

## **BusinessMirror**

### **Preserving biodiversity: Effective, lasting solutions based on science and innovation**

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Emphasizing the need to “produce more with less,” Qu Dongyu, director general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), urged all stakeholders in agri-food systems to upscale science and innovation and find “effective and long-lasting solutions” to support biodiversity.

The agri-food sector is a key player in the management of biodiversity as well as its custodian, he said in his opening remarks at the 18th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA). The meeting kicked off on September 27.

The CGRFA is the only permanent intergovernmental body that specifically addresses all biological diversity for food and agriculture, and aims to reach international consensus on policies for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.

The week-long session will address an array of issues in relation to genetic resources for food and agriculture. It will focus on devising and implementing global action plans for animal, aquatic, forest and plant genetic resources—and digging deeper into the worlds of micro-organisms and pollinators. The Commission will also consider a policy response to the first-ever global assessment of The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

Biodiversity loss has been associated with the higher risk of zoonotic pathogen emergence as well as reduced resilience in the face of climate change for food crops and livestock. “We are facing a critical time in the planet’s history,” Qu said.

FAO, which hosts the CGRFA, has been actively involved in global fora such as the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD), the One Planet Summit and the World Conservation Congress, and has been fostering dialogue to help Members effectively contribute to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that will be considered at a major summit in Kunming, China, in October.

He noted that, within the past 12 months, FAO’s governing bodies have adopted a strategy and an action plan on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors.

He also emphasized that agriculture plays a positive role in biodiversity conservation, and insisted on policies that could lead it to be an even greater contributor, as well as aimed to form a bridge leading to more food diversity to feed the world’s growing population.

“Biodiversity allows farmers, breeders, scientist and all other stakeholders along the agri-food chain to keep the agri-food systems up and running,” Qu said. “And it is this diversity that forms the basis of innovation and inspires scientists, the private sector, farmers and traders to discover new solutions and make technological breakthroughs.”

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