

26th Session of the Committee on Forestry

Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members – Original language

Item 8.2 Progress report on the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and its 2021-23 Action Plan

Member Name	Comments
European Union, Thursday, September 15, 2022 9:57 (CET)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to the written correspondence procedure, we are honoured to share with you a statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. 2. The EU and its Member States thank the secretariat for the report. 3. We would like to stress our support to the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors. This is particularly important in the context of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the future Global Biodiversity Framework, in particular through the promotion of biodiversity friendly practices in agroecosystems (Agroecology) but also in other managed ecosystems (forest and aquaculture). 4. We would like to highlight in particular the importance of the actions in the strategy to address deforestation and forest biodiversity loss. 5. We do not have substantial comments on the background document; however, we reserve our right to comment on it later in the plenary on the basis of the outcome of the written correspondence procedure.
New Zealand, Thursday September 22, 2022 11:07 (CET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand welcomes the work being done by the FAO to mainstream biodiversity across forestry sectors, particularly through the action plan and strategy. The extensive list of activities reported highlights the fundamental and critical role of biodiversity in the agriculture sectors. • We note that in the transition to sustainable forestry practices, approaches should allow member states to tailor adopted practices to suit their domestic context, environment, and economy. • We express appreciation for FAO's work to implement the Action Plan, and request FAO to continue promoting biodiversity mainstreaming in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework process and monitoring.
Australia,	Australia welcomes the progress that the FAO has made on the implementation of the Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, including the Action Plan for 2021-23.

<p>Thursday, September 22, 2022 13:44 (CET)</p>	<p>We were pleased that a range of tools and approaches were presented for enhancing biodiversity outcomes and promoting sustainable agricultural practices within the Strategy adopted at the 163rd Session of the Council, including sustainable intensification.</p> <p>Given the diversity of land management systems and environments around the world, we consider it to be critically important that the Action Plans for the Strategy are similarly implemented in accordance with the principle of “no one size fits all.”</p> <p>In order to support global wood production, Australia considers it vital to accommodate both a “sharing” approach – where biodiversity is integrated into production landscapes – and the “sparing” approach – where certain land is intensively managed to free up other land for biodiversity. Australia implements both management approaches, recognising each have strengths dependent on contexts, and firmly believes both should be accommodated. Intensively-managed timber plantations will play a key role in meeting the growing wood demand from construction and biofuels highlighted by the 2022 FAO State of the World’s Forests Report. They play a critical role in minimising the footprint of production forestry, leaving more land available for supporting biodiversity outcomes. Many countries are experiencing pressures to meet increasing wood demand from limited available land, and ensuring this can be facilitated sustainably is critical in a landscape management sense.</p> <p>Recent research such as 2021’s ‘Sustainable Boreal Forest Management Report’ by the International Boreal Forest Research Association, highlights the important role that intensively-managed forests are playing in carbon abatement and in turn supporting biodiversity.</p> <p>Given this, we emphasise the importance of a balanced Action Plan for 2024-27 and implementation of the Strategy, which refrains from favouring certain approaches over others when integrating biodiversity objectives into forests management. This will help ensure relevance for the wide range of land management systems and environmental contexts globally, and ensure that biodiversity outcomes are optimised.</p> <p>Australia highlights that actions that do not meet the objectives of the Strategy, or that are unrelated to the outcomes or key actions should be re-assessed for inclusion. It would be unfortunate if scarce FAO funding were directed toward actions with tenuous or unproven links to biodiversity outcomes, or to create post facto justification of certain agricultural production or trade distorting measures.</p> <p>Specifically, the Australian Government proposes the following action for consideration by the Committee and inclusion in the COFO26 Report:</p> <p>[‘The Committee recommended FAO support both sparing and sharing land management approaches within the implementation of the Strategy and the draft 2024-27 Action Plan, in acknowledgement of the role that sustainable</p>
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	intensification approaches can play at a landscape-level to simultaneously support biodiversity outcomes and help meet global wood demand, alongside agroforestry and multiple-use forest management approaches.']
Argentina, Friday September 23, 2022 16:20 (CET)	<p>Argentina wishes to thank FAO and, in particular, Mr. Mansur and his team for preparing the document that details the activities developed to implement the Biodiversity Strategy and its Action Plan.</p> <p>Throughout the document, good synergy can be seen between FAO, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, respecting the comparative advantages and, above all, the mandates of each of the parties; all of which is deemed essential to be maintained in order to avoid overlaps.</p> <p>Likewise, in the different tables we have also seen good progress in terms of cooperation to achieve the 4 main goals or objectives of the Strategy that have materialized thanks to the implementation of the Action Plan, beyond the various difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is reflected in the information in Annex 1.</p> <p>In the case of paragraph 13, we have noted an imbalance in the approach to sustainable agricultural practices, since reference is made only to one particular approach, thus ignoring the contributions generated by, for example, sustainable intensification, conservation agriculture and innovations and technologies that promote sustainable agri-food systems. As we have highlighted on previous occasions, Argentina believes that there is no unique solution for sustainable agriculture, since there is a diversity of needs, contexts and priorities and, therefore, FAO should avoid encouraging biased views.</p> <p>With regards to activities for promoting sustainable soil management, we believe it is key to highlight and support the work of the Global Soil Partnership, which, thanks to its different initiatives, collaborates with the scientific systems of each country and region to promote the protection and conservation of this essential resource for agriculture.</p> <p>On the content of paragraph 24, we would like to know the value of prioritizing the assessment of the TAPE tool over other FAO products, and whether the use of said tool does not imply prejudging the validity, merit and convenience of the application of other sustainable agricultural approaches, according to the specific capacities, needs and contexts.</p> <p>With reference to the content of the draft 2024-27 Action Plan (ANNEX 2), first of all, we welcome its publication and, at the same time, we would like to recall the importance of this document being in line with the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change and that it can also be enhanced with Members' comments and suggestions through an inclusive, comprehensive and transparent process. Previous experiences of such consultations have shown the value of these Member consultation processes.</p>

	<p>In this regard, and by way of preliminary comments, we understand that it is necessary to refine the proposal for the transformation of food systems in paragraph 1, taking into account the specific priorities and needs of each Member. This was reflected by the FAO Conference itself, so we consider this is a necessary incorporation.</p> <p>Likewise, on page 40, Achievement 1, table 2, we would like to understand the scope of the actions that are planned to be carried out in the field of pesticides. We would also like to know the relevance of including achievements that do not depend on FAO or its Members in the action plan, as is the case of the Rotterdam Convention.</p> <p>We have also noted that there appears to be an imbalance in the approach to sustainable agricultural practices and the treatment of phytosanitary products on page 43 and, at the same time, there is a lack of clarity on the interdivisional initiative on deforestation stated on page 45.</p> <p>Taking into account the preliminary comments made, we look forward to the consultations with FAO Members on this particular issue.</p>
<p>Russian Federation, Thursday, September 29, 2022 10:46 (CET)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We would like to thank the Secretariat for the progress report. 2. We would like to stress that while reviewing the draft 2024-27 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors it should be taken into account that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is not yet approved. 3. We do not have substantial comments on the background document; however, we reserve our right to comment on it later in the plenary on the basis of the outcome of the written correspondence procedure.
<p>Malaysia, Friday, September 30, 2022 10:18 (CET)</p>	<p>Malaysia welcomes the progress report on the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and its 2021-23 Action Plan. Mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors including agriculture remains to be a major global priority especially within the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as evidenced by ongoing negotiations on Target 10 and Target 14. Malaysia supports this priority and the need for mainstreaming. However, it is Malaysia's position that there remains to be challenges in ensuring that ALL areas under agriculture including fisheries are managed sustainably. This is in recognition that there are gaps in financial, technical, and technological capacity to transition into a fully sustainable agriculture sector, especially in developing countries. Hence, we call upon FAO to continue supporting efforts worldwide to incorporate biodiversity-friendly practices through facilitating partnerships, dialogue, enhancing capacity-building, technical documents, and technology transfer.</p>
<p>United States of America,</p>	<p>The United States supports efforts to mainstream biodiversity in the agricultural sectors and recognizes the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to preserve critical ecosystem services and improve food security.</p>

<p>Friday, September 30, 2022 11:25 (CET)</p>	<p>We strongly believe that scaling up innovative practices and approaches that sustainably enhance agricultural productivity and livelihoods can simultaneously contribute to the conservation of critical habitat such as forests and improved outcomes for biodiversity and climate.</p> <p>We welcome the progress made in implementing the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and its 2021-23 action plan, in spite of pandemic challenges.</p> <p>The draft 2024-2027 Action Plan presents an ambitious and comprehensive roadmap of work to advance the mainstreaming of biodiversity across agricultural sectors.</p> <p>We agree that mainstreaming efforts and the forthcoming action plan should reflect new developments and agreements including those reached under the CBD, the CGRFA, and the ITPGRFA.</p> <p>We appreciate that the proposed four-year duration of the updated Action Plan intended to be aligned with corporate FAO planning exercises and is substantively aligned with other FAO strategies and policies.</p> <p>However, we have reservations with the proposed deliverable to <i>support countries to eliminate public policies that are harmful to biodiversity</i>.</p> <p>We would like to take this opportunity to note that any conversation regarding the impact of agriculture support is broader than a narrow discussion of subsidies. We support ongoing efforts in the WTO aimed at substantial progressive reduction in agricultural support and protection, and we recognize the importance of taking into account concerns related to the environment, in those discussions. We must be careful not to duplicate work here that is part of a broader conversation ongoing at the WTO.</p> <p>We encourage countries to consider the impact on biodiversity as part of policy-making, while also taking into consideration other factors including consistency with WTO obligations.</p> <p>With regard to the impact of subsidies on biodiversity, the United States encourages the development and application of incentives for the conservation of natural resources including biodiversity. However, the United States cannot support blanket calls for the elimination, phasing out, or reform of incentives and particular subsidies. The United States welcomes work related to the impact of subsidies and will take it into account as part of broader agricultural reform negotiations at the WTO.</p>
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