



## CGRFA 15 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2015

CGRFA 15 delegates met in plenary throughout the day to consider cross-sectoral issues, including: the application of biotechnologies for the sustainable conservation and use of genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA); climate change and GRFA; biodiversity and nutrition; and access and benefit-sharing (ABS) with regard to GRFA. Delegates also discussed: animal GRFA, including preparation of the second Report on the State of the World's Animal GRFA (SoW-AnGR) and implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (GPA-AnGR); and forest GR, including follow-up to the GPA for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest GR (GPA-FGR).

### CROSS-SECTORAL MATTERS

**BIOTECHNOLOGIES FOR GRFA CONSERVATION AND USE:** The Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-15/15/7. AFRICA, GRULAC, ASIA and the EU, speaking also for Norway, Switzerland and Turkey (the EU), supported strengthening developing-country capacities to develop appropriate biotechnologies for the characterization, conservation and utilization of GRFA at national and regional levels. BRAZIL underscored the role of triangular cooperation in fully understanding related risks and benefits.

The EU noted that field trials and contained use activities must take place under specific biosafety regulations. The NEAR EAST suggested studying trends and progress regarding the application of biotechnologies in different regions. CANADA noted that the nature of appropriate biotechnologies may differ between regions. The US encouraged enhanced coordination of work and dissemination of updated scientific information. The IPC suggested strengthening regional capacities for research on traditional knowledge of biodiversity and the appropriate use of *in situ* conservation.

AUSTRALIA, IRAN, PARAGUAY and CANADA opposed reference to risk assessment and socio-economic analysis, to avoid duplication of work with other international bodies. BRAZIL favored retaining the references to portray their importance, even if FAO is not requested to conduct similar analysis. ARGENTINA supported removing language on risks and benefits, but underscored the importance of socio-economic analysis. The EU suggested that Parties may conduct such analyses at the national level. The US proposed that members "may" highlight the importance of socio-economic analysis of certain biotechnology applications in the characterization, conservation and utilization of GRFA. AFGHANISTAN supported having the FAO undertake socio-

economic analysis. ETHIOPIA and the IPC highlighted the importance of assessing socio-economic risk. SEARICE supported that FAO work on risk assessment.

The NEAR EAST and CANADA suggested requesting FAO to periodically study trends and progress of the application of biotechnology to the conservation and utilization of GRFA. Noting that provisions for risk assessment already exist at regional and national levels, BRAZIL proposed stating that Parties "may wish to highlight the importance of conducting socio-economic analysis."

After informal consultations, delegates agreed to delete a reference to "addressing benefits and risks of biotechnology" and to add that "Parties may wish to undertake socio-economic analyses of biotechnology applications, where appropriate."

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND GRFA:** The Secretariat introduced documents CGRFA-15/15/6 and Inf.15. AFRICA supported the revised draft Guidelines to Support the Integration of Genetic Diversity into National Climate Change Adaptation Planning. BRAZIL and the US opposed renegotiating the guidelines. ARGENTINA and the US suggested clarifying that the guidelines are "voluntary".

AFGHANISTAN asked whether the activities included in the revised proposal of the programme of work would continue to depend on extra-budgetary sources. ASIA said that GRFA aspects should be considered within national adaptation plans, but opposed developing a separate plan for GRFA and climate change.

The EU highlighted the relevance of addressing both mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the different sectors, such as animals, plants and forests. The COOK ISLANDS highlighted efforts to address food security concerns in relation to climate change, including research on plant GRFA for resilience. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) highlighted the interdependence between climate change and land systems and the synergistic implementation of plans and programmes to address climate change efficiently. BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL stressed the relevance of agricultural biodiversity in national climate change adaptation planning. SEARICE highlighted the contribution of indigenous peoples to climate change adaptation and supported raising their awareness to develop location-specific climate change policies.

**BIODIVERSITY AND NUTRITION:** The US reported back from informal discussions, saying that delegates had agreed to refer to "voluntary" guidelines and to qualify language on research, implementation and awareness as "examples of how mainstreaming could be implemented, depending on each country's needs and capabilities, as appropriate."

Delegates agreed to the compromise text.

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**ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING:** Bert Visser (the Netherlands) reported that the Friends of the Chair group had agreed on text relating to the ABS draft elements, including a proposal to reconvene the ABS expert team. He noted that the group had not agreed on whether to adopt a draft resolution to present this outcome to the FAO Conference, or to forward the CGRFA 15 report without a resolution.

CANADA, supported by the EU, preferred a draft resolution to give greater visibility and recognition to the draft elements. He noted this would provide a source of information to governments who may be considering national action, given the Nagoya Protocol's recent entry into force.

AFRICA expressed reluctance to adopt a resolution, saying the draft elements have not been finalized.

Informal consultations will continue on Wednesday.

### ANIMAL GRFA

Drago Kompan (Slovenia), speaking for Harvey Blackburn (US), Chair of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal GRFA (ITWG-AnGR) introduced the report of the group's eighth session (CGRFA-15/15/9). The EU suggested that FAO continue implementation of the GPA-AnGR, seeking financial resources through, *inter alia*, partnerships. AFRICA emphasized conservation and sustainable use of indigenous breeds and their genetic improvement.

**SOW-ANGR:** The Secretariat introduced the second SoW-AnGR (CGRFA-15/15/10) and related information documents (CGRFA-15/15/Inf.17.1, Inf.17.2 and Inf.17.3) highlighting: the importance of livestock diversity for adapting production systems to future changes; new challenges caused by increased demand for meat; and an increasing proportion of livestock at risk, from 15% to 17% since 2005.

Hungary, for the EUROPEAN REGION (EUROPE), supported by AFRICA, suggested preparing a report summary and translating both documents into all UN languages. The US expressed concern over data availability regarding livestock breeds classified at risk.

CANADA called for the application of statistical tools to accurately reflect the current status of animal populations and breeds. BRAZIL recommended providing further information on locally adapted breeds.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATING OF THE GPA-ANGR:** The Secretariat introduced documents CGRFA-15/15/11, Inf.18, Inf.19 and Inf. 20 and background study paper no.66, underscoring the stepwise approach to reviewing the second GPA-AnGR. Most regions supported the stepwise approach.

AFRICA called for financial and technical support for GPA-AnGR implementation. EUROPE prioritized inviting donors to contribute before discussing maximum budgets or threshold levels for implementation.

ASIA and AFRICA welcomed the draft guidelines for the development of integrated multipurpose animal recording systems, with AFRICA requesting that they be characterized as "voluntary."

EUROPE and AFRICA called for updating information and breed classifications in the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) to ensure informed decisions, as well as maintaining DAD-IS as the global clearing house mechanism. CANADA expressed concern over the DAD-IS' lack of connection to other databases. CHINA underscored the importance of DAD-IS and called for allocation of funds to ensure full geographic representation.

Opposed by ARGENTINA and BRAZIL, the US expressed concern that the use of the terms "exotic" or "locally adapted" may lead to inflation of the number of breeds. Before taking further budget decisions, the US suggested waiting for the results of currently funded projects. The Secretariat clarified a distinction between breeds and national breed populations, noting that a breed may be spread over several countries and

may consist of several national breed populations some of which may be classified as "locally adapted" in one country, and "exotic" in another.

AUSTRALIA and the US questioned references to specific sustainable development goals (SDGs), noting that the post-2015 development agenda is still under negotiation. The Secretariat responded that specific SDGs were mentioned to maintain continuity as the GPA-AnGR had previously supported the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on environmental sustainability and poverty. Delegates nonetheless agreed to the US' request to delete the reference.

### FOREST GRFA

Pierre Bouillon (France), Chair of the ITWG on Forest GR, introduced the report of the ITWG's third session CGRFA-15/15/12. CANADA and the US emphasized the intersessional consultation process to further review the proposed indicators of the implementation of the GPA-FGR, with the US suggesting the need to reduce the number of indicators. The EU proposed that material produced in the process of creating the Report on the State of the World's Forest GR (SoW-FGR), such as the thematic studies, be widely disseminated, including by publishing it on the FAO website. BIOVERSITY INTERNATIONAL stressed that articles drawn from these thematic studies are published in magazines with open access and that the thematic studies that contain further information are available on the FAO website.

**GPA-FGR FOLLOW-UP:** The Secretariat introduced document CGRFA-15/15/13. BRAZIL, supported by the US, suggested that the strategy for the implementation of the GPA-FGR take into account and be consistent with the work of the relevant international instruments and processes related to forests. She also proposed that indigenous peoples and local communities be involved in the process for developing technical standards, where possible.

The EU encouraged regional collaboration on GPA-FGR implementation, and called on FAO to develop information systems to ensure dissemination of information produced during GPA-FGR implementation. ARGENTINA highlighted priority setting for implementation at the country level. AFRICA called for technical support to foster experience sharing, and community involvement in GPA-FGR implementation. The EU and the US supported seeking extra-budgetary funding and donor support for GPA-FGR implementation. The EU and JAPAN suggested careful consideration of a funding strategy.

On coordinating and avoiding duplication of efforts in implementing the GPA-FGR, FAO highlighted collaboration with existing regional networks referenced in the report.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

The threat of an evening plenary motivated delegates to catch up with the agenda so that by the end of the day the meeting was fully on track again. Not only did participants complete all of today's tasks, but they also resolved outstanding issues on biodiversity and nutrition and biotechnologies. Some, however, attributed the swift progress to other reasons, such as slimmed down mandates. One delegate explained that agreement on climate change and genetic resources, for example, is easier to come by, now that mitigation is off this agenda.

Finding agreement on the right way to communicate the Commission's guidance on access and benefit-sharing to the FAO Conference remained nonetheless elusive. While some said a resolution would send a clear message regarding the CGRFA's contribution to implementing the Nagoya Protocol, others cautioned that it could prejudice possible future negotiations on specialized ABS regimes under the Commission. One delegate recommended that the Secretariat should uphold the threat of night sessions to ensure that ABS discussions will be resolved on time.