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# COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

## Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

#### Thirteenth Session

Rome, 20 – 22 November 2024

### REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Nineteenth Regular Session, called upon countries to continue implementing the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (Global Plan of Action)<sup>1</sup> with a view to contributing to global food security, sustainable rural development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 15.<sup>2</sup> The Commission further recommended FAO to provide complementary technical and policy support, especially to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.<sup>3</sup>
2. The Commission recommended that FAO continue to support capacity building, including on topics such as animal identification and recording, genetic improvement, sustainable breeding, *ex situ* conservation, agroecology and other innovative approaches, sustainable beekeeping and the development of livestock value chains for smallholders, and to continue to prepare technical guidelines, including on the quality management of animal gene banks according to international standards.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Commission further recommended that FAO continue raising awareness, and encourage relevant stakeholders to continue raising awareness, of the importance of animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (AnGR) and the roles of livestock keepers and of livestock species and breeds and their production systems in the provision of ecosystem services.<sup>5</sup>
4. The Council, at its 174th Session, endorsed the Commission's recommendations.<sup>6</sup>
5. This document summarizes FAO's activities supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action since the Commission's Nineteenth Regular Session. The activities are grouped according to their relevance to the four strategic priority areas (SPA) of the Global Plan of Action. A more detailed inventory of FAO projects, publications, meetings and capacity building events supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action is provided in the document *Summary progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*.<sup>7</sup>

## II. FAO SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

6. Since the last Session of the Commission, FAO continued to support countries in the implementation of all SPAs of the Global Plan of Action, by providing institutional and technical support, facilitating research, developing collaborative partnerships and building capacity. This section provides examples of FAO's activities in the four SPAs and some cross-cutting areas.

### **Strategic Priority Area 1. Characterization, inventory and monitoring of trends and risks**

7. The Commission, at its Nineteenth Regular Session, recommended FAO to continue to provide technical support to further maintain and develop the Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) and to continue to increase its user-friendliness, including tools that facilitate data entry, export and updating, and storage and visualization of geographic distributions of national breed populations, and to consider the inclusion of additional data fields to help increase the visibility and

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2007. *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/a1404e>

<sup>2</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 96.

<sup>3</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 97.

<sup>4</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 98.

<sup>5</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 99.

<sup>6</sup> CL 174/REP, paragraph 33.

<sup>7</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.

use of DAD-IS.<sup>8</sup> It furthermore recommended that FAO continue developing and/or refining cost-efficient methodologies for estimating the sizes of national breed populations, and providing technical support to countries with the estimation of breed population sizes and other data relevant to monitoring the diversity of livestock breeds and managed bee populations.

8. In response to the Commission's recommendations, FAO maintained and further developed DAD-IS<sup>9</sup> while increasing its user friendliness. These activities included the following: (i) development of DAD-IS tools for entering, storing and visualizing data related to the geographic distribution of breeds within and among countries; (ii) general improvements of the user-friendliness, including through the on-going translation of the system into Chinese; (iii) introduction of new data fields to allow for detailed reporting on breeding programmes and on effective population size in the context of within-breed diversity; and (iv) development and testing of a methodology for the collection and estimation of breed population data. Details of these activities are provided in the documents *Monitoring the diversity of animal genetic resources*<sup>10</sup> and *Detailed report on the development of the domestic animal diversity information system*.<sup>11</sup>

9. In 2009, the Commission requested FAO to make status and trends reports on AnGR available to the Commission at each of its regular sessions.<sup>12</sup> In response, FAO has prepared for each subsequent session a report providing this information. The document, *Status and trends of animal genetic resources – 2024*,<sup>13</sup> has been made available for consideration by the Working Group. The status report is based on information in DAD-IS provided by National Coordinators for the Management of Animal Genetic Resources (NC-AnGR). As of September 2024, 180 countries had nominated a NC-AnGR.<sup>14</sup>

10. Since 2022, the proportion of national breed populations for which at least one historical record of population data is available increased from 66 to 69 percent for mammalian species, while it remained essentially constant at 66 percent for avian species. Among the 8 811 breeds reported in DAD-IS, 26 percent are currently classified as being at risk (excluding extinct breeds); 14 percent are classified as not at risk; 52 percent have unknown risk status and 8 percent are reported to be extinct.<sup>15</sup> As of August 2024, 38 countries had reported data in DAD-IS on 91 honey bee species or subspecies, including 21 countries that provided estimates for numbers of colonies for 46 species or subspecies.

11. FAO continued to work through its Technical Cooperation Programme and with various partners to support countries in the characterization, inventory and monitoring of AnGR, in the standardization of methods to undertake these tasks, and in the dissemination of results and related information. During the 2022-23 biennium, FAO technically and/or financially supported projects in Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Mongolia that included activities related to characterization, inventory and monitoring of AnGR. More details about these projects can be found in the *Summary progress report on the implementation of the global plan of action for animal genetic resources*.<sup>16</sup>

12. The Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture (CJN) provided capacity building through training courses and individual fellowships undertaken at either CJN's laboratory in Austria or in the laboratory of a collaborating country. In addition, CJN provided technical support on characterization activities with IAEA

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<sup>8</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 101.

<sup>9</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 103.

<sup>10</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4.

<sup>11</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.2.

<sup>12</sup> CGRFA-12/09/Report, paragraph 39.

<sup>13</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/4/Inf.1.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fao.org/dad-is/national-coordinators/en/>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.

Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP)<sup>17</sup> in six countries.<sup>18</sup> CJN worked directly with scientists in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mozambique to undertake characterization studies on local breeds of cattle, chicken and sheep, respectively.

### Strategic Priority Area 2. Sustainable use and development

13. FAO continued to provide technical assistance in sustainable use and development of AnGR, both directly and through cooperation with other organizations. FAO's technical support and capacity-building focused on animal identification, genetic improvement and genomic selection, breeding programmes, the application of biotechnologies, agroecology and the development of livestock value chains for smallholders.

14. During the intersessional period, CJN continued implementing its Coordinated Research Project (CRP) on "Improving efficiency of animal breeding programs using nuclear and related genomic information – Practical applications in developing countries."<sup>19</sup> This CRP aims to facilitate the use of nuclear and related genomic technologies in countries to enhance the efficiency of breeding programmes for increased milk productivity and dairy animal adaptability. Target species are cattle, buffaloes and camelids. Ten countries<sup>20</sup> receive support under this CRP.

15. During the 2020-21 biennium, 49 countries received support through 41 TCP or extra-budgetary projects<sup>21</sup> involving sustainable use and development of AnGR. These included projects administered by FAO (28 projects, 37 countries)<sup>22</sup> and by CJN (34 projects, 31 countries).<sup>23</sup> The projects address various issues of priority to each country, including agroecological production systems, family poultry production, beekeeping, livestock development, value-chain enhancement, genetic improvement, use of artificial insemination and other reproductive technologies and animal identification and traceability.

16. FAO continued supporting pastoralists and other small-scale livestock keepers, who maintain a large proportion of the world's AnGR. In the Sahel region,<sup>24</sup> support was given to establish national, regional, and local transhumance committees tasked to inform policy development in the countries, which was in line with the FAO technical guidelines on *Improving Governance of Pastoral Lands*.<sup>25</sup> FAO also collaborated with pastoral associations to build capacity in data collection. The data collected is used to produce a bimonthly watch bulletin on livestock mobility, animal health, rangeland health, market prices, conflicts and events that require early action. A regional analysis of pastoral economies and their contribution to the gross domestic product in the target countries, challenges and risks pastoral households encounter, and main coping strategies is also being produced. FAO is implementing a project to strengthen evidence on biodiversity and gender for sustainable livestock transformation in Mongolia, Tunisia, and Uganda. The project aims to fill a critical gap in the availability of harmonized data on the contribution of pastoralism to biodiversity and women's role in

<sup>17</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.

<sup>18</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mongolia, Mozambique and Paraguay.

<sup>19</sup> IAEA. 2021. Improving efficiency of animal breeding programs using nuclear related genomic information – practical applications in developing countries. In: *International Atomic Energy Agency*. Vienna, Austria, UN. [Cited 9 September 2024]. <https://www.iaea.org/projects/crp/d31030>

<sup>20</sup> Argentina, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, China, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

<sup>21</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1, Tables 4 and 5.

<sup>22</sup> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Comoros, Cuba, Fiji, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Micronesia, Mongolia, Niger, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Rwanda, Republic of Moldova, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tonga, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu.

<sup>23</sup> Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

<sup>24</sup> Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

<sup>25</sup> Davies, J. et al. 2016. *Improving governance of pastoral lands*. Rome. FAO.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e3da5b48-920a-4b07-bfa7-0c62e9761511/content>

the livestock sector. FAO also continued to operate the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub,<sup>26</sup> making relevant documents and information on pastoral systems available and facilitating information exchange among stakeholders working in this subsector. The actions undertaken were supported by extra-budgetary funds from the Government of Spain as well as through FAO Regular Programme funds.

17. FAO also undertook various activities to improve the sustainable use and development of the genetic resources of bees that are managed for food and agriculture. FAO has continued to organize events to commemorate World Bee Day<sup>27</sup> and to raise awareness of the importance of honey bees and other pollinators for food and agriculture. These activities have included the First International Forum for Action on Sustainable Beekeeping and Pollination<sup>28</sup> that was organized in collaboration with the Government of Slovenia.

### Strategic Priority Area 3. Conservation

18. In response to the Commission's recommendation to prepare guidance tools on the quality management of animal gene banks according to international standards,<sup>29,30</sup> FAO developed an online *Quality management checklist for animal gene banks*.<sup>31</sup> By responding to the questions in the checklist, a gene bank manager can identify issues meriting further consideration for quality management of a country's *ex situ* collection of AnGR.

19. During the reporting period, FAO also contributed to partners' capacity-building events on conservation of AnGR. Across 2023, the Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health (CTLGH), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), and the African Union - InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) organized a series of regional webinars on strategies for conservation of local poultry, cattle, and pig genetic resources. FAO staff delivered presentations on DAD-IS and the practical guide on cryoconservation of AnGR.<sup>32</sup>

20. During the reporting period FAO supported projects on conservation in four countries<sup>33</sup> and CJN had a single conservation project.<sup>34</sup>

### Strategic Priority Area 4. Policies, institutions and capacity-building

21. In response to the Commission's recommendation continue to support countries in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and to work closely with regional and subregional groups, as well as with NC-AnGR, FAO organized or contributed to 10 meetings and workshops for NC-AnGR during the reporting period. The events were mostly associated with country reporting for *The Third Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (Third Report), but also included general assemblies and working group meetings of the European Regional Focal Point (ERFP) for AnGR. FAO also participated in a seminar organized by the

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<sup>26</sup> FAO. 2024. Pastoralist Knowledge Hub. In: FAO. Rome. [Cited 11 September 2024]. <https://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/en/>

<sup>27</sup> FAO. 2024. World Bee Day | 20 May. In: FAO. Rome. [Cited 10 September 2024]. <https://www.fao.org/world-bee-day/en#:~:text=World%20Bee%20Day%20%7C%2020%20May>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/first-international-forum-for-action-on-sustainable-beekeeping-and-pollination-gives-new-impetus-to-international-cooperation-on-pollinator-protection/en>

<sup>29</sup> International Organization for Standardization. 2015. *Quality management systems — Requirements* (ISO Standard No. 9001:2015). [Cited 13 September 2024]. [www.iso.org/standard/62085.html](http://www.iso.org/standard/62085.html)

<sup>30</sup> International Organization for Standardization. 2018. *Biotechnology — Biobanking — General requirements for biobanking* (ISO Standard No. 20387:2018). [Cited 13 September 2024]. [www.iso.org/standard/67888.html](http://www.iso.org/standard/67888.html)

<sup>31</sup> FAO. 2024. *Quality management checklist for animal gene banks*. [Cited 16 September 2024]. <https://forms.gle/mxAsaR5X3trgmamZ7>

<sup>32</sup> Boes, J., Boettcher, P. & Honkatukia, M., eds. 2023. *Innovations in cryoconservation of animal genetic resources – Practical guide*. FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines, No. 33. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3078en>

<sup>33</sup> Bahrain, Cuba, Iran and Serbia.

<sup>34</sup> Paraguay.

Government of South Africa, explaining the intergovernmental process on AnGR, including the roles of DAD-IS and the Third Report.

22. FAO and its partners contributed to the development and/or implementation of three global projects and 67 regional or national projects involving 67 countries.<sup>35</sup> FAO organized, with partners, seven national, regional and global conferences and capacity-building events.<sup>36</sup> These events included the first ever *Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation*,<sup>37</sup> which was held at FAO Headquarters in 2023 and included sessions and side events related to AnGR management. The conference was attended by nearly 750 people approximately 100 countries. FAO staff have served on the advisory boards or stakeholder panels for several international collaborative research projects.

23. FAO continued to collaborate with the European Federation of Animal Science (EAAP) and ERFP in the organization of special sessions related to AnGR at EAAP annual meetings. Topics of the sessions were the following: (i) Establishing breeding programs in extensive systems (including developing regions) with climate change in mind, and (ii) The role of breeding and genetics in the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector. FAO collaborated with the Iberoamerican Network for Conservation of the Biodiversity of Local Domestic Animals (Red CONBIAND) to develop capacity in the management of AnGR in Latin America and the Caribbean

24. FAO continues to maintain the Domestic Animal Diversity Network (DAD-Net)<sup>38</sup> and regional subgroups as an informal forum for the discussion of issues relevant to the management of AnGR. As of September 2024, more than 3 400 people from 157 countries were subscribed to the network. During 2023 and 2024, an average of more than 200 messages per year were exchanged through DAD-Net. DAD-Net continues to be a unique and effective means of sharing experiences and disseminating information. FAO used DAD-Net to survey countries about capacity building priorities. This process generated around 90 responses and revealed community-based breeding programmes and adaptation to climate change as the two most requested topics.

25. In terms of awareness-raising, in 2024, FAO is the United Nations agency responsible for the International Year of Camelids<sup>39</sup> The events include the promotion of the diverse camelid species and breeds and their uses and special traits, including adaptation to harsh climates. FAO continues to increase its social media presence with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of AnGR. Since 2020, when FAO began posting messages on the @FAOLivestock Twitter account,<sup>40</sup> the number of followers rose to more than 57 000. Content includes regular quizzes on livestock breeds and facts about AnGR.

### III. COLLABORATION

26. As described in preceding sections of this document, FAO maintained and continued to strengthen its interactions with scientific and non-governmental organizations, regional focal points and regional networks during the reporting period. FAO maintains its recognized technical competence in the management of AnGR through participation in various scientific endeavours, including by undertaking in-house research and contributing to research and development projects, organizing and leading sessions at international scientific conferences and writing scientific publications.

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<sup>35</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.

<sup>36</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/fao-global-conference-on-sustainable-livestock-transformation/en>

<sup>38</sup> <https://dgroups.org/fao/dad-net>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.fao.org/camelids-2024/en>

<sup>40</sup> <https://twitter.com/FAOLivestock>

#### IV. THE FUNDING STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

27. The Commission, at its Twelfth Regular Session, adopted the *Funding Strategy for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*<sup>41</sup> (Funding Strategy) and requested FAO to implement it.<sup>42</sup> The Funding Strategy covers “all known and potential sources of financial resources” that support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including bilateral and multilateral support, domestic support, Regular Programme resources of FAO and voluntary contributions to the FAO Trust Account established for supporting national and regional projects for implementation of the Global Plan of Action.

28. The Commission recommended FAO to increase fund-raising efforts and invite donors to contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the Commission invited technical agencies and donors to develop and implement national projects on AnGR, with the wide inclusion of stakeholders and NC-AnGR.<sup>44</sup>

##### Contributions from the Regular Programmes of FAO and IAEA

29. During the 2022-23 biennium, work on AnGR, including the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, contributed to all four “Betters” and nine different Programme Priority Areas (PPA) within the *Medium Term Plan 2022-25*,<sup>45</sup> indicating the multi-factorial contribution of AnGR to food and agriculture. The greatest contribution by far was to the PPA *Better Environment 3: Biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture*. Other PPA receiving substantial contributions are *Better Production 1: Green innovation* and *Better Production 5: Digital agriculture*. During this time period, the portion of FAO’s Regular Programme resources allocated for work on AnGR was around USD 1.7 million. The work emphasized core activities, namely the intergovernmental process, DAD-IS maintenance and development, monitoring of Target 2.5. under the SDGs, and finalization of publications, but also included inputs to cross-cutting initiatives, particularly those involving biodiversity on a cross-sectoral level. Budget allocations and work-plan priorities are foreseen to remain the same for the 2024-25 biennium.

30. During the 2022-23 biennium, the value of FAO TCP contributing to this work amounted to approximately USD 1.6 million, and from the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme through CJN approximately USD 3.5 million. CJN also contributed approximately USD 0.25 million through its CRP programme.

##### Voluntary contributions to FAO

31. FAO received funds from Afghanistan, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates (total of approximately USD 4.0 million) to support the implementation of the Global Plan of Action by means of regional and country projects. For some of these projects, countries provided financial support for domestic activities, with FAO providing technical support. In the other cases, the financial support involved funds the countries had received from donors, specifically the Global Environment Facility and other FAO Members. The funds under these programme cooperation agreements helped FAO provide catalytic funds for special activities for all four SPAs, but primarily SPA 2.

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<sup>41</sup> CGRFA-12/09/Report, Appendix C.

<sup>42</sup> CGRFA-12/09/Report, paragraph 43.

<sup>43</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 97.

<sup>44</sup> CGRFA-19/23/Report, paragraph 98.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/ne576en/ne576en.pdf>

### Resources not under FAO control

32. The Funding Strategy lists four different types of relevant resources, including resources that are not under FAO control. For most countries, FAO does not have detailed information about these resources. However, at its Eighteenth Regular Session, the Commission requested FAO to invite countries to report on projects that contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, for consideration by the Working Group and the Commission.<sup>46</sup>

33. In response to this request, in July 2024, FAO sent an informal message to all NC-AnGR and their alternates inviting countries to report on their projects related to the Global Plan of Action. Responses were received from 21 countries.<sup>47</sup> Information about 90 country projects that were active during the intersessional period are summarized in the document *Summary progress report on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*.<sup>48</sup> The countries responding represented a wide range of levels of economic development. In general, higher income countries reported greater expenditure on AnGR projects. Some countries reported having single projects addressing all aspects of AnGR, whereas other countries reported multiple projects with each of them addressing single species and specific activities. Most projects reported were related to SPA2 (54), followed by SPA3 (48), SPA4 (29), and SPA1 (26).

## V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

34. The Working Group is invited to review the progress made in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. It may wish to recommend that the Commission:

- (i) welcome progress made in implementation of the Global Plan of Action;
- (ii) call upon countries to continue to implement the Global Plan of Action with a view to contribute to achievement of SDGs 2 and 15, and to the sustainable transformation of the livestock sector for: (i) greater food security, nutrition and inclusive economic growth; (ii) improved animal, public and environmental health through the One Health approach; and (iii) efficient utilization of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity;
- (iii) recommend FAO to continue to support countries and cooperate with regional organizations, civil society and the private sector in implementing the Global Plan of Action;
- (iv) invite donors to contribute to the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, including by providing funds to the FAO Trust Account; and
- (v) recommend FAO and all relevant stakeholders to continue and strengthen their efforts in raising awareness on the importance of AnGR and the roles of livestock keepers and of livestock species and breeds and their production systems in providing ecosystem services while adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.

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<sup>46</sup> CGRFA-18/21/Report, paragraph 72.

<sup>47</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland, Gabon, Italy, Mali, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

<sup>48</sup> CGRFA/WG-AnGR-13/24/3/Inf.1.