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ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

FAO has worked on genetic resources for food and agriculture since the 1960s. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) is a permanent intergovernmental forum. It has developed several international agreements, voluntary undertakings and codes of conduct, to promote and facilitate wise management, and access and benefit-sharing, of genetic resources. To these achievements can now be added the results of the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, held 3–7 September 2007 in Interlaken Switzerland.



The Interlaken Conference's main achievement was the adoption of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*, the first ever international

framework to promote the wise management of animal genetic resources (AnGR). Additionally, at its 11th Regular Session, in June 2007, the CGRFA adopted a Multi-year Programme of Work to facilitate the

coordination and coherence of efforts in the various areas of genetic resources management, as well as to address cross-sectoral linkages. FAO and its CGRFA play a crucial role in supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity's programme of work on agricultural biodiversity.



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ADOPTION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

The overall objective of the *Global Plan of Action* is to support and increase the overall effectiveness of national, regional and global efforts in AnGR management. The *Global Plan of Action* consists of three parts:

- the Rationale;
- the Strategic Priorities for Action; and
- Implementation and financing.

The Rationale describes the objectives of the *Global Plan of Action* and provides an overview of its underlying assumptions.

The Strategic Priorities for Action comprise a set of concrete actions needed to achieve the desired outcomes or improvements in current conditions. The main responsibility for implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* rests with national governments, but the *Global Plan of Action* calls upon governments of developed countries to “attach due attention, including funding, to the implementation of activities within the Strategic Priority Areas of the *Global Plan of Action* through bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.” The CGRFA was requested to oversee and follow up on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

THE INTERLAKEN DECLARATION ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

The *Global Plan of Action* was adopted through the *Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources* in which governments reaffirmed their common and individual responsibilities for the management of AnGR. The *Declaration* notes the significant ongoing loss of livestock breeds and calls for prompt action through the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* to conserve breeds at risk. It acknowledges that maintaining AnGR diversity is essential to enable farmers, pastoralists and animal breeders to meet current and future production challenges, and recognizes the enormous contribution that indigenous communities and farmers, pastoralists and animal breeders have made and continue to make to the AnGR management. By adopting the *Declaration*, governments have committed themselves to implementing the *Global Plan of Action*, to facilitating access to AnGR and to ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.



Learn more:
www.fao.org/dad-is
e-mail: DAD-IS@fao.org



Further information about the work of FAO on biodiversity is available at:
www.fao.org/biodiversity