

Report of the AHTEG on indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

Comments from FAO

13 October 2011

General comments

In general the analysis of the documents¹, both the report and the large table, is quite complex and can be confusing. There seems to be inconsistencies or discrepancies in some of the terms used in the documents (e.g. primary indicators vs. operational indicators, are they the same? Similar?). It might be appropriate to find ways to simplify their readability.

Also, it seems that despite the efforts made to operationalize the indicators for the Aichi Targets, the approach to their identification might not always meet the SMART criteria.

Specific attention should be paid to the difference between plant and animal genetic resources. These two areas, although always falling within the general “agriculture” definition, are not similar in terms of policy instruments and indicators needed for their sustainable management. While Germplasm banks are useful *ex-situ* tools for plant genetic resources, only recently some *ex-situ* storage (*in vitro*) is being furthered by some countries for animal genetic resources. But no substantial progress has been achieved as yet. For some species *in vitro* is not even yet possible.

Also, as a general comment, we note that agricultural biodiversity is in general not covered in:

- Trends in pressures from habitat conversion, pollution, invasive species, climate change, overexploitation and underlying drivers
- Trends in distribution, condition and sustainability of ecosystem services for equitable human well-being

Agricultural biodiversity may be specifically mentioned in:

- Trends in number of countries incorporating natural resource, biodiversity, and ecosystem service values into national accounting systems (B)
- Trends in resources mobilized from the removal, reform, or phase out of incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity, which could be used for the promotion of positive incentives, including but not limited to innovative mechanisms that are consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other international obligations taking into account, national, social and economic conditions (B) (decision X/3)

Specific Comments

The specific comments presented below refer to the table in Document UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/3/ADD1. We presume that the proposed comments should also be reflected in the report of the meeting (UNEP/CBD/ AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/3) and in its annexes.

Line 10: Headline indicator “*Trends in genetic diversity of species*”.

- The “*required data*” listed for the indicator should include “*Regularly updated data on the population sizes of livestock breeds*”.

¹ UNEP/CBD/ AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/3 and UNEP/CBD/AHTEG-SP-Ind/1/3/ADD1

- Also on the “*required data*”, the current version implies that the number of breeds in conservation programmes is to be used as an indicator of diversity. FAO would not recommend using this measure as an indicator of trends in diversity in livestock. Therefore we would prefer to have the words “*number of breeds*” removed.
- Please note that this indicator is being developed under the FAO and CGRFA process.

Line 24: Operational indicator “*Trends in proportion of utilized stocks outside safe biological limits (A) (MDG indicator 7.4)*”.

- FAO can contribute data on this indicator and can be mentioned in the table and in the report.

Line 71: Operational indicator “*Trends in number of effective policy mechanisms implemented to reduce genetic erosion and safeguard genetic diversity related to plant and animal genetic resources (B)*”

- This line should refer to domesticated animal and plant genetic resources , for which the FAO Commission GRFA has global responsibility. Also, generally referring to “species” would make the indicator difficult to implement. Hence we suggest that the operational indicators be integrated as follows (integration underlined) “Trends in number of effective policy mechanisms implemented to reduce genetic erosion and safeguard genetic diversity related to plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (B)”. This would also improve consistency with operational indicator “Trends in genetic diversity of cultivated plants, and farmed and domesticated animals and their wild relatives (B)” (see line 10) Aichi Target 103.
- Indicator sub-topic should also change as follows “*Trends in genetic diversity of ~~species~~ plants and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture*”.