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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMMES OF WORK ON RELEVANT CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Addendum

OPTIONS FOR A CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVE ON BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION

Note by the Executive Secretary

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 put forward elements for an international initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition (recommendation X/9, annex). In paragraph 5 of recommendation X/9, SBSTTA requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Continue to develop this initiative with FAO and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), and to consult with other organizations, including those responsible for the relevant existing initiatives, and, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, to organize a

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/11/1.

consultation on the scope of the proposed initiative in conjunction with the thirty-second session of the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition, to be held in Brasilia in March 2005;

(b) Compile relevant case-studies relating to biodiversity, food and nutrition;

(c) In line with decision VII/32, 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, in particular target 2 of goal 1 (To halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger) and goal 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability); and

(d) Report on progress to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its eleventh meeting.

3. The Executive Secretary has prepared this note to report on progress in developing the initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition. Section I of this document reports on the Brasilia consultation held in March 2005, and section II describes other activities under way, and past consultations, of relevance to the initiative.

4. The Executive Secretary will prepare options for a cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting in line with decision VII/32 and recommendation X/9, drawing upon the elements identified by SBSTTA, the outcomes of the Brasilia consultation and other relevant consultations.

I. OUTCOME OF THE BRASILIA CONSULTATION ON BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION

5. A consultation on the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition was held in Brasilia on 12-13 March 2005, co-organized by the Secretariat of the Convention, FAO, IPGRI and the Brazilian Ministry of Environment, which also hosted the event. The consultation 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.

6. Participants in 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.

7. The primary outcome of the Consultation is a Statement on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, which is annexed to the present note. In this Statement, participants proposed actions in three key areas: (i) substantiating and promoting awareness of the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition; (ii) mainstreaming biodiversity into nutrition, agriculture and poverty reduction programmes; (iii) promoting activities that enhance the sustainable use of biodiversity. The Statement also identifies other organizations to involve in the initiative, and key next steps. The final report and other documents from the Consultation are available at: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=IBFN-01>.

II. RELEVANT ACTIVITIES AND MEETINGS

8. To date, relevant staff at the Convention 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.

9. A key contribution of the initiative will be to build 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 member of staff to survey the information in FAO's 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.

10. At its tenth regular session, in November 2004, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture requested the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to "provide guidance to FAO on how it could best 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, in order to demonstrate the role of biodiversity in nutrition and food security". A document prepared for the third session of the Working Group, (CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/5), which will be held from 26 to 28 October 2005 addresses this request ^{1/} and includes suggested activities for a draft action plan.

11. A special issue of the *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* (March 2006) is in preparation, 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.

12. 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, 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 meeting of Central and Eastern European Countries in INFOODS 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, which was 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.

13. 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.

14. 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

^{1/} <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgr/ITWG3rd/pdf/p3w5E.pdf>.

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 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

Annex

STATEMENT ON BIODIVERSITY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION

Main conclusions of the consultation on the CBD cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, organized by the Convention on Biological Diversity in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, Brasilia, Brazil, 12 – 13 March, 2005

Call for Action

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. This 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.

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 nutrient deficiencies and the emerging burden of non-communicable disease will be lost.

Proposals for Action

- (a) substantiating and promoting awareness of the links between biodiversity, food and nutrition
- i. Compilation, review and analysis of existing scientific information, indigenous and traditional knowledge (in a manner consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 8(j)), and case-studies;
 - ii. 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;
 - iii. Convening of regional advocacy and policy workshops.
- (b) mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into agendas and programmes related to nutrition and agriculture, and poverty reduction. For example, integrate biodiversity into programmes and activities concerning:
- i. Food-based dietary guidelines;
 - ii. Food composition analysis and dietary assessments;
 - iii. Relevant regulatory frameworks and legislation at national and international levels;
 - iv. National Plans of Action for Nutrition;
 - v. National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
 - vi. The Right to Food;
 - vii. Food security projects and programmes, including: household food security projects, school programmes, home gardens;
 - viii. Emergency response and preparedness.
- (c) promoting activities, that contribute to improving food security and human nutrition through enhanced sustainable use of biodiversity:

- i. on farm conservation of biodiversity;
- ii. development of new crops;
- iii. protection and promotion of biodiversity friendly markets;
- iv. action research.

Invitation to other organizations to contribute to the initiative.

FAO, WHO, IFAD, WFP, UNICEF, UNU and other intergovernmental organizations are encouraged to include biodiversity-related considerations in 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 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

Similarly Governments and other international and national institutions, IUNS, ICSU and other research and academic associations, civil society organizations and movements, including the Slow Food Movement, local community and indigenous peoples organizations, and the private sector are encouraged to contribute to the initiative

Next steps

The participants in the consultation recognize the benefits of coming together under a common framework and commit themselves to continue to contribute to the development of the cross-cutting initiative and to undertake the following activities:

- i. Raising awareness in our organizations, networks and communities of practice and at upcoming meetings and events
- ii. Preparing an inventory of the existing knowledge base, including published scientific studies, indigenous and local knowledge (consistent with CBD Article 8(j)), case-studies et cetera, and preparing a policy-relevant review for publication in a scientific journal
- iii. Promoting and facilitating the development of pilot activities including an inter-sectoral project on biodiversity for food and nutrition in Brazil, with a view to further such pilot activities in other countries
- iv. Preparing tools to aid implementation of the activities listed above
