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Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

### Item 7.2 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

**COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**Eleventh Regular Session**

Rome, 11-15 June 2007

**COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**

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## COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations cooperates with other institutions to address agriculture-related subjects (which for FAO include agriculture, forestry and fisheries). It seeks to ensure that the specific needs and concerns of the food and agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors are adequately reflected in relevant international instruments, and that appropriate policy advice is provided to forums dealing with natural resources, the environment and trade.
2. FAO hosts key international instruments and programmes that require cooperation with other organizations working in natural resources management, particularly genetic resources and biodiversity. These include:
  - The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
  - The International Plant Protection Convention;
  - *The Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;
  - *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*,
  - *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;
  - The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; and
  - The FAO Forest Resources Assessment; FAO facilitates country efforts to identify and implement criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.
3. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a framework convention, with a broad mandate in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Conference of Parties (COP) to the CBD often requests FAO and other organisations to provide policy advice and technical assistance. Since 1993, cooperation between FAO and the CBD has been broad and deep, and FAO has been a key partner and contributor to the CBD's implementation.
4. At the inter-governmental level, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture oversees cooperation between FAO and the COP. The Commission has responded to requests from the COP, and decided on appropriate means of cooperation within the areas of the Commission's mandate. The Commission has also recommended areas for cooperation to the COP.
5. Within FAO, the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (NRD), in which the Commission Secretariat is now placed, is the focal point for the CBD. At a technical level, cooperation with the CBD is primarily guided by an Inter-Departmental Working Group on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (PAIA BIOD).
6. This document provides an overview of cooperation with the CBD. Relevant decisions of the Commission's last Regular Session are reviewed, and action taken in response is described. Matters arising from the Eighth COP in 2006 that are of particular relevance to the Commission are noted. The need for a strategic approach to strengthening cooperation with the CBD is emphasized, and a number of cooperation mechanisms are explored. The Commission's guidance is then sought.

## **II. FAO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

7. Cooperation between FAO and the CBD has fostered the development of joint and complementary policies and programmes of work, and has largely avoided duplication of activities, in a spirit of mutual respect for mandates.
8. For FAO, cooperation with the CBD provides an opportunity to promote policy coherence across sectors and forums, and ensure that the nature and needs of the agricultural sector are taken into account in the CBD's work. In addition, the CBD's activities have policy implications for FAO and its Members, and countries increasingly request support from FAO to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use efforts into national food and agricultural policies and programmes.
9. Over the past decade, a number of measures have helped enhance cooperation, including the establishment of a Memorandum of Cooperation, and the secondment by FAO of an Agricultural Biological Diversity Officer to the Convention Secretariat, between 1997 and 2003.
10. The COP has established various sectorial and cross-sectorial programmes of work and initiatives, to assist countries implement the CBD. FAO has been a major contributor to the preparation of programmes of work and important international initiatives.
11. Sectorial programmes include: agricultural biodiversity; forest biodiversity; inland water biodiversity; mountain biodiversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands; and island biodiversity.
12. The main cross-cutting issues, initiatives or programmes of work are: the 2010 Biodiversity Targets; access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing; traditional knowledge, innovations and practices; biodiversity and tourism; climate change and biodiversity; economics, trade and incentive measures; the Ecosystem Approach; the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; the Global Taxonomy Initiative; impact assessment; indicators; invasive alien species; liability and redress; protected areas; public education and awareness; sustainable use of biodiversity; and technology transfer and cooperation.
13. FAO has focused cooperation on issues most relevant to the Organization's mandate, and has been the main facilitator assisting Parties to develop the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity, and is leading its implementation. FAO has also contributed significantly to the development of the programmes of work on forest biodiversity; inland water biodiversity; mountain biodiversity; and marine and coastal biodiversity.
14. The most relevant cross-cutting programmes of work and initiatives where FAO has been a main collaborator include: invasive alien species; access and benefit-sharing; sustainable use of biodiversity; the Ecosystem Approach; and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
15. The COP has established a time table for reviewing its programmes of work. FAO participated in the in-depth review of several relevant programmes, and contributed to the establishment of goals and targets in several of them, as part of the review process. It will continue to participate in the review of relevant programmes and initiatives.

## **III. REVIEW OF ONGOING COOPERATION IN SELECTED AREAS**

16. At its Tenth Session, the Commission acknowledged this increasing cooperation, noting that FAO is a major player in the CBD's programmes of work on forestry, fisheries and agriculture. It took a number of decisions on further work in relation to:
  - the revision of the Memorandum of Cooperation between FAO and CBD;

- agricultural biodiversity, including food and nutrition;
- sustainable use of biodiversity;
- targets and indicators; and
- access and benefit-sharing.

17. In the following paragraphs, relevant decisions taken by the Commission and the COP – primarily those arising from the Eighth COP in 2006 – are examined, in order to assist the Commission in deciding on priorities for on-going cooperation in these fields, and on how best to proceed in the context of the Commission’s Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW).

### **Memorandum of Cooperation**

18. The Commission, at its Tenth Session, welcomed the preparation of the revised Memorandum of Cooperation, to facilitate further cooperation between FAO and CBD, and expressed hope for its early conclusion.<sup>1</sup> In May 2005, the revised Memorandum of Cooperation was signed. It provides a framework in which to develop and strengthen cooperation between the two institutions, and seek synergy in the area of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture. It makes provision for joint activities, and provides for FAO and the CBD to seek jointly to mobilize resources for agreed activities.

19. The Memorandum recognizes the specific mandates and functions of each organization, and the importance of the existing agreements and initiatives, including: the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; the International Plant Protection Convention; the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*; the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources; and the Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries.

20. The Memorandum of Cooperation recognizes the Commission’s role as an international forum where Governments address all components of biological diversity of relevance to food and agriculture, and the role of the Commission in facilitating cooperation between FAO and other international governmental and non-governmental bodies dealing with the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, in particular the COP to the CBD.

### **The CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity**

#### ***Preliminary findings of the in-depth review of the CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity***

21. In 2000, the COP adopted a Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity. FAO was the main facilitator, and it has been regularly invited to support its implementation. FAO coordinates two initiatives under this Programme: the *International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pollinators* and the *International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity*. It has also contributed to the establishment of the new *Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition*, and has been invited to participate in its implementation.

22. In 2008, the COP will review progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity in depth. At its Tenth Session, the Commission recommended that FAO convey to the CBD’s Executive Secretary the Organization’s willingness to play a leading role in the in-depth review of the CBD Programme of Work, and stated its wish to consider any preliminary findings at the current session. The COP welcomed the

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<sup>1</sup> See CGRFA-11/07/Inf.11, *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity*.

Commission's decision, and requested the Executive Secretary to work in partnership with FAO and in consultation with other organizations, to prepare the Programme review.<sup>2</sup> Both the Commission and the COP noted that a valuable and timely input for the review would be *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for food and agriculture*.

23. The review will assess progress, identify barriers and gaps in the programme's implementation, and assess – where relevant – how the programme addresses major challenges and emerging issues. It will acknowledge activities by other international organizations, focus on filling gaps and providing added value, and identify new opportunities for cooperation. Major programme modifications will be considered only where a significant gap has been identified.

24. A number of goals and targets are expected to be integrated into the review, as reported in paragraphs 36 to 40 of this document. The review will also assess progress in the three international initiatives mentioned in paragraph 21 above.

25. The CBD Executive Secretary and FAO have established a partnership to prepare the review, in consultation with other organizations. They have agreed a work plan, and are examining the resources required. An information document describes progress so far.<sup>3</sup> FAO will provide inputs on its relevant programmes and activities, including *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. FAO will also draw together relevant information on other international activities and instruments, and will collaborate with the CBD Secretariat in analysing the information.

26. Some of the preliminary findings which the Commission's may wish to note are the following:

- Assessments of the status and trends of the world's plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture have been prepared under the Commission's guidance. However, assessments of other sectors of agricultural biodiversity, such as microbial genetic resources, are limited, and there is as yet no comprehensive assessment of the status and trends of agricultural biodiversity as a whole. Some work has been done to assess key goods and services provided by the components of biodiversity at sub-national level, and at national, regional or global levels. There are ongoing assessments that could contribute significantly to knowledge on agricultural biodiversity.
- While work on indicators has been carried out, particularly by international organisations, coordination and refinement are required, in order to establish adequate indicators to monitor the status and trends of agricultural biodiversity on a global scale.
- Databases and information relevant to agricultural biodiversity – including case studies and best practices – are increasingly available on the Internet; the challenge is to ensure their accessibility and usefulness for countries.
- There is much scope for mainstreaming and integrating agricultural biodiversity into sectorial and cross-sectorial plans and programmes in the food and agriculture sector, including the development of national plans or strategies. Few countries have so far developed such national frameworks, due in particular to capacity constraints.
- Socio-economic analysis of the value of agricultural biodiversity, and of commercial practice in its use, needs to be improved, to inform policy-making, in particular, in relation to benefit-sharing.

27. The Commission may wish to highlight the importance of taking the following processes into account in the review:

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<sup>2</sup> Decision VIII/23.

<sup>3</sup> CGRFA-11/07/Inf. 16, *Progress in the preparation of the in-depth review of the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity*.

- The adoption of the Commission's MYPOW, which will allow the Commission to implement its full mandate and, in the medium and long term, cover all biodiversity of relevance for food and agriculture, according to a clear time plan, which will make coordination with the CBD more effective;
- The entry into force and implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- The International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at which the international community will reach agreement on how best to address priorities for the sustainable management of animal genetic resources.

28. The CBD programme review is timely, and can contribute to strengthening both FAO's work on agricultural biodiversity and cooperation between FAO and CBD. Given the major contribution to various components of agricultural biodiversity that the Commission's work provides to the implementation of the CBD's Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity, the Commission may wish to propose to the COP the establishment of a Joint Work Plan on Agricultural Biodiversity. Such cooperation mechanisms are being established between the COP and other international bodies.

29. The Commission may therefore wish to:

- Emphasize the need to strengthen efforts to conserve and sustainably manage agricultural biodiversity for global food security, and reiterate the special nature of agricultural biodiversity, its distinctive features and problems needing distinctive solutions;
- Welcome progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity, and address any recommendations it may wish to make in relation to the Programme review to the COP;
- Emphasize the importance of FAO continuing to lead the implementation of the Programme of Work of Agricultural Biodiversity, to ensure and strengthen the involvement of FAO Members;
- In expressing its willingness to continue strengthening mutual cooperation with the COP, propose a Joint Work Plan for agricultural biodiversity, and request its Secretary to discuss practical arrangements with the Executive Secretary of the CBD, and report to its next session;
- Reiterate that *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* will be a timely and valuable input into the review of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity.

#### ***A cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition***

30. In 2006, the COP adopted a framework for a cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition. At its last session, the Commission supported FAO's contributing to its establishment. Element 3 of the Initiative, *Conserving and promoting wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition*, is of particular relevance to the Commission's work, and the proposed activities under this element suggest the need for close cooperation with the Commission.

31. The COP requested its Executive Secretary to continue collaborating with FAO, Bioversity International and other organizations regarding this cross-cutting initiative, and to report on progress in the context of the in-depth review of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity.

32. FAO's ongoing activities on nutrition are reported in *Reports from FAO on its policies, programmes, and activities on agricultural biological diversity: (2) Cross-sectorial Matters*.<sup>4</sup> An information paper for the third session of the Commission's Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture outlined a number of FAO's initiatives related to nutrition and biodiversity.<sup>5</sup> The Working Group recommended that FAO prepare a draft action plan on how best to support countries, on request, to generate, compile and disseminate cultivar-specific nutrient composition data, and provided guidance as to what the focus should be.<sup>6</sup> Future work in this area will contribute to the implementation of the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition.

33. FAO is currently seeking partnerships and identifying extra-budgetary resources to enhance work in the area of nutrition and biodiversity, and will in due course consider the need for integrating the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition into the Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD and FAO.

34. The Commission may wish to:

- emphasize the importance of biodiversity for food and nutrition;
- provide guidance on the approach to implementing the framework for the cross-cutting initiative on biodiversity for food and nutrition, indicating priority areas for FAO;
- encourage donors to provide extra-budgetary resources for this work.

#### **Global monitoring, targets and indicators**

35. The Commission, at its Tenth Session, agreed that FAO should continue to lead development of agricultural biodiversity indicators, including those on genetic resources for food and agriculture, to assist in determining progress toward the CBD's 2010 target of significantly reducing biodiversity loss.

36. In 2006, Parties to the CBD clarified the overall framework for monitoring implementation of the Convention and achieving progress toward its 2010 target.<sup>7</sup> Global indicators are being developed to assess the status and trends of various levels of biodiversity, and the causes of the loss of biodiversity. This is intended to assist Parties in designing national monitoring programmes. Indicators to assess the effectiveness of responses measures are being considered (for example, the number of countries implementing national biodiversity strategies).

37. FAO is identifying and developing indicators for agricultural biodiversity, including indicators for genetic diversity, genetic erosion and genetic vulnerability, and will continue to participate in expert meetings on indicators convened by the CBD. Existing FAO reporting mechanisms will provide valuable inputs to global efforts to monitor the status and trends of biodiversity. A recent example is *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*. Parties to the CBD have requested FAO to consider options, under its Global Forest Resource Assessment process, for reporting on global outcome-oriented targets for the expanded programme of work on forest biodiversity, including relevant existing indicators of sustainable forest management.<sup>8</sup>

38. In 2008, during its Ninth Conference, the COP will consider the application and integration of goals and global outcome-oriented targets into the Programme of Work on

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<sup>4</sup> CGFRA-11/07/20.2.

<sup>5</sup> CGFRA/WG-PGR-3/05/Inf.9, *FAO's activities in nutrition and biodiversity*, <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgr/ITWG3rd/pdf/p3i9E.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See CGRFA-11/07/11, para. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Decision VIII/15.

<sup>8</sup> Decision VIII/15, paragraph 19.



Agricultural Biological Diversity, using the components of the provisional framework (focal areas, goals and targets), adopted in Decision VII/30.

39. The following targets, in particular, are relevant to the work of Commission:
- *Target 3.1:* Genetic diversity of crops, livestock and harvested species of trees, fish and wildlife and other valuable species conserved, and associated indigenous and local knowledge maintained;
  - *Target 10.1:* All access to genetic resources in line with the CBD. The Commission may wish to note that, in the application of the target in some programmes of work under the CBD, reference has been made to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Forest Biodiversity, Mountain Biodiversity, Dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity, and Island Biodiversity).;
  - *Target 10.2:* Benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources shared in a fair and equitable way with countries providing such resources, in line with the CBD.
40. The Commission may wish to emphasize the importance of cooperation in the field of targets and indicators, and express its willingness to integrate work on targets and indicators into its MYPOW.<sup>9</sup>

**The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and *The Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture***

41. In 2002, the COP adopted the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.<sup>10</sup> In 2004, it decided to integrate the targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation into all thematic and relevant cross-cutting programmes of work, and that that targets 6, 9 and 12, in particular, should be integrated into the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity.<sup>11</sup>
42. At its Tenth Session, the Commission accepted the COP's invitation to consider how its *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* can contribute to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, in particular target 9 (70 % of genetic diversity of crops and other major socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, and associated indigenous and local knowledge maintained).
43. At the invitation of the COP, FAO facilitated a stakeholder consultation on targets 6, 9, 12, and 13, and reported on it to the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.<sup>12</sup> The many activities of FAO that are relevant to the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation were indicated, including the updating of *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, and the preparation of thematic background studies. Some of FAO's work on forests and forest genetic resources was identified as also making significant contributions to the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
44. The Commission may wish to recommend that FAO continue contributing to the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, in the context of work on targets and indicators.

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<sup>9</sup> See also CGRFA-11/07/15.5, *Cross-sectorial international policy issues: status and needs*.

<sup>10</sup> Decision VI/9.

<sup>11</sup> Decision VII/10. The targets in question relate to sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care, crop genetic diversity, and sustainable production lands.

<sup>12</sup> See CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/Inf.3, *The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation*, <http://www.fao.org/waicent/FaoInfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgr/ITWG3rd/pdf/p3i3E.pdf>.

### The Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

45. In 2004, the Conference of Parties adopted the “Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity”. In doing so, they recognized that agricultural biodiversity was not fully addressed, and noted the need for their further elaboration, specifically with respect to domesticated species, breeds and varieties in the context of the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity.<sup>13</sup>

46. At its Tenth Session, the Commission supported FAO’s offer to lead, in cooperation with the Convention’s Executive Secretary, a process to engage agricultural sector stakeholders in an analysis of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines, to consider their application and further elaboration with respect to domesticated species, breeds and varieties. FAO accordingly made a significant contribution to a workshop in Nairobi in 2006, organized by the Convention’s Executive Secretary, on the application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines to agricultural biodiversity.

47. The application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines to agriculture can build on experience gained through FAO initiatives on the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity: for example, in the context of the preparation of *The State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources*, an expert meeting in 2006 considered guiding principles for the sustainable utilization of animal genetic resources.<sup>14</sup>

48. The Commission may wish to emphasize the importance of continuing cooperation in this field, and to integrate work on sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture in its MYPOW.<sup>15</sup>

### An International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing

49. At its Tenth Session, the Commission, recommended that FAO and the Commission contribute to further work on access and benefit-sharing, in order to ensure that work in this area move in a manner supportive of the special needs of the agriculture sector, noting the essential role of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in this context.

50. Since its entry into force, the COP has established various processes to facilitate the CBD’s access and benefit-sharing provisions, in relation to genetic resources, including the establishment of an *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, and the adoption of the “Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilization”.

51. In 2004, the COP mandated the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.<sup>16</sup> It also requested that the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group address issues related to an international certificate of origin/source/legal provenance, taking into account multilateral approaches to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, including issues such as feasibility, practicality and costs. The COP invited the United Nations Environment Programme, FAO, the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, to cooperate with the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group.

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<sup>13</sup> Decision VII/12, paragraph 5.

<sup>14</sup> See CGRFA/WG-AnGR-4/06/Inf.5.

<sup>15</sup> See also CGRFA-11/07/15.4, *The Ecosystem approach applied to food and agriculture: status and needs*.

<sup>16</sup> Decision VII/19.

52. In 2006, the Conference of Parties adopted the Action Plan on Capacity-building for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing, which at the international level calls for “enhancing synergies and coordination with capacity-building initiatives carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and other relevant organizations”. In 2006, the COP also requested the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to complete its work before its 2010 meeting.<sup>17</sup>

53. FAO has for many years contributed to the debate within the CBD on matters relating to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, with a view to ensure that understanding of the special needs of the agricultural sector are considered, and to ensure synergies and coordination with initiatives carried out by FAO and its governing bodies. The COP has recognized “the special nature of agricultural biodiversity, its distinctive features and problems needing distinctive solutions.” The International Treaty, which is in harmony with the CBD, has now established a Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Commission is expanding its coverage of the sectors of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture, beginning with animal genetic resources: in this context, the COP has recognized that the process of the preparation of *The State of World’s Animal Genetic Resources* “will contribute to [...] access and benefit-sharing of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture”.<sup>18</sup>

54. With the planned expansion of its coverage to all components of genetic resources for food and agriculture, in the context of its MYPOW, the Commission may wish to now consider access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture in general, including in order to contribute to the current CBD processes, so that work in this area moves in a manner supportive of the special needs of the agricultural sector, in particular the need to achieve global food security and sustainable agriculture.<sup>19</sup>

#### IV. STRENGTHENING COOPERATION: A STRATEGIC APPROACH

55. At its Tenth Regular Session, the Commission agreed that its cooperation with the CBD should be strengthened. While cooperation between FAO and its Commission and the CBD has been mutually beneficial, much of it has been *ad hoc*. In the light of the increasing complexity of this cooperation and the resource implications, the Commission may wish to approach future cooperation strategically, and in a planned manner. The following paragraphs explore mechanisms to strengthen cooperation between FAO and its Commission and the CBD, in the light of arrangements currently being developed to strengthen cooperation within the UN system.

##### Improving cooperation between international bodies

56. With the adoption of its MYPOW, the Commission will have a new tool for long-term planning of cooperation with the CBD, in on-going areas of cooperation. The MYPOW will also allow the Commission to plan and initiate cooperation in other areas, such as forest biological diversity, and marine and inland biodiversity, and inform the COP well beforehand of its plans. This will increase the international visibility of FAO and its Commission, build on their comparative advantages, and increase their impact on the international policy dialogue.

57. The COP has emphasized the need to cooperate with relevant biodiversity-related conventions, institutions and processes, with a view, *inter alia*, to exploring the possibility of developing joint work programmes.<sup>20</sup> A practical way of strengthening cooperation between the

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<sup>17</sup> Decision VIII/4.

<sup>18</sup> Decision VI/5.

<sup>19</sup> See also CGRFA-11/07/15.5, *Cross-sectorial international policy issues: status and needs*.

<sup>20</sup> CBD Decision IV/15.

Commission and the CBD would be for the Commission to propose to the COP a Joint Work Plan on Agricultural Biodiversity, as discussed in paragraphs 28 and 29 above, and request its Secretary to discuss practical arrangements with the Executive Secretary of the CBD, and report to its next session. This could facilitate the exchange and sharing of information, enhance synergies and avoid duplication, and promote efficiencies between the reporting requirements of Governments in the two forums.

### **Improving cooperation between FAO and the CBD Secretariat**

58. The revised Memorandum of Cooperation<sup>21</sup> provides an effective framework in which to develop and strengthen the cooperation between the secretariats of the two institutions. Provision is made in the Memorandum of Cooperation for individual cooperative projects to be agreed and appended to it, and for the two organizations to jointly seek extra-budgetary funds for such projects.

59. The COP has welcomed ongoing cooperation with FAO, particularly with the Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention, and other FAO processes on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, at the same time requesting its Executive Secretary to invite the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to join the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions.<sup>22</sup>

60. Although not a Convention, the Commission is the only standing inter-governmental body addressing all components of biodiversity of interest to food and agriculture, and plays a key role as an intergovernmental forum for the negotiation of international agreements, undertakings, codes of conduct and other instruments relating to genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture. The Commission may therefore wish to convey to the CBD's Executive Secretary its willingness to cooperate with the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, and to request that the possibility be explored of its Secretary participating, possibly as an observer.

### **Improving technical assistance, in particular to developing countries**

61. Since 1993, with increasing cooperation between FAO and the CBD, FAO provided substantial advice and technical assistance in relation to relevant activities of the CBD to its Members, on request. Countries increasingly request FAO's support to mainstream biodiversity into national food and agricultural policies and programmes. The COP, in recent meetings, has stressed the need to focus future efforts on implementation of the Convention, for which technical assistance and cooperation will be essential. The Conference of Parties invited FAO and other relevant organizations to take the lead, in cooperation with the Executive Secretary, in the development and operation of enhanced technical assistance activities.<sup>23</sup> The development of a Joint Work Plan on Agricultural Biodiversity would facilitate such activities.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMISSION**

62. FAO has to date relied on its limited financial or staff resources in responding to requests for inputs and support from the COP. While extra-budgetary resources from a number of donors have been important in responding to these requests, there are substantial implications for FAO's Regular Programme of Work and Budget, of two types:

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<sup>21</sup> Available to the Commission, CGRFA-11/07/Inf.16, *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity*.

<sup>22</sup> Decision VIII/16 paragraph 9, Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives.

<sup>23</sup> Decision VIII/8, Implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan.

- *Preparation of substantive technical programmes and activities.* When the subject matter is close to FAO's own substantive activities, the request can sometimes be met within ongoing activities of the Organization. However, a growing proportion of programmes and activities flowing from requests from the COP require substantial extra resources, in a time of budgetary constraints. It will be important to use the provisions of the Memorandum of Cooperation to cost and plan future joint activities, and jointly seek donor support. The Commission may wish to endorse such an approach, and to request donor countries to look favourably at such requests for resources.
  - *Implementation of the Organization's overall response to requests from the CBD.* Many of the CBD's activities have policy implications for FAO and its member countries, in fields of the Commission's mandate. A well planned MYPOW will make it possible for the Commission to better coordinate its work with the work of the CBD, and to promote policy coherence between the food and agriculture and environment sectors.
63. Advice from the Commission is sought on how to further strengthen cooperation with the CBD, and to determine priorities for collaboration and ways and means to addressing them.
64. In relation to overall cooperation and coordination, the Commission is requested to consider the mechanisms to strengthen cooperation between FAO and its Commission and the CBD explored in section IV, and provide guidance to FAO.
65. In relation to the review of the CBD Programme of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity the Commission may wish to:
- Emphasize the need to strengthen efforts to conserve and sustainably manage agricultural biodiversity for global food security, and reiterate the special nature of agricultural biodiversity, its distinctive features and problems needing distinctive solutions;
  - Welcome progress in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity, and address any recommendations it may wish to make in relation to the Programme review to the COP;
  - Emphasize the importance of FAO continuing to lead the implementation of the Programme of Work of Agricultural Biodiversity, to ensure and strengthen the involvement of FAO Members;
  - In expressing its willingness to continue strengthening mutual cooperation with the COP, propose a Joint Work Plan for agricultural biodiversity, and request its Secretary to discuss practical arrangements with the Executive Secretary of the CBD, and report to its next session;
  - Reiterate that *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* will be a timely and valuable input into the review of the Programme of Work on Agricultural Biological Diversity.
  - Highlight the importance of taking on-going FAO processes into account in the review.
66. The Commission may wish to emphasize the importance of strengthening cooperation with the CBD in the fields of biodiversity and nutrition; targets and indicators, including those on plant conservation; and sustainable use.
67. In the context of its MYPOW, the Commission may wish to now consider access and benefit sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture in general, including in order to contribute to the current CBD processes, so that work in this area moves in a manner supportive of the special needs of the agricultural sector, in particular the need to achieve global food security and sustainable agriculture.