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PROGRAMME OF WORK ON AGRICULTURAL BIODIVERSITY

Options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In decision VII/32, paragraph 7, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), and taking into account ongoing work, to undertake the necessary consultations and bring forward options for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition within the existing programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, and to strengthen existing initiatives on food and nutrition, enhance synergies and fully integrate biodiversity concerns into their work, with a view to the achievement of target 2 of the Millennium Development Goal 1 and other relevant Millennium Development Goals.

2. At its tenth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) considered this matter further. Taking note, *inter alia*, of the document on options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition prepared by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/13) and related background information provided by FAO (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/INF/25), SBSTTA, in its recommendation X/9, put forward elements for an international initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition. In paragraph 5 of the same recommendation, SBSTTA requested the Executive Secretary to organize a consultation on the scope of the proposed initiative; to compile relevant case-studies relating to biodiversity, food and nutrition; and to liaise with the Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Millennium Project to highlight the role of biodiversity in the achievement of relevant Millennium Development Goals.

3. In response, the Executive Secretary—in collaboration with FAO, IPGRI and the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment—organized a consultation on options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, held in Brasilia on 12-13 March 2005. Relevant staff at the Secretariat, FAO and IPGRI have also undertaken information gathering and awareness-raising activities within their organizations and sectors, and have introduced the proposed initiative at cross-sectoral and

* UNEP/CBD/COP/8/1.

high-level meetings. As requested in recommendation X/9, the Executive Secretary presented a progress report on these activities to the eleventh meeting of SBSTTA (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/3/Add.1).

4. The present note has been prepared by the Executive Secretary, in cooperation with FAO and IPGRI, to provide an update on work carried out to enhance synergies and integrate biodiversity concerns into existing food and nutrition initiatives, and to put forward, as part of these efforts, options on a new cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

5. Section II of this note briefly considers the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition, and their relevance to meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Section III reviews the consultations and activities carried out to date by the Executive Secretary, FAO, IPGRI and relevant partners to advance work on biodiversity, food and nutrition issues. Drawing upon the outcome of these consultations, as well as elements identified by SBSTTA in recommendation X/9, the annex to the present note contains a proposed framework for a new cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition.

II. LINKS BETWEEN BIODIVERSITY, FOOD AND NUTRITION

6. There are multiple links between biodiversity, food and nutrition (see the figure on page 7 below). Biodiversity at the genetic and species levels provides the basic components of nutrition, including not only energy, protein, and fats, but also minerals and vitamins, as well as bioactive “non-nutrients” (e.g., antioxidant phytochemicals). The diversity of fruits, leafy vegetables and other plants and algae is particularly important in this respect, but fish and other animal products are also important. The diversity of food species and varieties is declining in many food systems. Given the intra-specific variation in nutrient content within food species, reversing the erosion of agricultural biodiversity could have important positive impacts on diet, especially for the poor. Cultivated species may be complemented by harvested wild species that can be of particular significance for indigenous communities and for poor and vulnerable communities, especially in times of shortage of the main staples (lean seasons or crisis situations – whether natural or man-made). Processing and marketing of wild species also contributes to the livelihoods of vulnerable households through income-generation, or easier access to affordable nutrient-rich foods or medicinal plants. In addition to its role in supporting and sustaining food production, biodiversity, by underpinning dietary diversity, has a role to play in addressing both under-nutrition associated with poverty, and obesity-related diseases associated with urbanization, in developed and developing countries.

7. Given these links, a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition can contribute directly to the achievement of target 2 of Millennium Development Goal 1 (“To halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger”), and indirectly to the achievement of Goals 4 (“To reduce child mortality”), 5 (“To improve maternal health”) and 6 (“To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases”). By promoting conservation and sustainable use of food resources, the initiative can also contribute to meeting Goal 7 (“To ensure environmental sustainability”). Whereas existing activities towards these ends are being pursued individually (and often without directly linking to biodiversity), a coherent initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition promises to make better use of limited resources, and to address the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition for sustainable improvements in human well-being.

8. Earlier documents prepared by the Executive Secretary present further information on the relationships between biodiversity, food and nutrition (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/13 and UNEP/CBD/IBFN-Consultation/2).

III. REPORT ON PROGRESS IN ADVANCING WORK ON BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION

A. *Outcome of the Brasilia consultation on biodiversity for food and nutrition*

9. The Brasilia consultation—co-organized by the Executive Secretary, FAO, IPGRI and the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment—aimed to develop ideas on the purpose and scope of a cross-cutting initiative within the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity of the Convention, and to explore ways to enhance synergies and integrate biodiversity concerns into existing food and nutrition initiatives, in collaboration with other organizations and their initiatives.

10. Participants to the consultation were drawn from the fields of agricultural development, environment, food security, health and nutrition, and represented United Nations and other intergovernmental agencies, government, research and academic institutions, and indigenous, civil society and non-governmental organizations. They included experts present in Brasilia to attend the thirty-second session of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition—held immediately after the consultation—as well as Brazilian experts and experts nominated by Parties.

11. The primary outcome of the consultation was a Statement, in which participants put forward a rationale for the cross-cutting initiative, and proposed actions in three key areas:

- (a) Substantiating and promoting awareness of the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition;
- (b) Mainstreaming biodiversity into nutrition, agriculture and poverty reduction programmes; and
- (c) Promoting activities that enhance the sustainable use of biodiversity.

The Statement also identified other organizations to involve in the initiative, and key next steps.

12. The Brasilia Statement has been incorporated in the proposal for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, contained in section IV of the present note. The original Statement is included in the final report of the meeting. ^{1/}

B. *Other activities and consultations*

13. Relevant staff at the Secretariat, FAO and IPGRI are collaborating closely to facilitate the integration of biodiversity concerns into ongoing work on food, agriculture and nutrition, holding frequent discussions either in person (for those based in Rome) or through teleconferences and e-mail, in addition to their meeting at the Brasilia consultation. Discussions have also been initiated with relevant staff of the World Health Organization (WHO).

14. A key contribution of the initiative will be to increase the evidence base for the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition, through data compilation and case-studies. As a first step in this process, IPGRI has dedicated a staff member to survey the information in the FAO nutritional databases (and eventually, other relevant databases) for substantiation of links to biodiversity. Data gathered will serve as background for the preparation of case studies, as called for in paragraph 5 (b) of SBSTTA recommendation X/9. Together, IPGRI and FAO are preparing a preliminary list of case-studies which will be made available to Convention bodies and other processes.

15. The tenth regular session of the FAO Intergovernmental Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was held in November 2004. The Commission reviewed the document on cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity^{2/} which, *inter alia*, led to decision VII/32 on biodiversity for food and nutrition. ^{2/}

^{1/} Available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=IBFN-01>.

^{2/} See <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/docs10.htm>; paragraphs 38 and 76 of the report of the session.

16. The Commission supported the FAO contribution to the establishment of a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, within the existing programme of work on agricultural biological diversity under the Convention. The Commission noted that this would involve cooperation with other organizations, such as IPGRI. The thematic study on the contribution of plant genetic resources to health and dietary diversity, undertaken as part of the process for compiling the second State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, would be an important element of this work.

17. The Commission requested that its subsidiary Inter-governmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture provide guidance on how FAO could support countries, on request, to generate, compile and disseminate cultivar-specific nutrient composition data, as well as indicate the relative priority of obtaining cultivar-specific dietary consumption data. At its Third Session, the Inter-governmental Working Group recommended the preparation of a draft action plan on cultivar-specific nutrient composition and consumption data, and provided, for the Commission's decision, elements on which the plan should focus, and priorities. ^{3/}

18. A special issue of the *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* (March 2006) is in preparation by FAO, comprising 30 primary papers and a commentary setting out the cross-cutting initiative. The journal issue will serve both to build the evidence base, and promote awareness, of the biodiversity-nutrition link.

19. The issue of biodiversity and its links to food, agriculture and nutrition has been introduced at a number of relevant meetings since the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including several sectoral meetings. In July 2005, an FAO representative introduced the initiative at a meeting of the Central and Eastern European Countries in the International Network on Food Data Systems (INFOODS), and to participants in the twenty-eighth session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Member countries attending the former meeting signalled their support to the initiative by requesting FAO assistance in generating and mainstreaming nutrient data on local cultivars and varieties. The initiative also received attention at the 18th International Congress of Nutrition, held in Durban, South Africa from 19 to 24 September 2005, and the 6th International Food Data Conference, held in Pretoria from 14 to 16 September 2005, where it was mentioned in the keynote address.

20. In addition, the initiative has been presented to cross-sectoral gatherings. The Statement arising from the Brasilia Consultation was distributed at the consultation on the role of plant biodiversity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals on hunger and poverty held in Chennai, India, on 18-19 April 2005, co-organized by IPGRI. Paragraph 7 of decision VII/32 of the Conference of the Parties and the initiative were mentioned at the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) workshop on agriculture and health linkages held in Washington, D.C., on 23-24 June 2005 and hosted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). In addition, COHAB ("Conference on Health and Biodiversity") 2005—First International Conference on the Importance of Biodiversity to Human Health, held in Galway, Ireland, from 23 to 25 August 2005, and co-organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, featured presentations on biodiversity for food and nutrition by the heads and staff members of both the Convention Secretariat and IPGRI.

21. These cross-sectoral meetings provided opportunities to liaise with the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Millennium Project, as requested in paragraph 5 (c) of SBSTTA recommendation X/9. Participants in the Chennai meeting prepared a statement for delivery at the Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2005. At COHAB, the Secretary General made a statement on the importance of biodiversity for nutrition and health. In addition, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity participated in a High-Level Brainstorming Workshop for Mainstreaming Environment Beyond MDG 7 held by the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, on 13 and 14 July 2005, which was attended by, *inter alia*, representatives from

^{3/} See http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgr/ITWG3rd/pdf/P3rep_e.pdf; paragraphs 28 to 32 of the report.

various multilateral environmental agreements and the Millennium Development Project. Nonetheless, messages linking biodiversity to food and nutrition, and hence to the Millennium Development Goals, were not reflected in the final text adopted by the Millennium Summit.

22. The Secretariat has developed a web page to communicate the importance of biodiversity for food and nutrition (<http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/agro/food-nutrition/default.shtml>) and has established a password-protected web portal for document sharing among organizers of the initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, participants to the Brasilia Consultation, and other interested parties.

23. Finally, IPGRI, in collaboration with FAO and the Secretariat, propose to host a planning meeting for activities on biodiversity for food and nutrition in the first half of 2006.

24. Based on the consultations and activities detailed above, and on the elements put forward by SBSTTA in recommendation X/9, the annex to this note proposes a framework for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition. The framework consists of four elements, as well as an overall rationale, aim and a set of general considerations.

IV. SUGGESTED DRAFT DECISION

25. The Conference of the Parties may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

“The Conference of the Parties:

Recalling decision VII/32, paragraph 7, that requests the Executive Secretary to undertake the necessary consultations and bring forward options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition within the existing programme of work on agricultural biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to work together with relevant organizations in order to strengthen existing initiatives on food and nutrition, enhance synergies and fully integrate biodiversity concerns into relevant work, with a view to the achievement of target 2 of the Millennium Development Goal 1 and other relevant Millennium Development Goals,

1. *Welcomes with appreciation* the progress made in enhancing synergies and integrating biodiversity concerns into the work of other initiatives, and on the development of options, as presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/26/Add.2);

2. *Extends its appreciation* to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), the Brazil Ministry of the Environment and other contributors to the process;

3. *Adopts* the framework for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, as contained in the annex;

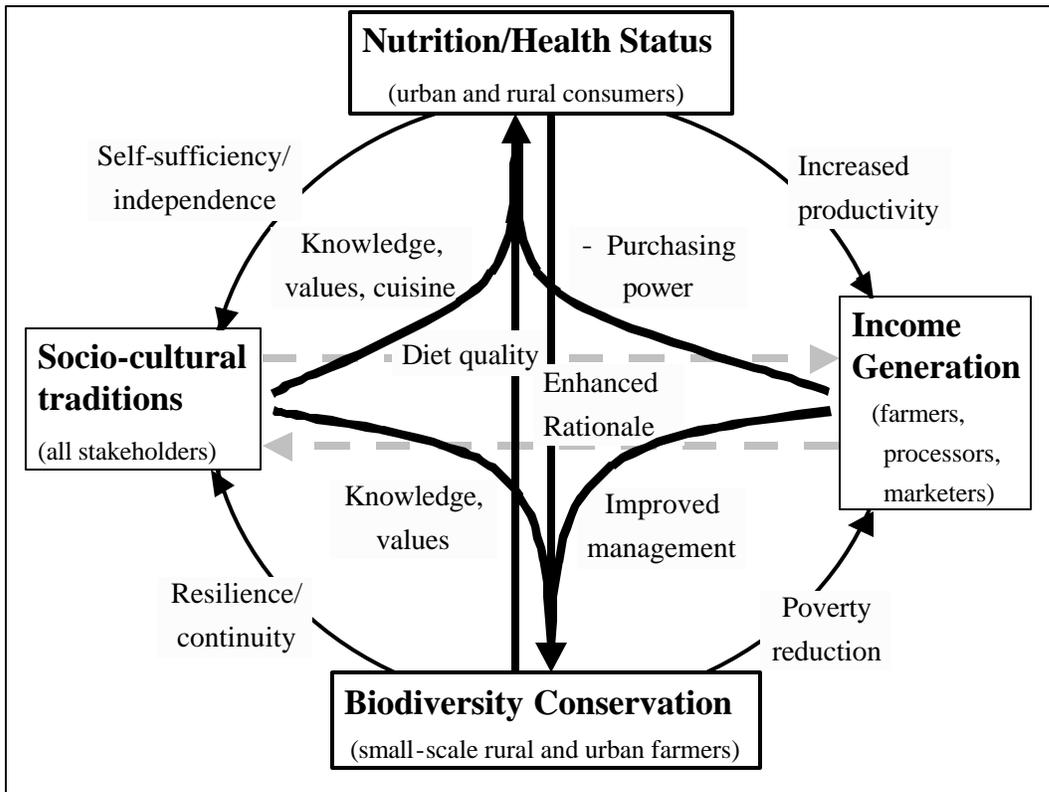
4. *Urges* Parties and other Governments to integrate biodiversity, food and nutrition considerations into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and other national plans and activities including, National Plans of Action for Nutrition and strategies for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to continue to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other stakeholders, regarding the implementation of the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition and to report on the progress to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary and the Food and Agriculture Organization to integrate the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition into the Memorandum of Understanding between the Convention and FAO, when the Memorandum is next updated;

7. *Invites* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, the World Health Organization, and other relevant organizations and initiatives, taking into account ongoing work, to implement the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition.”

Figure. Population -level synergies linking biodiversity conservation and human nutrition in developing countries



Source: Johns, T. and B.R. Sthapit. 2004. Biocultural diversity in the sustainability of developing country food systems. Food and Nutrition Bulletin 25(2): 143-155.

*Annex***PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR A CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVE ON BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION****A. *Rationale***

1. Biodiversity is essential for food security and nutrition, and offers key options for sustainable livelihoods. Environmental integrity is critical for maintaining and building positive options for human well-being. Existing knowledge warrants immediate action to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in food security and nutrition programmes, as a contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Such action would counteract the simplification of diets, agricultural systems and ecosystems, and the erosion of food cultures. Considering the difficulty in precisely identifying optimal diets, a diversity of foods from plants and animals remains the preferred choice for human health. Traditional food systems provide positive synergies between human and ecosystem health, and culture offers an essential context for mediating positive dietary choices.

2. An interdisciplinary initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, based on the ecosystem approach that makes the most of locally-available biodiversity and initiative to address nutrition problems, will assist countries and stakeholders in achieving the MDGs. Without urgent action that directly engages the environmental, agricultural, nutrition and health communities, biodiversity and the positive options offered by domesticated and wild biodiversity for addressing food security, nutrient deficiencies, and the emerging burden of non-communicable disease, will be lost.

B. *Aim*

3. The overall aim of the initiative is to promote the enhanced sustainable use of biodiversity in programmes contributing to food security and improved human nutrition, as a contribution to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 (target 2), Goal 7 and related goals and targets and, thereby, to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, its conservation and sustainable use.

C. *General considerations*

4. The initiative is to be implemented as a cross-cutting initiative within the existing programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, and should complement relevant activities under this and other programmes of work and cross-cutting initiatives of the Convention. In addition, the initiative should build upon and strengthen other relevant existing initiatives, and avoid duplication of effort.

5. The initiative will apply the ecosystem approach, using interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approaches in order to integrate health, education, agriculture and environmental objectives. In examining potential solutions to food and nutrition problems, activities under the initiative will look first to the biodiversity resources of local ecosystems, including existing intra-species diversity. As well, the social and cultural importance of food—as an inherent aspect of human existence and community organization—should be recognized as a positive motivating force for healthy diets and ecosystems.

6. A commitment to sustainability is essential to the success of the initiative. Accordingly, the initiative should apply the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use, including in nutrition programmes. The initiative will explore the potential of local and national markets to transact and deliver a greater diversity of plant food types to consumers, and to return greater value to those producing biodiversity-based products.

7. Activities under the initiative should be responsive to community needs, and developed with full community participation and engagement. Activities should seek to increase participation of local and indigenous communities in national and international institutions, programmes and processes, and should seek to increase coordination between all levels. Activities should contribute to ‘learning by doing’ and to adaptive management. Activities should be implemented consistent with the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food in the Context of National Food Security (the

“Right-to-Food Guidelines”) adopted by the FAO Council in November 2004. Finally, existing activities should be scaled upwards to address a more global, cross-sectoral agenda, without losing local and cultural specificities.

D. Elements

Element 1. Developing and Documenting Knowledge

Operational objective 1

To substantiate the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition, in particular clarifying the relationship between biodiversity and dietary diversity, and the relevant links between human health and ecosystem health.

Rationale

Current evidence on the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition is sufficient to warrant immediate action, but more work is needed. Developing and documenting knowledge of these links will provide a sound scientific basis for the initiative, allowing for the better design of activities, and the development of convincing awareness-raising messages on the importance of biodiversity to human diets and health, and the link between human health and ecosystem health.

Activities

- 1.1 Compilation, review and analysis of:
 - (a) Existing scientific information, indigenous and traditional knowledge on the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition (in a manner consistent with Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention);
 - (b) Case-studies on the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition;
 - (c) The value of biodiversity for food and nutrition;
- 1.2 Stimulating the generation and systematic compilation of new data;
- 1.3 Development of an indicator (or indicators) on biodiversity in use for food, consistent with decision VII/30.

Ways and means

FAO and IPGRI will take the lead on developing the evidence base for the initiative. IPGRI will work with FAO to increase the usability, for the initiative, of existing FAO databases and information resources. The first report of the State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources and the second report of the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources, among other resources, will contribute to building the evidence base for the initiative. In addition, FAO, through its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, could support countries in generating, compiling and disseminating new cultivar-specific nutrient composition data, as could the International Agricultural Research Centres of the CGIAR, through the HarvestPlus initiative. An examination of available data will serve to identify where in-depth case studies would be most useful. On the basis of knowledge gathered, FAO, IPGRI and the Secretariat could support, in collaboration with relevant partners, development of the indicator(s) and related activities as outlined under other elements of the initiative (e.g., development of a communication strategy).

Element 2. Integration of biodiversity, food and nutrition issues into research and policy instruments

Operational objective 2

To mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into agendas, programmes and policies related to nutrition, agriculture and poverty reduction.

Rationale

Existing research and policy instruments often overlook the importance of biodiversity and associated knowledge in addressing local problems of hunger and malnutrition. In nutrition studies, the most commonly used research instruments aggregate food data into broad categories, obscuring the contribution of individual species or cultivars to human nutrition and health. Under prevailing regulatory frameworks, increasingly stringent food quality standards may also inadvertently constrain food producers, limiting their ability to provide an array of species and varieties to markets. Policies, programmes and projects aimed at addressing poverty reduction and food security sometimes emphasize the provision of staple food sources and dietary supplements while overlooking the value of locally available diverse food sources. In these cases, the value of biodiversity for food and nutrition, especially to poor and disadvantaged groups, is not fully realized. A proactive focus on biodiversity will be needed in order to encourage practitioners and researchers to modify current approaches, and to shift research and policy emphasis towards examining issues of food quality, and not simply food quantity.

Activities

- 2.1 Integrate biodiversity concerns into nutrition instruments, *inter alia*:
 - (a) Food-based dietary guidelines;
 - (b) Food composition analysis and dietary assessments;
 - (c) National plans of action for nutrition;
 - (d) Relevant regulatory frameworks and legislation at national and international levels;
- 2.2 Integrate biodiversity for food and nutrition concerns into food security and poverty strategies, *inter alia*:
 - (a) National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
 - (b) The right to food;
 - (c) Food security projects and programmes, including: household food security projects, school programmes, home gardens;
 - (d) Emergency response and preparedness.

Ways and means

FAO, IPGRI, WHO and the Secretariat, as appropriate, will work with relevant partners (including those identified in section E, below) to advance activities under this element, including through their work on the development of standards, and provision of support to member countries, their agencies responsible for nutrition, and extension services.

Element 3. Conserving and promoting wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition**Operational objective 3**

To counter the loss of diversity in human diets, and in ecosystems, by conserving and promoting the wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition.

Rationale

Diversity is being replaced by uniformity in the agricultural market place, and in human diets more generally. Yet a diverse resource base remains critical to human survival and well-being, providing the basis for adaptation to changing conditions (including environmental change). Promoting the broader use of biodiversity promises to contribute to improved human health and nutrition, while also providing opportunities for livelihood diversification and income generation, and the preservation of local socio-cultural traditions and knowledge. These combined outcomes can serve to reduce poverty,

providing important incentives to maintain and enhance biodiversity conservation efforts at multiple scales.

Activities

- 3.1 Conservation and sustainable use of crop and livestock genetic diversity, including wild relatives of domesticated animals and plants;
- 3.2 Conservation and sustainable use of neglected and underutilized species;
- 3.3 Promotion of genetically diverse home gardens, agro-forests and other production systems that promote the *in situ* conservation of germplasm;
- 3.4 Conservation and sustainable use of wild resources, including those that support bushmeat and fisheries, including maintaining viable stocks of wild species for sustainable consumption by local and indigenous communities;
- 3.5 Promotion, conservation and sustainable use of important biodiversity associated with agricultural, forestry and aquaculture systems at all levels;
- 3.6 Identification and promotion of species currently underutilized or of potential value to human food and nutrition;
- 3.7 Support to traditional forms of food production of indigenous and local communities, in accordance with Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention;
- 3.8 Identifying and establishing incentives for crop diversification and the creation of markets for biodiverse food crops, including through extension, training, pricing, input distribution, infrastructure development, credit and taxation;
- 3.9 Protection and promotion of biodiversity friendly markets by addressing regulatory issues.

Ways and means

Most of the activities outlined under this element will be pursued under the Convention's existing programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, and the FAO Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GPA). In particular, activities 2, 4, 11 and 12 of the Global Plan of Action could advance activities under the initiative for the conservation and diversification of plant genetic resources. Action under the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (in particular, under target 9) will also contribute to the conservation of plant genetic diversity. In terms of market-related activities, activity 14 of the Global Plan of Action will support the development of markets for biologically diverse food products. In addition, there are opportunities for cooperation with the BioTrade Initiative of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to, *inter alia*, provide technical assistance and create an enabling policy environment. Planned activities could be tested through pilot projects in selected countries, in order to evaluate effectiveness and develop approaches.

Element 4 – Public awareness

Operational objective 4

To raise awareness of the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition, and the importance of biodiversity conservation to meeting health and development objectives.

Rationale

Biodiversity programmes and policies can be made more relevant to policymakers and stakeholders, and more effective on the ground, by making clear the crucial links between biodiversity and human well-being. When rural people perceive that biodiversity has greater value through positive impacts on both income and health, they are more likely to maintain and protect it. In addition, issues of food production as they relate to nutrition and health can serve to mobilize both urban and rural

consumers who may not otherwise be motivated by environmental or ethical arguments to support agricultural sustainability. Food issues can then serve as a way to re-establish links between local production and global consumption, and between the rich and poor.

Activities

- 4.1 Development of a communication strategy, and associated publications and other materials to address the general public, decision makers, local communities, and the nutrition, agriculture, health and environment communities;
- 4.2 Convening of regional and national workshops to raise awareness of the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition, and of activities supporting these links.

Ways and means

Awareness-raising activities would be integrated under the Convention's programme of work on Communication, Education and Public Awareness, and related activities by FAO, IPGRI, WHO and other relevant organizations. Activities under target 14 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation would further support implementation of this element.

E. Key partners and initiatives

8. FAO, WHO, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations University (UNU) and other intergovernmental organizations are encouraged to include biodiversity-related considerations in the implementation of their programmes and strategies, including but not limited to:

- The Global Plan of Action to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (prepared through the Secretary-General's Millennium Project) and in particular its action plan on hunger;
- The Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- The FAO World Food Summit Plan of Action;
- The WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health; and
- The International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development.

9. Similarly, Governments and other international and national institutions; the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS), the International Council for Science (ICSU) and other research and academic associations; civil society organizations and movements, including the Slow Food Movement, indigenous and local community organizations; and the private sector, are encouraged to contribute to the initiative.
