

February 1999



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

E

Item 9 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Eighth Regular Session

Rome, 19-23 April 1999

COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY^{1/}

CONTENTS

	<i>Para.</i>
1. Introduction	1-4
2. Revision of the International Undertaking	5
3. Assessment of ongoing activities and existing instruments at the international level	6-7
4. Joint programmes of work, and joint technical workshops	8-11
5. Protocol on Biosafety	12-13
6. Information and data management	14
7. Attendance at meetings and other activities	15-18

1/ This document was prepared jointly with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. Introduction

1. The last two years have shown strengthened cooperation between FAO and the Convention process, through mutual reporting and participation in one another's meetings. This paper responds to the Commission's wish to be kept abreast of the developing cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), for which it requested a specific item in the agenda of the current session.

2. In November 1995, Decision II/15 of the Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD recognized the special nature of agricultural biological diversity, its distinctive features and problems needing distinctive solutions.

3. Experts in various areas (fisheries, forestry, agriculture, and sustainable development) have officially represented FAO in all meetings of the COP and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). FAO provided advice to the Secretariat of the Convention, to SBSTTA, and through its programmes at policy and technical levels with Member Countries, of which a large majority are also Parties to the Convention.

4. In February 1997, FAO seconded a staff member to the Secretariat of the CBD, as the Programme Officer responsible for agricultural biological diversity, to assist with issues related to agriculture, forest, animal and fisheries genetic resources. This secondment has proven most successful in strengthening linkages and close collaboration between FAO and the CBD Secretariat. This post will be extended.

2. Revision of the International Undertaking

5. Mutual reporting between the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the COP/CBD Convention process has continued, especially in regard to the inter-governmental negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, in harmony with the Convention. COP Decision IV/6, in May 1998, urged that the momentum in these negotiations be maintained, with a view to their conclusion before the end of 1999. Representatives of the CBD Secretariat have attended all negotiating sessions of the Commission, made a number of statements of support for the negotiating process, and provided information and documentation on request.

3. Assessment of ongoing activities and existing instruments at the international level

6. In its decision III/11, the COP invited FAO to take a lead role in the assessment of relevant ongoing activities and existing instruments at the international level. This was reiterated in decision IV/6 of the Fourth Meeting of the COP in Bratislava, May 1998. FAO then invited a wide range of international and regional organizations to report on their ongoing activities and instruments related to agricultural biodiversity. The preliminary results of the inventory were highlighted in a progress report to COP IV.¹ Simultaneously the CBD Secretariat is conducting the inventory at national level based on contributions provided by Parties. An analytical process has been jointly

¹ UNEP/CBD/COP/4/6.

elaborated for synthesizing and presenting the findings of the assessment, for consideration by SBSTTA at its Fifth Meeting (end January 2000). This will facilitate SBSTTA's work in elaborating recommendations for the consideration by the Fifth Meeting of the COP (15-26 May 2000), with a view to the further development, under the Convention, of a focused work programme on agricultural biological diversity.

7. FAO made available to the CBD the reports that international organizations had provided to the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at its Seventh Session, on their policies, programmes and activities in the field of agricultural biodiversity.²

4. Joint programmes of work, and joint technical workshops

8. A joint FAO-CBD technical consultation in June 1997 led to the development of elements of a joint programme of work. At the same time, a first technical workshop was organized, with the support of the Government of the Netherlands, focusing on farming systems approaches for agricultural biological diversity in agroecosystems. The document presenting the outcome of the workshop was submitted to SBSTTA.³ A formal agreement of collaboration between FAO and the CBD Secretariat was also established by a Memorandum of Understanding covering the above fields, as reported to the Third Meeting of SBSTTA in September 1997.⁴ Progress in this regard was welcomed, in SBSTTA recommendation III/4.

9. In December 1998, a joint CBD-FAO international technical workshop was held, on opportunities, incentives and approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in agricultural ecosystems and production systems⁵, again with the support of the Government of the Netherlands. Its outcome, based on case studies and the experiences of experts from 20 countries and 15 international and regional organizations, will be taken into consideration in the ongoing assessment.

10. FAO's Forestry Department has established direct technical contacts with the CBD Secretariat, for information exchange on their respective programmes, activities and publications. Possible joint programmes and the coordination of activities have been discussed on several occasions with the Executive Secretary of the CBD and his staff.

11. FAO and ICLARM supported the Bellagio Conference, "Towards Policies for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Aquatic Genetic Resources", which considered the present status of, and likely requirements for, policies for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic genetic resources. The Conference agreed on a number of suggestions for action, and areas of concern, in the "Bellagio Declaration", which was noted by COP IV, and made available to delegates. The CBD Secretariat and the FAO Fisheries Department will explore possible collaboration in order to implement the Jakarta Mandate, a plan of work to foster the sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity in marine and coastal areas, approved by the COP.

² CGRFA-7/97/7.

³ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf 10.

⁴ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf 21.

⁵ The report of this workshop is available to the Commission.

5. Protocol on Biosafety

12. The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has, since 1993, been working on a *Draft Code of Conduct for Plant Biotechnology, as it Affects the Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources*. As the Commission requested, the Biosafety Component of the draft Code was transmitted to the CBD Secretariat as an input towards the CBD Protocol on Biosafety. The Commission has also agreed that further work on its draft Code should await the outcome of the revision of the International Undertaking.

13. FAO has attended and provided documents to the CBD negotiating meetings for the elaboration of a Protocol on Biosafety, which focuses specifically on the transboundary movement of any living modified organism. The sixth meeting of the Open-ended *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Biosafety, the final negotiating session, was scheduled to take place in Cartagena, Colombia from 14 to 19 February 1999, to be immediately followed by an Extraordinary meeting of the COP to adopt the Protocol.

6. Information and data management

14. Various FAO information systems collaborate with the work of the CBD in this regard. Cross linkages are being finalized between the FAO homepage on forest genetic resources and the Internet site on forestry of the CBD's Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). FAO's Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) provides an important contribution to the CHM. Close collaboration between the DAD-IS and CHM focal points in the further development of these mechanisms will enhance communications, and the information exchange between DAD-IS and CBD stakeholders, including farmers, scientists and policy makers from environmental and agricultural fields. It is expected that FAO's WAICENT programme will collaborate with the CHM in implementing a training package, which will include tools, and information system components to enhance the capacities of CHM focal points to access FAO information, and to exchange information among stakeholders at the national level. This collaboration will include joint activities in 1999, including joint and national workshops, and evaluation of the training package, based on user response.

7. Attendance at meetings and other activities

15. The CBD Secretariat attended the First Session of the Inter-governmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which met in Rome in September 1998. A message from the CBD Secretariat noted the support given by the COP at its Third and Fourth Meetings, to the development of the Global Strategy, emphasizing the need to develop plant and animal genetic resources in a holistic manner.

16. FAO attended the meeting of the CBD Liaison Group on Forest Biological Diversity (Helsinki, Finland, May 1997). Several FAO documents of relevance to forest genetic resources and biological diversity in forest ecosystems were distributed. The discussions addressed, *inter alia*, complementarities between possible CBD action and action already under way by other organizations, notably FAO and, in regard to research, CIFOR. A report of the meeting has been made available.⁶ The CBD Secretariat collaborates in the *ad hoc* Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF), established in support of the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests of the CSD, and its successor-arrangement, the Inter-governmental Forum on Forests, chaired by FAO. CBD has

⁶ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/3/Inf.5.

the lead in the ITFF in issues related to traditional forest-related knowledge, into which FAO makes inputs, and the CBD, in turn, inputs into other issues, including, for example, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, in which FAO has the lead.

17. FAO and the CBD Secretariat participated in the International Workshop, in San Paolo in November 1998, on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators, with an Emphasis on Bees, that was organized by the Government of Brazil, with FAO as a sponsor, as a contribution to COP decision III/11. The workshop was very useful in identifying the key issues and priorities for further action. The report was expected to be available in early 1999, and submitted for SBSTTA's consideration, in the further development of the work programme on agricultural biological diversity.

18. The CBD Secretariat is preparing a paper, on the potential consequences of technologies for the control of plant gene expression that renders second generation seed sterile, for consideration by SBSTTA at its Fourth Meeting. FAO is assisting the Secretariat in this technical review.