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Assessment of the International Year of Quinoa 2013

Executive Summary

In recognition of the indigenous peoples from the Andean zone who preserved and improved quinoa to feed past and future generations, under the slogan “A future sown a thousand years ago” the International Year of Quinoa (IYQ) was commemorated throughout the year 2013.

This report highlights key background information and the role played by FAO in facilitating these processes, and overall results of the International Year of Quinoa.

Thanks to the collaborative work between Governments, UN Organizations, NGOs, Producers associations, Research institutions, Private sector and Academia, the IYQ was successful as it has accomplished its main objectives and expected results.

Higher visibility and greater scientific knowledge about quinoa, coupled with increased production and consumption not only in the Andean Zone but also in other countries and continents suffering from food insecurity, is the legacy left to the world by the International Year of Quinoa 2013.

The International Year of Quinoa endorses the understanding that quinoa promises to be an ally in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, within the framework of the Zero Hunger Challenge, due to its high nutritional value, its adaptability to different agro-ecological zones, and its gastronomic and commercial potential. During 2013, world attention therefore rightfully centred on this crop which had been left on “stand-by” for too many years.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to take note of the information provided and of the proposed invitation to the Conference to call on all member countries to continue the generation of programmes, projects and activities that promote quinoa food systems, especially in countries suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

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I. Background

1. The United Nations General Assembly, through Resolution 66/221, on 22 December 2011 declared 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa (IYQ) in recognition of the Andean peoples who maintained, controlled and protected quinoa as a food for present and future generations.
2. The UN Assembly's declaration of the IYQ highlights quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd) as a natural food with high nutritional value, and recognizes that thanks to the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous Andean peoples, quinoa has been preserved in its natural state, including its numerous varieties, as a food for the current generation and those generations to come.
3. The main objective of the IYQ was to focus world attention on the role that quinoa could play in food security and the eradication of poverty, in support of reaching the Millennium Development Goals.
4. To achieve this, an IYQ Master Plan was elaborated, and an IYQ International Coordination Committee was set up, whose role was to establish technical and policy guidelines for the implementation of the IYQ.
5. FAO was entrusted by the UN with the Technical Secretariat and to facilitate the implementation of the IYQ, a role it eventually delegated to the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) in Santiago, Chile, with the support of FAO Headquarters in Rome.

II. Implementation of the International Year of Quinoa

6. The implementation of the IYQ was based on three components of the Master Plan: information and communication; research, technology and marketing; and mechanisms for cooperation and mobilization of funds, at national and international level.
7. The key arrangements that allowed the implementation of the IYQ were:
 - a) The establishment of an International Coordination Committee. Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, France and Peru led this committee. Throughout the year meetings of this Committee were convened with the purpose of coordinating the actions and resources available to develop the IYQ.
 - b) Various countries in the Region set up National Committees and identified focal points in order to foster the IYQ celebrations. The National Committees of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, France and Peru became pivotal strategic stakeholders in coordinating the vision of the IYQ with local realities.
 - c) The President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr Evo Morales, and the First Lady of Peru, Ms Nadine Heredia de Humala, as Special Ambassadors of the International Year of Quinoa, were involved in several initiatives and worked arduously to promote the IYQ.

Information and communication

8. A series of awareness raising events took place throughout the year. Among them:
 - a) The slogan "**A future sown thousands of years ago**", translated in six languages was promoted around the world.
 - b) One of the flagship activities in the IYQ was its global launch on 20 February 2013 in New York, with the participation of the UN Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Mr Evo Morales, the First Lady of Peru, Ms Nadine Heredia de Humala, the FAO Director-General, Mr José Graziano Da Silva, and many other dignitaries.
 - c) The Travelling exhibition "From the Andes to the World" toured in 2013 – China, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and United States of America. This exhibition was created and financed by the Plurinational State of Bolivia and served as a promotional tool both for quinoa and the IYQ.

- d) An IYQ website was launched and was available in six languages, which contributed to the visibility of the IYQ in many countries of the world as well as different sectors of society¹.
- e) Promotional material in the form of posters, calendars, brochures, concept notes, recipe books, photographs, songs, videos, publications, etc. was produced and disseminated around the globe.
- f) Tasting events promoted Quinoa and its nutritional value in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, United States of America and Uruguay.
- g) First Quinoa Food Festival – Brussels, Belgium.
- h) Many magazines and newspapers dedicated special editions or articles to quinoa. Some examples include the July Newsletter of World Farmers Organization (WFO), the Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, the Chilean magazine Tierra Adentro's November edition, National Geographic magazine, BBC, Capital Press in the United States, among others.
- i) Many chefs from around the globe and Andean indigenous communities participated in presenting quinoa and its benefits through the "International Recipe Book on Quinoa: Tradition and Innovation".
- j) Quinoa Phantasy Chef: Quinoa-based cooking contest with new recipes adapted to Italian cuisine – Sondrio, Italy.
- k) Book presentation of "Quinoa in the Kitchen", in collaboration with Slow Food – Rome, Italy.
- l) Civil society around the world was also involved in promoting the message of quinoa as a healthy and sustainable food system, in accordance with the 2013 World Food Day theme "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition".
- m) The closing ceremonies held in Bolivia and Peru with the participation of the IYQ special Ambassadors and FAO Director-General.

Research, technology and marketing

9. In order to share and promote knowledge about quinoa and to better understand markets and to analyse opportunities and constraints related to its production and consumption, the IYQ encouraged the organization of a series of events which convened hundreds of researchers from different parts of the world, ranging from the Andes to Pakistan and from North America to Malawi. Among these were:

- a) A new variety of quinoa, INIA 433 - Santa Ana / AIQ / FAO, named in honour of the International Year of Quinoa.
- b) The IV Global Congress on Quinoa – Ibarra, Ecuador.
- c) Scientific technical meeting on food security and quinoa – New York, USA.
- d) Conference on quinoa at the International Agricultural Show – Paris, France.
- e) International seminar: "*Quinoa: An Ally in the Fight Against Hunger*" (ALADI) – Montevideo, Uruguay.
- f) International Quinoa Research Symposium – Pullman, Washington, USA.
- g) International Congress on Quinoa "*Quino@ndo: From the Andes to Milan and from Milan to the World*" – Milan, Italy.
- h) International Scientific Congress of Quinoa and Andean grains – Lima, Peru.
- i) International Symposium of Quinoa Producers and Researchers – Oruro, Bolivia.
- j) Science and Technology Week (Quinoa) – Bogotá, Colombia.
- k) Cooking show and quinoa tasting in partnership with Slowfood – Casablanca, Morocco.
- l) Launching of the IYQ and seminar – Jakarta, Indonesia.
- m) Promotion of the "Quinoa Felix" project – Ercolano, Italy.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/quinoa-2013/iyq/en/>

- n) Scientific forum “The potential of Quinoa in Japan” – Kyoto, Japan.
- o) III International Forum of Quinoa at La Mar – San Francisco, USA.
- p) “*Quinoa Week*” – Rome, Italy.
- q) National seminar “*The role of Quinoa in Food systems*” – Rabat, Morocco.
- r) 20th Olympic Marathon, running for the Quinoa Year – Budapest, Hungary

10. The Technical Secretariat worked on a series of publications and scientific materials, in collaboration with Bioversity International, CIRAD in France, ALADI in Uruguay and PROINPA in Bolivia, among others. Examples of this are:

- a) A global “*Integrated Roster of main Researchers and Experts on Quinoa*”.
- b) “*The State of the Art of Quinoa*”, gathers scientific summaries from over 166 researchers and quinoa experts around the world.
- c) “*Descriptors for Quinoa and its Wild Relatives*”. Bioversity International and FAO have released a new list, updated for the first time in 30 years.
- d) Study on the “*Tendencies and Perspectives of the International Commerce of Quinoa*”
- e) Publication of “*Catalogue of quinoa varieties in Peru*”.
- f) “*Post-harvest Operations*”, publication which provides useful information and current data on harvest, post-harvest, storage and transport of quinoa in the main producing countries. It also includes requirements for the treatment of grain and its derivatives to ensure quality.

11. FAO continues to provide technical support to projects in several countries in Africa, Asia and the Near East, to pilot the introduction of quinoa. In addition, South-South cooperation and the exchange of knowledge are being promoted.

Mechanisms for cooperation and mobilization of funds

12. In order to implement the IYQ, a variety of resources, both financial and in kind, were indispensable. All national committees had a resource mobilization focal point, and so did FAO as the IYQ Technical Secretariat.

13. Fund mobilization campaigns were organized, and based on promotional and informational material including the IYQ Master Plan, a substantial number of governmental, non-governmental and private institutions were contacted at global, regional and national levels. The response was mostly disappointing, but some funds were eventually raised, which assisted in covering costs of printed materials.

14. On the other hand the mobilization of in-kind contributions was quite successful, and as a result the majority of planned activities were implemented.

III. Challenges and opportunities

15. Even though a positive future for quinoa production, based on an expanding market, is being anticipated, a set of challenges and opportunities are faced. The most important of these are the following:

- a) Public policies need to be promoted that encourage sustainable production of quinoa and strengthen the related food system.
- b) Public policies are required to create the conditions for fair trade and the equitable sharing of benefits.
- c) Social inclusion policies for family producers of quinoa and other grains need to be elaborated.
- d) National and international instruments for the protection, sustainable use of, and sharing of germplasm and seeds of quinoa need to be created and implemented.
- e) Research networks need to continue generating and sharing information about quinoa research in several languages.

- f) Market behavior needs to be monitored, especially that of foreign markets, in order to foresee imbalances between supply and demand that could eventually have a negative effect on prices.

16. Further progress requires an increase in the productivity, profitability and sustainability of quinoa-based farming systems, the processing industry, and (fair) trade as well as a renewed commitment by the international community to agricultural and rural development in general. Beyond 2013, the IYQ is meant to serve as a catalyst for quinoa development programmes worldwide that can make a real difference in the fight against hunger and poverty.

IV. Conclusion

17. Higher visibility and greater scientific knowledge about quinoa, coupled with increased production and consumption, not only in the Andean Zone but also in other countries and continents suffering from food insecurity, of the so-called "Andean Golden crop", is the legacy left to the world by the International Year of Quinoa 2013.

18. The International Year of Quinoa was the first step of an on-going process and a catalyst for knowledge management and the generation of medium- and long-term programmes that promote sustainable production and local consumption of quinoa, thus contributing to the food and nutritional security of member countries.