

Remarks by FAOR – Kenya during the Official Opening of African Regional Workshop on Sustainable Use (Focus on Agriculture)

Nairobi, Kenya 12-15th December 2006

1. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me pleasure to be at this opening session of the **African Regional Workshop on Sustainable Use of Agrobiodiversity** to outline the major role that the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is playing in the area of agricultural biodiversity and as a key partner to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We are particularly interested in supporting this workshop to share ideas and experiences with participants for the further development of the Addis Ababa Principles and guidelines for sustainable use of biodiversity with a view to better addressing **the specific nature and importance of agricultural biodiversity for world food security and rural livelihoods**.
2. It is worth noting here that the Conference of the Parties to the CBD has recognized the “specific nature of agricultural biodiversity and its distinctive features and problems requiring distinctive solutions” and the leading role of FAO in agricultural biodiversity, including leading support to the multi-year work programme in agricultural biodiversity (Decision V/5 Nairobi, 2000)
3. FAO’s goal is to **alleviate poverty and hunger by promoting sustainable agricultural production, improved nutrition and food security, and the access of all people at all times to the food they need for active and healthy life**. The importance of biological diversity for food security by FAO was reconfirmed in commitment No. 3 of the Rome Declaration on Food Security made at the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996. FAO is actively promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture including in the forestry and fisheries sectors.
4. Through its **Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** and other Governing Bodies, FAO provides inter-governmental fora whereby biodiversity related policy issues are discussed and relevant agreements negotiated and adopted by member countries. Major examples are the **International Plant Protection Convention**, and the breakthrough following decades of technical work and negotiations which culminated in the adoption of the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** in 2001, and already ratified by some 140 countries. Another important example of FAO’s work is promoting the adoption of good management practices through non-binding voluntary legal agreements such as the **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries**, which is being widely applied by many countries and through the development of **Good Agriculture Practices** which addresses the full chain from producers to consumers.

5. FAO has been providing technical and policy support for many years prior to the International Treaty through its support in the development and implementation of the **Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**, adopted in 1998 by 160 countries, and the **Global Strategy on the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources**. These country driven processes are based on **national assessments of the status and trends** of plant and domestic animal diversity respectively and the resulting strategies and actions focus on **conservation and sustainable use** with a view to enhancing local, national and global food security and sustainable livelihoods.
6. FAOs work in supporting implementation of the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** is guided by its Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), and by the Joint Programme of Work which is developed with the Secretariat of the CBD through a Memorandum of Understanding. FAO is also helping to integrate biodiversity issues into the work under the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for example through projects and capacity building at all levels on sustainable land management, land degradation assessment in drylands, and climate change mitigation.
7. Through characterization of the **many diverse farming systems, land use types and farmer situations** worldwide, and capitalizing on its **multi-disciplinary expertise**, FAO is able to better target specific contexts and address **ecosystem and socio-economic dimensions** of agricultural biodiversity. This requires efforts to address the specific components of agricultural biodiversity and the integration of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use **as part of wider natural resources management strategies and programmes**. This can be achieved through capacity building for effective community planning and action, watershed and river basin management, and strategies that are adapted for specific systems- dryland areas, mountain areas and so forth.
8. The focus of the workshop gives prominence to the **assessment or valuation of ecosystem services** and understanding the costs and benefits and how they can be more equitably shared among stakeholders. This is in tandem with ongoing activities being implemented through the FAO Representation in Kenya together with key public, development and private sector stakeholders. Kenya is benefiting from financial support through the **FAO - Netherlands Partnership programme (FNPP)** which has three components one of which is to mainstream agricultural biodiversity into national policies, programmes and actions. This component is interlinked with the other two on forestry and Food security. For example, the nation-wide **Integrated Natural Resources Assessment** is being led by the Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing, in partnership with many concerned sectoral bodies, is developing methods and tools to integrate forestry, agricultural biodiversity and food security dimensions.

9. Activities under the agrobiodiversity theme are being implemented at three broad levels
 - (i) **Grassroots level** sensitization and demonstration of the role of sustainable management of agrobiodiversity in **enhanced household food security and resilience of the production systems** in support of livelihoods of small-holder producers. This includes capacity building on agrobiodiversity issues for frontline agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry public sector extension staff and working through successful **Farmer Field Schools approaches**.
 - (ii) **Support to agriculture training institutions** through the development of case studies, through sensitization workshops leading to curriculum development processes for the mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity. This has already resulted in 7 agrobiodiversity tailored training modules for implementation of FFS activities initially in two pilot district but with potential for up-scaling to other parts of the country and in the region and management decisions have been taken in the training institutions for the agrobiodiversity training curricula.
 - (iii) **National level mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity into the national agriculture and forestry policies** is planned through partnerships with relevant stakeholders and institutions and organizations and through establishing a **National Agrobiodiversity Steering Committee** that will coordinate mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity issues into national policies. At policy level for example the conservation and sustainable management of plant and animal genetic resources for enhanced agricultural production and household food and nutrition security have been integrated into the **draft National Food and Nutrition Policy** that has been revised with support of the Food Security Theme of FNPP.
10. FAO welcomes the opportunity to continue **its capacity building activities** through supporting, as required, the development and implementation of **guidelines for the sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity**, building on the Addis Ababa guidelines. I believe that our experiences in Kenya and at global levels will be of direct relevance to the subject of this workshop and I look forward to hearing through my colleagues about the other experiences throughout Africa. However, I deeply regret for I am unable to stay with you due to other commitments.