



PRESS RELEASE

FAO, SPREP and CBD introduce guide on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands

- *Technical guidance document identifies key entry points for policy action*
- *Issued to foster cross-sectorial collaboration.*

9 December 2016 – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), today released a technical document that provides guidance on mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands.

Launched during the Forest and Agriculture Day at the Rio Conventions Pavilion, as part of the UN Biodiversity Conference currently taking place in Cancun, Mexico, the document is part of a series of technical guidance documents to identify key entry points for policy action and to foster cross-sectorial collaboration. It was funded by the European Union and jointly produced by the FAO, CBD and regional partner organizations.

“To meet rising global food demands, the agriculture sectors need to produce greater quantities of more diverse and nutritious food. This progress can and must be achieved in a sustainable way, without causing more impacts on biodiversity.” said Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary.

“This is particularly true for the Pacific Islands which are home to diverse and unique terrestrial and marine ecosystems. These ecosystems support a range of agricultural activities which are important to the economy but which also need to be managed in a sustainable way”.

The document introduces best practices for integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into agriculture for the Pacific region, including: diversification and integration of farming systems (cropping, agroforestry and agrosilvipastoral systems); strengthening resilience of production systems and landscapes to the adverse effects of climate change or pest outbreaks; soil biodiversity to enhance soil health, nutrient transformation, soil decontamination, climate regulation; and ecological management to minimise chemical use. It also links ecotourism and agricultural zones to support environmental protection and agrobiodiversity preservation.

Biodiversity and ecosystem services can provide many solutions for sustainable increases in agricultural productivity. Agriculture relies on biodiversity to maintain soils health, pollination services, and control pests, weeds and diseases. Mainstreaming biodiversity can help agricultural production systems to deliver better outcomes for food and nutrition security, and at the same time, protect the environment.

“The ecological footprint of agriculture can be reduced through sustainable practices,” said Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General, adding that “Agriculture and food systems are biological and social systems and they can be designed to build on and harness the forces of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Agriculture can be regenerative at farm, landscape and community levels”.

FAO, working closely with regional partners, has organized cross-sectoral consultations to integrate agriculture into countries’ revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and has promoted dialogues to engage Ministries from different areas to collaborate in NBSAP implementation. NBSAPs are the main policy tool for implementing the CBD’s provisions at the national level and achieving the Convention’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The first title in the series, *Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa*, was released in May 2016. These initiatives are undertaken under the umbrella of the EU-ACP project “Capacity Building on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP-MEAs 2).

NOTES TO EDITORS

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands, is available at: www.fao.org/3/a-i6505e.pdf

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa, is available at: www.fao.org/3/a-i5603e.pdf

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 91 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
