

Joint statement by Bioversity International and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research to SBSTTA14

Agenda item 4.1.1. Agricultural Biodiversity: Follow-up to requests of the Conference of the Parties in Decision IX/1, 17 May, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in this debate. I am speaking on behalf of both Bioversity international and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research. As most of you may know Bioversity International is an international research organization, part of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. It hosts the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, an independent multi-stakeholder initiative that links researchers with international and national organizations, civil society and indigenous peoples groups.

The Platform seeks to improve the maintenance and use of agricultural biodiversity by synthesizing and sharing existing knowledge, identifying areas where research is needed and stimulating the development of new research partnerships.

Bioversity and the Platform attach great importance to the implementation of the CBD's programme of work on agricultural biodiversity. We believe that this programme has brought a valuable perspective and stimulus to work on the maintenance and use of agricultural biodiversity around the world and that this perspective should continue to complement and inform the joint work plan being developed with the FAO and its Commission.

In the light of this I would like to take this opportunity to update delegates on recent relevant activities and make some comments on document, SBSTTA14/11, provided by the Secretariat.

On Goals Targets and indicators two initiatives are ongoing. The first in collaboration with FAO concerns the development of indicators of ex situ conservation of plant genetic resources which can allow for the integration of information over species, crops, countries and gene banks in a robust and meaningful way. The second initiative is the development of indicators of resilience in socio-ecological production landscapes, integrating information on diversity with that on institutions, traditional knowledge, complexity of production systems and other key properties of these important biodiverse production systems.

Under this heading, although involving a much wider range of work than the concern with indicators and targets, I should report our continuing commitment to the *International Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition*. Bioversity and FAO are now working with 4 countries (Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey) on the development of a full size GEF project through UNEP/GEF which will, directly address key elements of this initiative.

On the Addis Ababa principles and Guidelines for sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, I would like to take this opportunity to draw delegates attention to the information document SBSTTA14/## submitted by Bioversity which comes out of our close collaboration with the Secretariat over the past two years. This explores both the sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity (the continuing availability of agricultural biodiversity to support sustainable agriculture) and the contribution that agricultural biodiversity actually makes to developing more sustainable agriculture production.

Both Bioversity and the Platform have had a strong commitment to working on **on-farm and in situ conservation** of agricultural biodiversity. In the last 15 years we have worked with national programmes, research organizations, civil society partners and farming communities in over 30 countries. This was reviewed in a paper published in the issue of Biodiversity prepared for COP9. Currently we are collaborating on a new analysis which will review lessons learnt and present a framework for identifying those practices that can best support the maintenance and use of agricultural biodiversity on farm. We will of course make this available to the Secretariat, Parties and other organizations as soon as it is completed.

Turning now specifically to the work of the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research I would like to inform you of a specific initiative relevant to proposed joint work plan with FAO.

The Platform has compiled information on the how indigenous peoples and rural communities are using agricultural biodiversity to help cope with climate change. We have reviewed and analysed information from over 250 case studies, all of which can be accessed through the Platform's website.

Three broad conclusions can be drawn from this analysis:

- Firstly, adapting to climate change has usually involved a range of different actions at three levels: ecosystem or landscape; farm or agricultural system; and inter- and intra-specific diversity.
- Secondly, innovation based on a combination of both traditional knowledge and new information has been important, and social, cultural and political dimensions have played a key role.
- Thirdly, use of traditional crop and livestock species and varieties, with new materials where necessary, has been a common feature of farmer and community adaptation actions.

The synthesis report on this work provides information of direct relevance to work on the impact of climate change on genetic resources for food and agriculture, lessons learnt about ways and means to conserve and use genetic diversity to build resilience and the integration of agricultural biodiversity into adaptation and mitigation planning as noted in the Joint Work Plan paragraph 4.5.

Tomorrow, Tuesday 18 May at 1.15, the Platform in collaboration with a number of other organizations, will host a Side Event at which the findings of our analysis will be presented, and where representatives of indigenous communities and researchers will outline some of the key aspects of using agricultural biodiversity to adapt to climate change. We invite you all to participate and promise you an opportunity to taste some local foods.