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**THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FARM
ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES**

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THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FARM ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The significant contribution that animal genetic resources make to food and agriculture worldwide led the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to initiate development of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (Global Strategy), in 1993. The Global Strategy was established as a technical programme, and evolved as governments accepted it as a framework for global efforts to achieve the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. Although the Global Strategy was never formally adopted by the Commission, it has guided its work on animal genetic resources on a *de facto* basis, and FAO has regularly reported on its development and implementation.
2. The Commission, at its Tenth Regular Session in 2004, recommended that FAO continue to develop the Global Strategy, in collaboration with all relevant international organizations, and requested its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) to review progress and report to the Commission.¹
3. Over the last years, the primary focus of activity within the Global Strategy has been on the preparation of the first report on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the report on *Strategic Priorities for Action for the Sustainable Use Development and Conservation of Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Once finalized, these reports will inform future programming of international cooperation in the field of animal genetic resources. In addition, these important assessment and planning initiatives provide a unique opportunity for FAO to strengthen mutual cooperation with other international organizations and forums to address priorities and emerging issues in the field of animal genetic resources, and to raise awareness of the various roles and values of these essential resources.
4. The Working Group, at its Fourth Session in December 2006, recommended to the Commission that, apart from the presentation of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*, the outcome of the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources be a *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, which would be adopted through an *Interlaken Declaration*.² The *Strategic Priorities for Action* would provide the agenda for action within the *Global Plan of Action*. The Working Group also recommended that the monitoring of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* be within the context of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work, and that the Global Strategy remain as a FAO technical programme, until FAO can realign support for the *Global Plan of Action*.³
5. The expected finalization of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* and adoption of a *Global Plan of Action* at the *International Technical Conference* provide a unique opportunity to reflect on past achievements of the Global Strategy, and to decide upon its future. This document summarizes the history and the main achievements of the Global Strategy, and seeks the Commission's guidance on a possible way forward for the Global Strategy in light of the expected adoption of a *Global Plan of Action*. An information document on activities taken to implement the Global Strategy since the last session of the Commission is given in the document,

¹ CGRFA-10/04/REP, paragraph 51.

² CGRFA-11/07/3, paragraph 26.

³ CGRFA-11/07/3, paragraphs 26-27.

*Progress made in the implementation of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources.*⁴

II. THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY (1993 – 2007)

6. FAO has, since the early 1960's, provided assistance to countries to identify their animal genetic resources and develop conservation strategies. In 1990, the FAO Council recommended the preparation of a comprehensive programme for the sustainable management of animal genetic resources at the global level. Consequently, in 1993, the Global Strategy was formulated containing four constituent elements: (a) inter-governmental mechanism, (b) country-based planning and implementation infrastructure, (c) technical programme of work, and (d) reporting and evaluation.

7. In 1995, FAO's Committee on Agriculture reviewed the progress made and the FAO Council supported the process, stressing the need to involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders and for additional funds to ensure its successful further development. In the same year, the FAO Conference broadened the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to include other genetic resources for food and agriculture, beginning with animal genetic resources. The Commission became known as the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), in Decision III/11 (1996), appreciated the Global Strategy and strongly supported its further development.⁵

8. In 1997, the Commission initiated its oversight of the Global Strategy. It established a subsidiary Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to provide advice on the further development and implementation of the Global Strategy. FAO has since reported biennially to the Working Group on the implementation of the Global Strategy, according to its four constituent elements.

9. The Working Group met for the first time in 1998, and recommended that FAO coordinate the development of a country-driven *State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*. The Commission, noting that increasing erosion of animal genetic resources is a threat to global food security and the livelihoods of rural communities, requested FAO to coordinate the development of the first report on *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*, including a report on *Strategic Priorities for Action*, stressing the need for this to be a country-driven process. FAO accepted the request, and the preparation of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* has been the major activity of FAO's Global Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources since this time.

10. *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* will be presented, and the *Strategic Priorities for Action* is intended to be adopted, at the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources, in Interlaken, Switzerland, in September 2007. This will be a major achievement of the Global Strategy and a milestone for the work of the Commission in the area of animal genetic resources. Some of the other important major achievements under the Global Strategy include:

- Country preparation of 169 Country Reports on animal genetic resources as a key contribution to the *State of the World* process;
- Development of the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) as the major global information system on animal diversity;
- Establishment of National and Regional Focal Points for animal genetic resources, and networking;

⁴ CGRFA-11/07/Inf 7.

⁵ <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?dec=III/11>.

- Strengthened technical and targeted cooperation and partnerships between FAO, the CGIAR, and other scientific and technical organizations, in line with priorities set by the Commission;
- Development of a number of technical tools, including a series of Primary and Secondary Guidelines for Development of National Farm Animal Genetic Resources Management Plans;⁶
- Establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources;
- Convening of a number of expert panels and stakeholder and donor consultation processes; and
- Preparation of a wide-range of communication tools to enhance understanding and awareness of the status and roles and values of animal genetic resources, including the World Watch List for Domestic Animal Diversity.

III. THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

11. While the Global Strategy was never formally adopted by the Commission as a technical programme, the Global Strategy, as the achievements above indicate, has provided a valuable framework for mobilizing and organizing country, regional and global action on animal genetic resources. It has evolved over time, as governments accepted the framework to guide efforts to achieve the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture. In light of the experience gained, it is now time to take a critical look at the future of the Global Strategy, particularly with the soon to be published *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*, and the expected adoption of a *Global Plan of Action*.

12. The following points of information are provided to assist the Commission to decide on the future of the Global Strategy:

- The Global Strategy was first developed more than ten years ago, as a technical programme when there was a lesser understanding of animal genetic resources issues. Much has been learned over the past 10 years and the experience gained provides an excellent basis for deciding on how best to proceed in future.
- *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* has greatly enhanced the understanding of the roles and values of animal genetic resources, and the requirements and challenges for their management. It has provided valuable information on status and trends of animal genetic resources and the capacity to manage these resources at local, national and international levels, as well as on country and regional priorities to be addressed through national interventions and international cooperation. This makes it possible to consider appropriate options to ensure a coordinated international response to the sector's requirements, and should be taken into account in programming the Commission's future sectorial and cross-sectorial work.
- The *Strategic Priorities for Action* provides a synthesis of country and regional priorities, based on a series of national reports and regional consultations, and technical inputs. Once adopted by governments, this synthesis will provide an agenda for international action, including both policy development and capacity building, to enhance the characterization, monitoring, sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources. The current draft of the *Strategic Priorities for Action* builds on the achievements of the Global Strategy and the components of its technical programme of work, and will require modalities for monitoring and reporting on implementation.

⁶ Available at the DAD-IS library: <http://www.fao.org/dad-is/>.

- Governments are increasingly dealing with policy issues regarding biological diversity for food and agriculture in an integrated manner, applying ecosystem approaches. There is a need to firmly root the policy framework of animal genetic resources in this context. Many of the emerging issues for animal genetic resources relate to cross-sectorial policies.
- The Commission is considering a draft Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) at its Eleventh Session. Agreement on a *Global Plan of Action* will greatly facilitate the Commission planning and inclusion and scheduling of animal genetic resources matters into the MYPoW, in an organized and focused manner.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

13. The Global Strategy has driven a process expected to culminate in the finalization of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* and the adoption of the *Global Plan of Action*. The findings presented in *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*, and the expected outcomes of the International Technical Conference, offer an opportunity to review and adjust the international framework on animal genetic resources. Changes and adjustments may also be necessary in order to strengthen the on-going cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular through the agricultural biodiversity review, and to consider emerging issues within the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work in an organized and focused manner.

14. The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources has recommended to retain the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources as the FAO technical programme, "until FAO can realign support for the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*".⁷ In line with this recommendation, the Commission may wish to suggest that once the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources* has been adopted as the new strategic framework and support from the regular programme has been realigned for its implementation, it will replace the Global Strategy.

V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMISSION

15. The Commission may wish to acknowledge the progress made in the implementation of the Global Strategy since its last session.

16. The Commission may wish to:

- i. Decide that the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, once adopted, become the international framework for advancing policy development and implementation of priority actions for the use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, and replace the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources.
- ii. Recommend that the Global Strategy remain as a FAO technical programme, only until FAO can realign support for the *Global Plan of Action*.
- iii. Request FAO to ensure regular program support for the activities of the Global Focal Point for animal genetic resources in support of the Global Plan of Action, following its adoption at the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources in Interlaken.
- iv. Agree to consolidate the Commission's work on animal genetic resources and its timeline at its Twelve Regular Session, in order to incorporate the outcomes of the

⁷ CGRFA-11/07/3, paragraph 27.

International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources, in particular, the Global Plan of Action, into the Commission's Multi-year Programme of Work.

- v. Consider to include a section on implementation and financing within the Global Plan of Action, and to guide its implementation and assist in the mobilization of the required resources.
- vi. Re-enforce the need for a country-based early warning system and response mechanism for animal genetic resources⁸, and appeal to donors to provide the necessary extra-budgetary resources to enable planning and establishment of the system.

⁸ The Commission, at its Tenth Regular Session, requested FAO to prepare a proposal for a country-based early warning and response system for animal genetic resources, CGRFA-10/04/REP, paragraph 49.