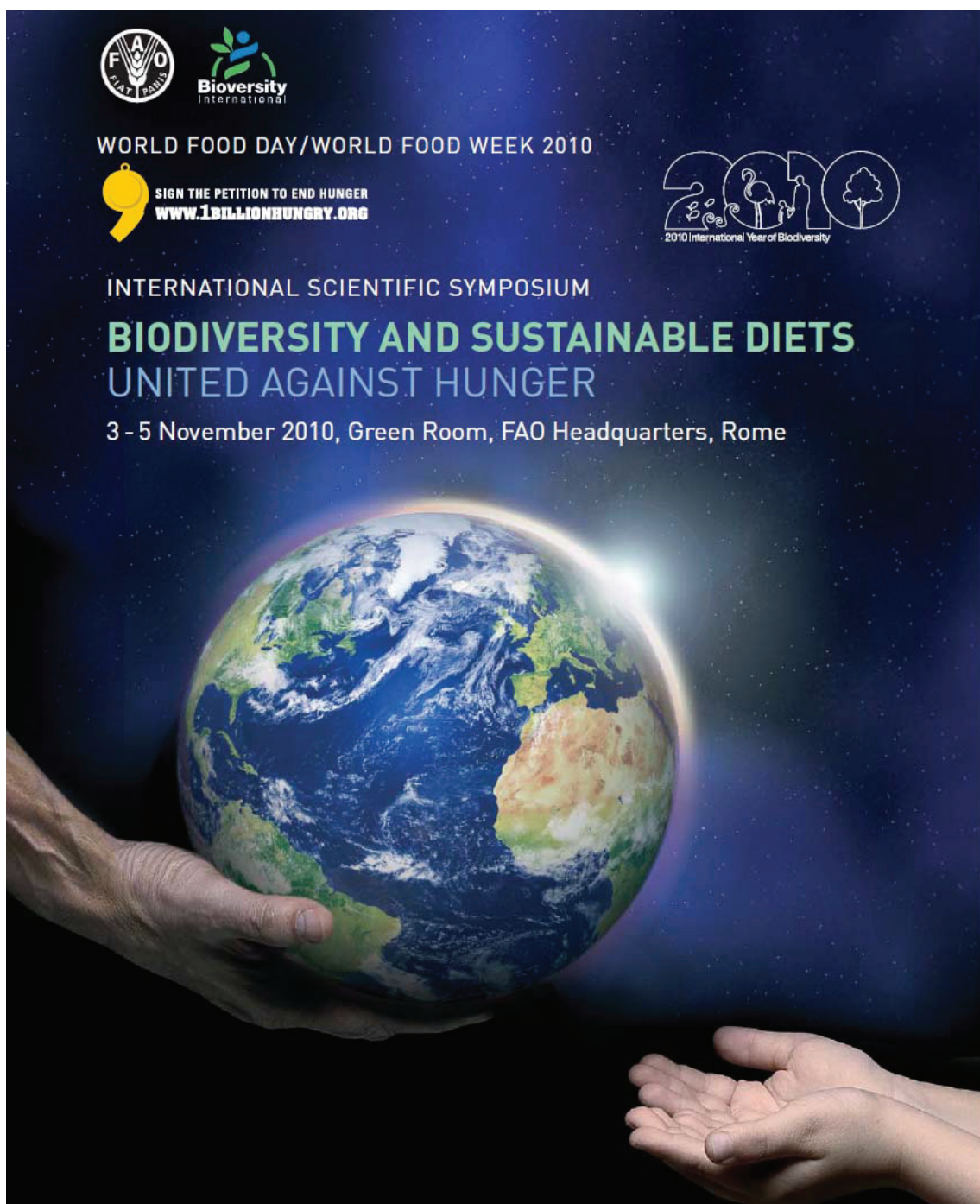


REPORT



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

**BIODIVERSITY
AND
SUSTAINABLE DIETS**

UNITED AGAINST HUNGER

ROME, 3-5 NOVEMBER 2010

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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FOREWORD

In recent years, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed a series of activities on sustainable diets, focusing on biodiversity, with the aim of promoting a broader appreciation of the links among local food products, nutrition, food security and sustainable production.

Today, close to one billion people suffer from hunger, while even more people are overweight or obese. In both groups, there is a high prevalence of micronutrient malnutrition. In spite of many efforts, the nutrition problems of the world are escalating. At the same time, the world is experiencing serious degradation of ecosystems and losses of biodiversity, with agriculture identified as a major offender. Globalization, industrial agriculture, rural poverty, population pressures and urbanization have changed food production and consumption in ways that profoundly affect ecosystems and human nutrition. These trends are alarming, and they bring to the light the inadequacy of the present food systems and dietary patterns.

The International Scientific Symposium “Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets”, as a contribution to the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, was organized jointly by FAO and Bioversity International, within the World Food Day/Week programme. Among several important outcomes there was a consensus definition of “sustainable diets”, developed through a series of activities, including the Technical Workshop on Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets held in May 2010 and an online survey which ran for six months in 2010. This culminated in the final working group session during the International Scientific Symposium. The definition will hopefully generate further research and encourage more use of local food biodiversity, including traditional foods of indigenous peoples, with their many nutritionally-rich species and varieties, as readily-accessible and sustainable sources of quality nutrition. The notion of sustainable diets will also serve to support biodiversity as one component in the paradigm shift to address the multiple burdens of malnutrition. Sustainable diets as a model will foster a broader consensus for action in agriculture, to improve nutrition through an ecosystem approach. It will serve to raise awareness among the public and governments on food systems’ sustainability, including sustainable production intensification. Sustainable diets, as a goal, will lead to broader scientific, social and political recognition that the health of humans cannot be isolated from the health of ecosystems.

Current FAO activities involve the characterization of different agro-ecological zones and production systems, increasing efficiencies and optimizing inputs in food chains, analyzing food biodiversity through food composition and food consumption projects, and monitoring nutrition and biodiversity indicators. Although more and better scientific evidence is required, immediate action is warranted based on existing knowledge. Some of that knowledge was presented for the first time during this Scientific Symposium.

Barbara Burlingame
Principal Officer
Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division
FAO, Rome

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Symposium was organized by FAO and Bioversity International. The organizers are grateful for the collaboration of the CBD Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Forestry Policies of Italy, INRAN, CIHEAM-Bari, INFOODS, Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition, IUNS, and FENS. The Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition, IDRC and CTA are acknowledged for their contribution to this gathering of experts from many parts of the world to discuss with us these challenging emerging issues.

Overall leadership was provided by Barbara Burlingame, Principal Officer of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of FAO. The technical and organizational support from Sandro Dernini, in collaboration with Ruth Charrondiere, Florence Egal, Stefano Mondovì and Barbara Stadlmayr and the very valuable administrative and logistical support from Giuseppina Di Felice and Nathalie Lambert, FAO staff, and Nadia Bergamini, Bioversity International staff, are acknowledged.

Special appreciation is due to Timothy Lang, Paul Finglas and Isaac Akinyele, who served as Chairs of the Working Groups; to Jessica Fanzo and Harriet Kuhnlein, who served as rapporteurs.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFROFOODS	INFOODS Regional Data Centre for Africa
BIOVERSITY	Bioversity International
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CNR	National Research Council, Italy
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
CIBFN	Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition
CIISCAM	International Interuniversity Studies Center on Mediterranean Food Cultures, Italy
CIHEAM-Bari	International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies of Bari, Italy
CINE	Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment, Canada
CODEX	Codex Alimentarius Commission
ENEA	National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development, Italy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FENS	Federation of European Nutrition Societies
ICRAF	International Center for Research in Agroforestry, Kenya
IDRC	International Development Research Centre, Canada
INFOODS	International Network of Food Data Systems
INRA	Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique
INRAN	National Research Institute on Food and Nutrition, Italy
IUNS	International Union of Nutritional Sciences
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MiPAAF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry Policies, Italy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food

SUMMARY

The International Scientific Symposium “Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United Against Hunger” was organized jointly by FAO and Bioversity International. The symposium was held at FAO headquarters, from 3 to 5 November 2010, within the World Food Day/Week programme and as part of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity celebration.

Several months earlier, a Technical Workshop was held to identify the topics, agenda and programme for the Symposium, and to develop a set of key points and recommendations for a definition of “sustainable diets” that would link the agriculture and environment sectors with nutrition. The Symposium, thus, became the platform to further develop the concept of biodiversity for food and nutrition, to form a common path for achieving food and nutrition security and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The symposium served to position sustainable diets, nutrition and biodiversity as central to sustainable development. The sustainable use of food, at the base of the sustainable diets’ rationale, was emphasized as fundamental to the achievement of broader goal of sustainable development, connecting nutritional well-being of the individual and community to the sustainability of feeding the planet. The challenge to move towards sustainable food production systems was broadly discussed, acknowledging the interdependencies of food consumption, food requirements and nutrient recommendations. The presentations included studies showing that increases in [productivity can be achieved with lower chemical inputs, relying on natural biological processes and lowering the environmental footprint of agriculture. Case studies and practices bringing biodiversity into the plate were presented with data showing improvements in nutrient intakes through food biodiversity, as a counterbalance to the trend of diets low in diversity but high in energy, which contribute to the escalating problems of obesity and chronic diseases. Examples of sustainable diets, which minimize environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, were shown, with the Mediterranean Diet showcased as a useful model. Two new indicators were presented, along with the plea to generate further scientific evidence on the nutrient composition and consumption of food biodiversity in order to demonstrate the role of biodiversity in human nutrition. Further studies are also required to characterize different agro-ecological zones in order to show foods and whole diets as ecosystem services.

Two working groups were formed and charged with a series of tasks, including developing a platform for action, elaborating a code of conduct/practice, and the finalization of the consensus definition of sustainable diets. The reports of the working groups were presented in the final session, with the most significant result being the definition of “sustainable diets”, as follows: *Sustainable Diets are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources.*

In addition, the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition was identified as the framework through which to [promote sustainable diets, and the participants recommended that FAO, Bioversity International and the CBD Secretariat, in collaboration with other relevant organizations and institutions, should establish a Task Force to promote and advance the concept of sustainable diets and the role of biodiversity.

OPENING ADDRESS

Changchui He

*Deputy Director-General, FAO
Rome, Italy*

*Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Welcome to the International Scientific Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United Against Hunger. As you are aware, the theme for this year's World Food Day is "United Against Hunger". This theme underscores the fact that achieving food security is not the responsibility of one single party; it is the responsibility of all of us. The 2010 celebration also marks the 30th World Food Day, a celebration that has been observed around the world over the last three decades. The latest hunger figures show that 925 million people live in chronic hunger. While there is a welcome decline from the 2009 level, the number of hungry people remains unacceptably high. Furthermore, this number does not reflect all the dimensions of malnutrition. Micronutrient deficiencies, for instance, affect an estimated two billion people. Responding properly to the hunger and malnutrition problems require urgent, resolute and concerted actions. It calls for united efforts by all relevant actors and at all levels.

As of today, close to two million people around the globe have signed the "Against Hunger" petition, as part of an international advocacy and awareness campaign launched by FAO ("1BillionHungry.org"). It aims at placing pressure on political leaders and mobilizing all parties to take a united action against hunger and malnutrition. As we are aiming to have as many signatures as possible by the 29th of November, when the petition will be presented to member countries on the occasion of the 140th session of the FAO Council, I am inviting all of you, if you have not yet done so, to sign the petition on the tables placed outside the Room. Coming back to this year's International Scientific Symposium, the theme for the Symposium is "Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United Against Hunger", jointly organized by FAO and Bioversity International as a contribution to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. For the first time, the concept of "biodiversity" is linked with the emerging issue of "sustainable diets" in exploring solutions for the problems of malnutrition in its various forms, while addressing the loss of biodiversity and the erosion of indigenous and traditional food cultures. Our purpose is to promote the development of new sustainable food production and consumption models.

There is currently no universally agreed definition of a 'sustainable diet'. However, a definition is needed to develop policy, research and programme activities for the promotion of sustainable food systems that minimize environmental degradation and biodiversity losses.

There is growing academic recognition of the complexity of defining sustainability, as well as an increasing body of evidence showing the unsustainable nature of current food systems. A definition of sustainable diets shall, therefore, address sustainability of the whole food supply chain and thus provide guidance on promoting and applying the concept in different agroecological zones.

The alarming pace of food biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and their impact on poverty and health makes a compelling case for re-examining food-agricultural systems and diets. FAO has been working with member countries, international and regional partners for the past few years to determine the status and trends of plant genetic resources that feed the world. We looked into the key achievements as well as the major gaps and needs that require an urgent attention. This effort has culminated in the publication of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* that was launched by the Director-General of FAO last week. The Report provides a wealth of information from over 100 countries for improving conservation and sustainable use of plant diversity to meet the key challenges of malnutrition, food insecurity and rapid climate change. It points out that plant diversity can be lost in a short lapse of time in the face of rapid climate change, population pressure and environmental degradation. There is an urgent need to collect, document and better use this diversity including crop wild relatives, not least because they hold the genetic secrets that enable them to resist heat, drought, floods and pests. New and better-adapted crops derived from genetic diversity can offer more nutritious and healthier foods for rural and urban consumers, and provide opportunities to generate income and contribute to sustainable rural development. Now more than ever, there is a greater need to strengthen linkages among institutions dealing with plant diversity and food security, and with other stakeholders, at global, regional, national, and local levels. Far greater efforts are required to counteract the effects of longstanding underinvestment in agriculture, rural development and food security.

The Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security held at FAO in 2009, stressed the urgent need and concrete actions to promote “new investment to increase sustainable agricultural production and productivity, support increased production and productivity of agriculture”, and for the implementation of “... sustainable practices, improved resource use, protection of the environment, conservation of the natural resource base and enhanced use of ecosystem services”. In this Declaration, it is also stated that FAO “will actively encourage the consumption of foods, particularly those available locally, that contribute to diversified and balanced diets, as the best means of addressing micronutrient deficiencies and other forms of malnutrition, especially among vulnerable groups”.

Agricultural biodiversity should play a stronger key role in the transition to more sustainable production systems, in increasing production efficiency, and in achieving sustainable intensification. The agriculture sector is responsible for ensuring the production, commercialization and distribution of foods that are nutritionally adequate, safe and environmentally friendly. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop and promote strategies for sustainable diets, emphasizing the positive role of biodiversity in human nutrition and poverty alleviation, mainstreaming biodiversity and nutrition as a common path, promoting nutrition-sensitive development and food-based approaches to solving nutrition problems. The importance of food-based approaches is fully recognized by FAO. Many developing countries, international agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donors are beginning to realize that food-based strategies are viable, cost-effective, and provide long-term and sustainable solutions for improving diets and raising levels of nutrition. Narrowing the nutrition gap - the gap between what foods are grown and available and what foods are needed for better nutrition - means increasing the availability, access and actual consumption of a diverse range of foods necessary for a healthy diet. Focusing on the distinctive relationship between agriculture, food and nutrition, FAO works actively to protect, promote and improve established food-based systems as the sustainable solution to ensure food and nutrition security, combat micronutrient deficiencies, improve diets and raise levels of

nutrition, and by so doing, to achieve the nutrition-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Globalization, industrial agriculture, rural poverty, population pressures and urbanization have changed food production and consumption in ways that profoundly affect ecosystems and human diets, leading to an overall simplification of diets. High-input industrial agriculture and long-distance transport increase the availability and affordability of refined carbohydrates and fats, leading to an overall simplification of diets and reliance on a limited number of energy-rich foods. In spite of the increasing acknowledgement of the value of traditional diets, major dietary shifts are currently observed in different parts of the world, representing a breakdown in the traditional food system. This trend has coincided with escalating rates of obesity and associated chronic diseases, further exacerbated by the coexistence of micronutrient deficiencies, owing to the lack of dietary diversity in modern diets. Dietary shifts that have occurred in urban areas are currently extending to rural communities as well, where people have abandoned diets based on locally-grown crop varieties in favour of “westernized” diets. Your deliberations should, therefore, focus the need for repositioning nutrition security, developing and strengthening food value chains and promoting public/private sector collaborations, with biodiversity and sustainability at its core.

The Symposium shall also serve to explore ways in which agricultural biodiversity can contribute to improved food security and to feeding the world within a framework of enhancing agricultural efficiency and ensuring sustainability. I do hope that your collective intellectual wisdom will also offer broad perspectives on ways of changing current global thinking on how to feed the world sustainably and achieve food and nutrition security.

I am sure that the outcome of the Symposium will guide FAO and others in their work towards addressing the role of biodiversity for sustainable food production, in light of global changes. I once again wish to emphasize that in the current context of difficulties and challenges, it is the shared responsibility of all actors to solve the problems of hunger and degraded ecosystems, and I am convinced that united we can reach the goal of sustainable diets, now and for future generations.

I thank you for your kind attention.

OPENING ADDRESS

Emile Frison

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I am pleased to welcome all the participants to this International Scientific Symposium on Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets: United Against Hunger, that was co-organized by Bioversity International (Bioversity) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in collaboration with many partners from Italy and abroad. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank the financial supporters of the Symposium.

I think this Symposium was a very timely one, indeed for the first time in 2010 it would seem that the whole issue of nutrition is reaching a level of awareness in the various sectors, including among donors, not seen before. For too long now the issue of Food Security has focused on the quantity of food, with very little or no attention given to the quality of food. What really matters is not just filling stomachs but providing a nutritious diet that will allow the cognitive and physical development of human beings. We are aware of the alarming and unacceptable levels of hunger, but the 2 billion people that suffer from malnutrition still do not receive sufficient attention. Expanding exponentially among the world's poorest people and, more than one would believe, among the wealthiest people are cases of micro-nutrient deficiencies and the double burden of malnutrition with non communicable diseases. This alarming situation is one that we must tackle together, especially when considering the rate of expansion in the poorest countries.

I am very pleased to see that, through a number of initiatives that have taken place and are taking place in different parts of the world, we are beginning to build this much needed awareness of malnutrition and its devastating impact on the peoples of developing countries. In 2008 Bioversity, together with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and FAO, launched a Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition and, more recently, initiatives such as Scaling Up Nutrition have really put the issue of nutrition at the top of the agenda. In New York, in September 2010, Scaling Up Nutrition was launched by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Micheál Martin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland.

I think this shows a real interest up to the highest levels. We must make sure that we seize this opportunity because tomorrow there may be some other hot topic that takes over from nutrition. It is up to all of us to take this momentum that is being built up and move it into action. When talking about nutrition we must attempt to move beyond the predominant medicalised approach of tackling individual or single micro-nutrient deficiencies or macro-nutrient deficiencies, attempting to fix the problem after the problem has occurred and with very little effort to prevent the problem in the first place. In order to tackle this issue we should begin looking at malnutrition through food systems, since it is the integration of the entire food system that will provide a sustainable answer to the problems of malnutrition. This Symposium is the right forum for us to do just that.

I believe the true definition of food and nutrition security is that of bringing diverse diets, diets that fulfil all the needs of human beings, to everyone's table. This takes me to the role of agriculture, with nutrition being in the medical camp and agriculture just caring about the quantity of food produced, any links between agriculture and nutrition are weak or totally lacking. We must, as Deputy Director-General of FAO, Dr He, has already mentioned, prevent the simplification of agriculture to the three major staples. Currently, these three major staples provide 60% of the calorie intake from plant origin at the global level. Such a degree of diet simplification is alarming and it is high time that we looked not only at producing quantities of food that are sufficient, but also nutrients and nutrition sufficient to fulfil all needs.

I have already mentioned the double burden of malnutrition, this is now becoming the world's number one problem in terms of public health, yet it has not been tackled properly nor is it even considered a major problem by many decision-makers. It is up to us now to make sure that this increased attention to nutrition looks at this issue in a holistic way and in a way that will prevent problems in the future. The organization of the Symposium also coincides with the International year of Biodiversity. The role that biodiversity can play in addressing the problems of malnutrition has been underestimated, understudied and deserves much more attention. For this reason, this particular Symposium on Biodiversity for Sustainable Diets is very important to me, it is also important that the general public is more aware of the importance of diversity and the potential of biodiversity in addressing the problems of malnutrition. In this regard, Bioversity organized, in May of this year, a whole week's celebration: 'La Settimana della Biodiversità' here in Rome together with the Secretariat of the CBD, IFAD, FAO, the Comune di Roma and many other partners to highlight the importance and raise awareness among the broader public of biodiversity for better nutrition.

There is an urgent need to change the paradigm of agricultural production in order to integrate this dimension of nutritional quality, this requires us to move beyond the major staples and to look at the many hundreds and thousands of neglected and underutilized plant and animal species that mean the difference between an unsustainable and sustainable diet. It is not just about producing calories, but diverse diets and that is why these neglected and underutilized species are so important. Of course, this change will not be successful without collaboration and improved communication among the different sectors. The gap between the agricultural and the nutrition and health sectors must be closed. At a national level (as well as the international level) ministries of agriculture, health, education and of course, ministries of finance must come together to set up and develop policies to address these problems in a sustainable way. There are many examples that show how we at Bioversity have started to try to practice what we preach in looking at neglected and underutilized species. One such example comes from Kenya, where we have been working with leafy green vegetables that have disappeared from the tables and markets in Nairobi. Our aim was to reintroduce these vegetables, to provide nutritious food in supermarkets and markets and to give farmers the opportunity to augment their income. In India, we have been working with the Swarmanathan foundation to look at nutritious millets (foxtail millet, finger millet and others that have various nutritious qualities) and reintroducing them in areas where they had been abandoned due to national policies promoting cassava production for starch. Through analyzing the impact of these policies, we were able to show that the income, derived by the cassava the farmers sold, was not sufficient to buy the millet they would have been producing otherwise.

What is more, the farmers themselves were consuming the cassava and of course this had a negative impact on their diet. We have been working in the Andes with native cereals, Quinoa

and Amaranth etc, in an effort to improve farming technologies and to allow the production of these nutritious foods to not only be maintained, but to develop further and also enter international markets. These examples and numerous others show that we can make a difference, the simplification of agriculture and the simplification of diets are not something that we just have to accept. In Kenya, the major obstacle in getting those leafy vegetables onto the tables was one of image, of being considered as backward, and the common conception that this is the food of the poor. However, through communication efforts involving the Minister of health, the chefs of the most famous restaurants of Nairobi who prepared new recipes with this leafy vegetable and by introducing it in the canteen of parliament, this food has been re-evaluated and people are taking pride again in producing, purchasing and consuming these vegetables. Today production is not sufficient to meet demand, so it is possible to make a difference. The westernization of diets is not ineluctable we must also tackle this problem. We have been working for a year or so in preparing for this Symposium together with FAO and many other partners, but this Symposium is not the end of the effort, it is the beginning, unless this Symposium leads to some real action we have not achieved very much. To have a book or a report on a shelf somewhere is not going to fill stomachs and certainly not to feed people better quality food, so we must take this opportunity in various initiatives, such as the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition and Scaling Up Nutrition, to incorporate the dimension of a diverse diet and the role it can play in improving nutrition. So this is really the start of, I hope, a major effort to ensure that all people in the world will not only have adequate food, but adequate nutrition to meet their needs.

Thank you.

1. OBJECTIVES

- To produce a consensus position on a definition of “sustainable diets”
- To mainstream biodiversity and nutrition
- To advance the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition

2. BACKGROUND

The Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition is being jointly developed by the CBD and its partners, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Bioversity International (Bioversity). This Initiative was established by decision VIII/23 A of the Conference of the Parties, held on 9-31 March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil. The overall aim of the Initiative is to promote and improve the sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and human nutrition, as a contribution to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 11, Goal 72 and related goals and targets and, thereby, to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, its conservation and sustainable use.

The framework of the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition identifies the contribution of agricultural biodiversity as a priority for improving nutrition and health of the rural and urban poor. It addresses major global health issues and trends such as micronutrient deficiencies, the decline of dietary diversity and the concomitant rise in chronic diseases that are affecting developing countries and, particularly, among the poor. The initiative promotes the use of local biodiversity, including traditional foods of indigenous and local ecosystems with their many sources of nutritionally-rich species and varieties as readily-accessible, locally-empowering and sustainable sources of quality nutrition. Furthermore, the Cross-cutting Initiative recognizes that, in an increasingly global, urban and commercial environment, the fulfilment of the potential of local resources must successfully integrate production, marketing, consumption and the health of rural and urban dwellers alike as components of sustainable food systems.

As a contribution to the advancement of the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, the FAO Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, in collaboration with Bioversity International and INFOODS, organized a Technical Workshop “Biodiversity in Sustainable Diets”, held from 31 May to 1 June 2010, at FAO headquarters, in Rome.

The purpose of the Technical Workshop was to define a framework and topics for the organization of the International Symposium on “Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets”, planned in the Fall of 2010, at FAO headquarters, in Rome, within the 2010 World Food Day/Week programme.

3. THE SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium's programme, reported in the *Annexes*, was articulated as follows: one keynote speech, seven sessions with 40 presentations, one exhibition of posters, and two working groups: 1) Definition of Sustainable Diets and Platform for Actions; and 2) Code of Conduct on Sustainable Diets. Working Group 1 produced a consensus position on a definition of "sustainable diets", that was then approved by all participants in the plenary session of the Symposium. The adopted definition states as follows:

Definition of "Sustainable Diets"

Sustainable Diets are those diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources.

As a final outcome of the Symposium, the following document for a Platform for Action was approved.

Platform of Action

1. The participants of the Symposium recommend that FAO, Bioversity International and the CBD Secretariat, in collaboration with other relevant organizations and institutions at international /regional/ national/local level should establish a Task Force to promote and advance the concept of sustainable diets and the role of biodiversity within it, in the context of the CBD Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, as contributions to the achievement of the MDGs and beyond.
2. FAO and Bioversity International should encourage the UN System, Governments, International Organizations, International Food Security and Nutrition Initiatives and other relevant bodies to finance and support research and development projects and programmes on biodiversity and sustainable diets.
3. Decision-makers should give priority to and promote sustainable diet concepts in policies and programmes in the agriculture, food, environment, trade, education and health sectors. Nutrition should be given more emphasis by plant and animal breeders and research on nutrient content of food biodiversity should be encouraged. Food composition data should be compiled by FAO in the INFOODS databases and by regional and national institutions.
4. New projects and case studies should be encouraged to demonstrate the synergies between biodiversity, nutrition and socio-economic, cultural and environment sustainability as well as to gather evidence about the potential of greater use of biodiversity for better nutrition and health and for poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods. The evidence gathered from these research efforts should be compiled by FAO and Bioversity International and made available on an open access web-based platform.

5. Food-based dietary guidelines and policies should give due consideration to sustainability when setting goals aimed at healthy nutrition. A guidance document on how to develop such guidelines and policies at national level could be elaborated by FAO, in collaboration with Bioversity International and other partners.
6. Governments, UN Agencies, Civil Society, Research Organizations and the Private Sector should collaborate in the development of programme activities and policies to promote sustainable diets in order to achieve sustainable food production, processing and consumption, and to minimize environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.
7. The development of a Code of Conduct for Sustainable Diets is strongly recommended.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The concept of sustainable diets, with biodiversity and at its core, has recently received renewed attention as the world struggles with many natural and man-made disasters.

The consensus position reached at the Symposium on a definition of sustainable diets was an important milestone for pursuing a coherent agenda in policies and programmes linking nutrition, agriculture, and the environment sectors.

Explicit in the definition of sustainable diets is food and nutrition security.

Participant organizations, institutions, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders were increasingly cognizant of the role that food biodiversity and sustainable diets can play in improving food and nutrition security.

At the Symposium, it was highlighted that although the evidence base must be further improved, existing knowledge warrants immediate action to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in nutrition programmes, as contributions to the achievement of food and nutrition security and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Escalating population growth, land degradation and increasing demands for food further reinforce the need for enhancing sustainable food systems, promoting sustainable dietary patterns and food-based strategies as critical issues.

Among the overarching principles was the recognition that the health of human beings cannot be isolated from the health of ecosystems and the affirmation of the need for all-inclusive cooperation in activities to improve human and environmental health through sustainable diets.

Changes in dietary habits have compromised nutritional wellbeing, increased erosion of local ecosystems, and contributed to the loss of food biodiversity. A close involvement of the civil society and of all stakeholders in the fields of environment, agriculture, nutrition, health, education, culture and trade, was recommended for the development of sustainable diets' programmes and policies.

Sustainability of food and agriculture activities upon which 2.4 billion people depend for livelihoods was considered a key driver in the transition towards a green economy, due to its dual positive impact on ecosystem services and poverty alleviation.

The improvement of food systems for sustainable diets was recommended through interdisciplinary efforts to address the problems of malnutrition, the degradation of ecosystems, and the erosion of biodiversity caused, at least in part, by modern day food systems and dietary patterns.

The need to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns, through the development of programme activities and policies, along with education and policies, at the base of the sustainable diets rationale, was stressed to direct the choices and behaviours of consumers towards more sustainable food patterns.

Increasing the sustainability of agro-food systems, from primary production to consumption, will improve food and nutrition security (in terms of availability, access, stability and utilization), while minimizing the use of external inputs (e.g. fertilizers, water and energy) and sustaining the health of ecosystems, biodiversity and people. The notion of sustainable diets will serve to promote the use of food biodiversity, including traditional foods of indigenous peoples, with their many sources of nutritionally-rich species and varieties as readily-accessible sources of quality nutrition. While good nutrition should be a goal for a nutrition-sensitive agriculture, it is imperative that concerns about sustainability are not lost in the process of meeting that goal. Many dietary patterns can be healthy but they can vary substantially in terms of their resource costs.

It was considered as essential to start to apply the notion of sustainable diets to different agro-ecological zones.

Improving nutrition through biodiversity could be the basis for the development of codes of practice, providing guidance to the health, agriculture, environmental and food industry sectors and to consumers. Agricultural production practices need to respond to the challenge of climate change by reducing their negative impact on the environment, and increasing productivity while improving sustainability and achieving food and nutrition security.

Therefore, new strategies on sustainable diets and sustainable production and consumption are required to connect the nutritional well-being of the individual and of the community to the sustainability of feeding the planet.

**AFROFOODS
CALL FOR ACTION FROM THE DOOR OF RETURN
FOR FOOD RENAISSANCE IN AFRICA**

House of the Slaves, Goree, Dakar, Senegal

10 December 2009 - Human Rights Day

We, the participants at the 5th AFROFOODS Sub-regional Data Center Coordinators Meeting held in Dakar, Senegal, on 9-11 December 2009,

- **Note** that the degradation of ecosystems and the loss of food biodiversity is contributing greatly to the increases in poverty and malnutrition in Africa;
- **Recognize** that returning to local crops and traditional food systems is a prerequisite for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and nutrition;
- **Acknowledge** that local foods are the basis for African sustainable diets;
- **Urge** that food composition data be emphasized as the fundamental information underpinning almost all activities in the field of nutrition;
- **Call upon** the sectors of public health, agriculture, and environment and food trade to help reinforce and assist with the improvement of food composition data, particularly on local foods;
- **Request** that the contribution of food composition be credited as one of the most important components for action in nutrition and food quality, food safety, and food and nutrition security.

We **invite** all sectors to place AFROFOODS on the national, regional and international agenda for all food and nutrition activities in Africa through interdisciplinary strategic plans for achieving the relevant MDGs; and therefore, from the **Door of Return** of the House of the Slaves of Gorée-Dakar, we accept the challenge ourselves and send this **call for action** to our colleagues, as well as to governments, the private sector and financial entities, to strengthen AFROFOODS activities in a renewed commitment to an African food renaissance.

**DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR
A “CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SUSTAINABLE DIETS,”
based on the model of the Code of Conduct for Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.**

Contents

Introduction

Article 1. Aim of the Code

Article 2. Scope of the Code

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Article 4. Definitions

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Article 8. Special Requirement of Developing Countries

Article 9. Research

Article 10. Implementation and monitoring

Preamble

Introduction

Affirming the right of every human being to be adequately nourished, to attain and maintain [as a means of attaining and maintaining] health;

Acknowledging that malnutrition is part of the wider problems [including] poverty, social injustice, lack of education;

Recognizing that the health of humans cannot be isolated from the health of ecosystems;

Conscious that food is indispensable for [an unequalled way of] providing ideal nutrition throughout life [for all ages and life cycles/stages];

Recognizing that the conservation and sustainable use of food biodiversity is an important part of human and (ecosystem) well-being;

Conservation should support the right to food [sustainable diet] and vice versa. Conservation should recognize the right for local populations to benefit from their traditional resources;

Recognizing that when ecosystems are able to support sustainable diets, nutrition programmes, policies and interventions supporting the use of supplements, RUTF, fortificants, and infant formulas are inappropriate and can lead to malnutrition, and that the marketing of these food substitutes and related products can contribute to major public health problems;

[Considering that when] (In periods when) ecosystems are not able to support sustainable diets, there is a legitimate use of supplements, RUTF (ready to use therapeutic foods) and fortificants; that all these products should accordingly be made accessible to those who need them through commercial or non-commercial distribution systems; and that they should not be marketed or distributed in ways that may interfere with sustainable diets;

Appreciating that there are a number of social and economic factors affecting sustainable diets; [and that, accordingly] governments should develop [social] support systems to protect, facilitate and encourage them. [and that] Governments should create an environment that fosters sustainable diets, provides appropriate family and community support and protection from factors that inhibit it;

Affirming that health-care systems, and the health professionals and other health workers serving in them, have an essential role to play in guiding sustainable diet practices, encouraging and facilitating sustainable diets, and providing objective and consistent advice to families, communities and governments about the superior value of sustainable diets;

Affirming further that educational systems and other social services should be involved in the protection and promotion of sustainable diets;

Aware that families, communities, women's organizations and other nongovernmental organizations have a special role to play in the protection and promotion of sustainable diets, particularly for pregnant and lactating women and infants and young children;

Affirming the need for governments, organizations of the United Nations system, Non-Governmental Organizations, experts in various related disciplines, consumer groups and industry to cooperate in activities aimed at the improvement of human and environmental health through sustainable diets;

Considering that manufacturers and distributors of food substitutes have an important and constructive role to play in relation to sustainable diets, and in the promotion of the aim of this Code and its proper implementation;

Affirming that governments are called upon to take action appropriate to their social and legislative framework and their overall development objectives to give effect to the principles and aim of this Code, including the enactment of legislation, regulations or other suitable measures;

Believing that, in the light of the foregoing considerations, and in view of the vulnerability of ecosystems, and the human health risks involved in inappropriate feeding practices, including the unnecessary and improper use of food substitutes, the marketing of substitutes requires special treatment, which makes usual marketing practices unsuitable for these products.

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM
BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DIETS
UNITED AGAINST HUNGER

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2010

- 08.30-9.30 **Registration**
 Sign the Petition 1billionhungry.org
- Session 1* *Opening Session*
9.30-11.30
- 9.30-10.00 **Welcoming Addresses**
 Mainstreaming Nutrition and Biodiversity for Sustainable Development
Changchui He, Deputy Director-General, FAO
Emile Frison, Director-General, Bioversity International
- 10.00-10.30 **Keynote Speech**
 Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity: the challenge for policy, evidence and behaviour change
Timothy Lang, Centre for Food Policy, City University, London
- 10.30-11.30 **Setting the Scene - Links with Global Initiatives**
 Biodiversity and sustainable diets for improved livelihoods for all
Emile Frison, Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition
- Global biodiversity outlook 3**
Kalemani Jo Mulongoy, Principal Officer, Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- The Cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition: nutrition and biodiversity - a common path**
Barbara Burlingame, Senior Officer, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO
- Opportunities and challenges for nutrition societies to redress malnutrition through food-based approaches**
Rekia Belahsen, General Secretary, International Union of Nutritional Sciences

Session 2
11.30-13.00

Feeding the Planet: The Challenge of a Sustainable Food Production and Consumption

Chair: Ezzeddine Boutrif, Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO

Expo 2015 of Milan: Feeding the planet-energy for life

Alberto Mina, Director, Institutional Relations, EXPO 2015 of Milan

Sustainable production intensification

William Murray, Senior Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO

The Dualine Project: Food sustainability - towards new issues

Louis Georges Soler, INRA/CIRAD, France

Sustainability and diversity along the food chain

Daniele Rossi, Director General, Federalimentare, Italy

13.00-14.30

Lunch break

Session 3
14.30-16.00

Sustainable Food Consumption

Chair: Florence Egal, Senior Officer, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO

Ensuring that agriculture, biodiversity and nutrition remain central to addressing the MDG One hunger target

Jessica Fanzo, Senior Officer, Bioversity International, Rome

Cities as drivers of sustainable food systems

Julien Custot, Food for the Cities Initiative, FAO

Food typologies, food behaviour determinants and actions aiming at improving behaviours for a better health

Patrick Etievant, Head, Nutrition, Chemical Food Safety and Consumer Behaviour Division, INRA, France

The contribution of forest biodiversity to sustainable diets

Paul Vantomme, Senior Officer, Forest Economics, Policy and Products Division, FAO

16.00-18.00

Report on technical workshop “Biodiversity in Sustainable Diets”

Sandro Dernini, Consultant, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO

Working groups on Recommendations

THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2010

Session 4
9.00-12.00

Bringing Biodiversity into the Plate -

Case studies and practices promoting food biodiversity

Chair: Harriet V. Kuhnlein, Founding Director, Professor of Human Nutrition, CINE, Canada

Nutrient diversity within species in major food crops consumed in India

Thing-Nga-Ning Longvah, Deputy Director & Head, Food Chemistry Division, National Institute of Nutrition, India

Nigerian traditional food system and nutrition security

Onimawo Ignatius, President, Nutrition Society of Nigeria, Nigeria

Canarium Odontophyllum Miq.: An underutilized fruit for human nutrition and sustainable diets

Ismail Amin, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University Putra, Malaysia

Assessing nutritional diversity of cropping systems in African villages

Roseline Remans, Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment Programme, The Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York

Edible insects in Eastern and Southern Africa: Challenges and opportunities

Muniirah Mbabazi, Department of Food Science and Technology, Makerere University, Uganda

Fruit trees in home gardens of the Nuba mountains, Central Sudan, and their contribution to household nutrition and income

Katja Kehlenbeck, World Agroforestry Centre ICRAF, Kenya

Conservation of plant biodiversity for sustainable diets

Kate Gold, International Projects Coordinator, Millennium Seed Bank Partnership, Seed Conservation Department, Royal Botanic Gardens, United Kingdom

12.00-13.00

Working groups on recommendations

13.00-14.30

Lunch break

Session 5
14.30-16.00

Biodiversity and nutrition, a food-based approach

Chair: Reikia Belahsen, General Secretary, International Union of Nutritional Sciences

Introductory Remarks (Video)

Denis Lairon, President, European Federation of Nutrition Societies

The challenges of overcoming rural poverty and malnutrition through local foods in West Africa

Amadou Tidian Guiro, Department of Animal Biology, University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal

Revisiting the vitamin A fiasco: Going local in Micronesia

Lois Englberger, Island Food Community of Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

Bioactive components in indigenous African vegetables

Francis Omujal, Natural Chemotherapeutics Research Laboratory, Ministry of Health, Kampala Uganda

Aquaculture with small fish species has the potential to improve nutrition and combat micronutrient deficiencies

Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, The World Fish Center, Bangladesh

Nutrition indicators of biodiversity

Ruth Charrondiere, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO

16.00-17.30

Panel discussion: Biodiversity, food composition and sustainable diets

Chair: Barbara Burlingame, Senior Officer, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division, FAO

Afrofoods call for action from the door of return:

Isaac Akinyele, AFROFOODS, Elected Coordinator, Nigeria

Recent achievements in Europe through EuroFIR and BaSeFood projects

Paul Finglas, EuroFIR & EUROFOODS, Coordinator, United Kingdom

Research projects and activities on biodiversity, food composition and sustainable diets among SAARCFOODS members

Thing-Nga-Ning Longvah, SAARCFOODS, Elected Coordinator, India

Achievements on biodiversity in relation to food composition in Latin America

Lilia Masson, University of Chile, Chile

Research projects and activities on biodiversity, food composition and sustainable diets among ASEANFOODS members

Prapasri Puwastien, ASEANFOODS, Coordinator, Thailand

17.30-18.30

Working groups on recommendations

FRIDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2010

Session 6

9.00-11.30

The Mediterranean Diet as an example of a Sustainable Diet

Coordinated by the National Institute of Food and Nutrition Research (INRAN), Italy. Chair: Carlo Cannella, Director, International Interuniversity Studies Center on Mediterranean Food Cultures (CIISCAM), Italy

Keynote Address

Pietro Sebastiani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Italy to FAO

The Mediterranean diet as intangible world heritage

Pier Luigi Petrillo, Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies (MiPAAF)

MiPAAF Biovita project: Biodiversity and Mediterranean diet

Giuseppe Maiani, INRAN, Italy

MiPAAF Bioqualia project: Organic farming, sustainability and biodiversity

Flavio Paoletti, INRAN, Italy

Mediterranean Diet: an integrated view

Mauro Gamboni, Agro-Food Department, CNR, Italy

Is the Mediterranean diet, World paragon, sustainable from plate to field?

Martine Padilla, CIHEAM-IAMM, France

Food and energy: a sustainable approach

Massimo Iannetta, ENEA, Italy

Double Pyramid: Healthy food for people, sustainable food for the planet

Andrea Poli, Barilla Center on Food and Nutrition, Italy

The Mediterranean diet at the beginning of the 3rd millennium

Cosimo Lacirignola, Director, CIHEAM-IAMB, Italy

11.30-12.30

A Platform for Action on Biodiversity and Sustainable Diets - Main recommendations

12.30-13.00

Closing remarks

Ezzeddine Boutrif, Director, Nutrition and Consumer Protection
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Emile Frison, Director-General, Bioversity International

ANNEX IV

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

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- 3) John, T. and Eyzaguirre, P., *Linking biodiversity, diet and health in policy and practice*. Proceeding of the Nutrition Society. 65 (2006) 182-189;
- 4) Herrin, M. and Gussow, JD., *Designing a Sustainable Regional Diet*, Journal Nutrition Education. 21 (1989) 270-275;
- 5) The CIHEAM Watch Letter, *The Mediterranean Diet*, Spring 2010, N. 13;
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- 8) FAO and SINER-GI. *Linking People, Places and Products. A guide for promoting quality linked to geographical origin and sustainable geographical indications*. 2009;
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- 11) CIISCAM. *The Mediterranean Diet Today, A Model of Sustainable Diet*. Conference Brochure, Parma, Italy, 3 November 2009, http://www.ciiscam.org/files/download/Convegno%20ed%20Eventi/parma_brochure_en.pdf