

Contributions to the HLPF 2016 from the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA)

I. An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level:

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture provides the only permanent forum for governments to discuss and negotiate matters specifically relevant to biological diversity for food and agriculture. The Commission aims to reach international consensus on policies for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use. As of May 2016, 178 countries and The European Union are Members of the Commission. NGOs and CSOs, including from indigenous communities, attend the meetings.

The Commission also prepared and negotiated numerous policy instruments, including technical guidelines and guidance documents providing advice as to the implementation of policy instruments developed by the Commission. The key instruments include: the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources* (GPA-AnGR, 2007), the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (GPA-PGR, 2011) and the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources* (GPA-FGR, 2013). All Global Plans of Action recognize the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers, forest dwellers, pastoralists and animal breeders of all regions of the world have made, and will continue to make for the sustainable use, development and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture. They note the interrelationship between genetic resources and traditional knowledge, their inseparable nature for indigenous and local communities, the importance of traditional knowledge for genetic resources and for the sustainable livelihoods of these communities, especially in protected areas, according to national legislation (PGR), and promote and enable relevant exchange, interaction and dialogue among indigenous and rural communities and scientists and government officials and other stakeholders, in order to integrate traditional knowledge with scientific approaches (AnGR).

The Global Plans of Action therefore require the full involvement of indigenous and local communities in the surveying, inventorying and characterization of the genetic resources they manage, including the related traditional knowledge, and the application of participatory assessment and monitoring tools. They further require specific action that empower, support and build capacity of the indigenous and local communities in the continued sustainable use of the genetic resource, with sector-specific focus, e.g. ‘Support and strengthen the role of forests managed by indigenous and local communities in the sustainable management and conservation of FGR’, ‘Promote the participation of indigenous and local communities in FGR management in the context of decentralization’, ‘Promoting in situ conservation and management of crop wild relatives and wild food plants’, ‘Promote agro-ecosystems approaches to the management of animal genetic resources’.

The Global Plans of Action also aim at improving livelihoods diversification and the development of value chains and niche markets based on local genetic resources, e.g. ‘Support indigenous and local production systems and associated knowledge systems of importance to the maintenance and

sustainable use of animal genetic resources’, and ‘Promoting diversification of crop production and broadening crop diversity for sustainable agriculture’.

A range of policy and technical guidelines for the implementation of the Global Plans of Action stress the need for inclusion and full participation in decision making of small-scale farmers, livestock keepers and pastoralists, and women.

The GPA-PGR encourages realizing Farmers’ Rights as detailed in Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at the national and regional levels and according to national legislation and priorities. The GPA-AnGR notes that in some countries, livestock keepers have specific rights, in accordance with their national legislation, or traditional rights, to these resources; however, there is not defined concept of livestock keepers’ rights comparable to Farmers’ Rights.

The ABS Elements - Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture welcomed by the FAO Conference equally state that indigenous knowledge and culture are integral parts of the management of agricultural biodiversity; and that the involvement of traditional knowledge associated with the genetic resource, the rights indigenous and local communities may have over the resource be taken into account when developing institutional arrangements around ABS, in line with the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nagoya Protocol).

II. Valuable lessons learned on ensuring that no one is left behind:

Experiences from State of the World’s genetic resources assessment reports and country projects indicate that the genetic diversity, peoples’ livelihoods and lifestyles, and production systems are closely interwoven. Drivers of biodiversity loss are often linked to changes in production systems, such as agricultural intensification or land-use changes. Because many smallholders, and especially mobile groups such as pastoralists depend on common property resources for their livelihoods, access restrictions may lead to their marginalization. The Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment developed under the Committee on World Food Security are therefore referred to in Commission recommendations. In the context of access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources, FAO has also collaborated with NGOs and Indigenous peoples and local communities in the development of *Biocultural Community Protocols for Livestock Keepers*.

The Commission continues to monitor the implementation of its instruments, through country reports.