



PRESS RELEASE

New report addresses need for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into agricultural production and management in East Africa

Montreal, 5 July 2016 –The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have launched a technical guidance document which aims to promote mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services into agriculture through national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and thereby contribute towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The technical guidance document *Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa*, was launched in May to coincide with the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi and in celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May).

“With climate change bringing more frequent and more extreme weather events we need to build more resilient agricultural landscapes and food systems,” said Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, CBD Executive Secretary. “A key strategy to achieve this goal is through sustainable ecological intensification of agriculture, including a reduced reliance on agrochemicals for increasing and improving yields, while minimizing negative impacts on the environment by integrating the ecosystem services delivered by biodiversity into agricultural production systems.”

The report points out that agriculture must achieve the twin goals of food security and environment conservation, while simultaneously increasing production to meet global food demands. In this context, biodiversity and ecosystem services lie at the heart of many solutions for sustainable increases in agricultural productivity that not only deliver better outcomes for food security and nutrition, but also reduce the negative externalities of current agricultural systems.

The environment-agriculture discussion is presently shifting from a polarized debate of trade-offs to a discussion of mutually supporting agendas. To that end, FAO is collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the CBD, through a European Union funded project supporting African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. The goal is to strengthen regional and national institutional capacity for the synergistic implementation of target multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) related to chemicals and biodiversity, for example providing alternative options to unsustainable agricultural practices, including the overuse of inputs such as agrochemicals. The document was prepared



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for the East Africa region to help build institutional capacity for synergistic implementation of MEAs, including the CBD and other biodiversity and chemicals related conventions, and to provide information on how ecosystem services and biodiversity can be mainstreamed into agriculture. Specifically, it provides practical guidance for implementation of ecosystem based solutions that benefit production, and policy measures for mainstreaming ecosystem services in agriculture to support the integration of agricultural concerns at the national level, through the development and implementation of their NBSAPs.

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in East Africa, is available at: www.fao.org/3/a-i5603e.pdf

FAO press release: www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/417489/

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties up to now, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 78 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
