

Comments from the United States
Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on
Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors

The United States appreciates the opportunity to provide additional comments on the Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors. We reemphasize our support for efforts to integrate biodiversity considerations into agriculture, forestry and fisheries activities and recognize the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to preserve critical ecosystem services and improve food security and nutrition.

We support the action plan's core action area to *assemble, disseminate and improve the update of knowledges, technologies and best practices that demonstrate the links between biodiversity and food security*. We also support the key action to *share best practices and develop tools that demonstrate the links between the sustainable use of biodiversity and food security and support the transition to biodiversity-friendly agriculture and sustainable food systems*. However, as noted in our interventions at COAG27 and COFI34, the United States has serious concerns about the action plan linking geographical indications (GIs) and sustainability outcomes, including biodiversity conservation, improved nutrition and healthy diets. We agree with the need to raise awareness of the role of biodiversity and its ecosystem services for food security, however, we reject the associated key actions and deliverables that imply there is some evidence to support the promotion of GIs for the purpose of biodiversity mainstreaming. The United States is not aware of any peer reviewed evidence to support a linkage between GIs and improved biodiversity or nutrition outcomes.

Further, the definition of GI in Article 22(1) of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights does not link biodiversity outcomes and GIs. A GI provides intellectual property protection but does not confer or imply by itself product grading, healthfulness, or sustainability, including biodiversity preservation. Specifically, we feel strongly that **this action plan is not the appropriate process for suggesting actions related to intellectual property rights**. Accordingly, we request that the following actions and deliverables be deleted from the draft action plan.

- “Raise awareness on the potential of geographical indications (GIs) to preserve biodiversity and contribute to nutrition and healthy diets.”
- “Guide “Evaluate sustainability of geographical indications” including biodiversity conservation and promotion published”
- “Forum on geographical indication sustainability, organized with the Organization for an International Geographical Indications Network (OriGIN)”
- “International conference on GIs co-organized with CIRAD”

The United States continues to support a diversity of approaches, adapted to local contexts and challenges, that can contribute to improving the sustainability of food systems including biodiversity conservation and emphasizes that FAO's biodiversity mainstreaming strategy should pursue interventions where there is a data and evidence to support those actions. We look forward to working with FAO and members in this process to ensure the implementation of an evidence-based action plan to mainstream biodiversity across agricultural sectors.