



مجلس الإمارات للأمن الغذائي  
EMIRATES FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL



## **IOFS FRAMEWORK OF ACTION FOR COOPERATION ON PLANT AND ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

### **Preamble**

The Workshop on Development of National Gene Banks in OIC Member States, which took place via video conference under the distinguished chairmanship of United Arab Emirates from 5-6 July 2020 and the participation of 157 experts and representatives of member states, OIC institutions and international organisations,

Pursuant to its theme: “Promoting Intra-OIC Food Security through Agricultural Bio-diversity”,

Working in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat, the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB), International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

Recognising the mandate of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security as enshrined in its statute, with particular reference to supporting developed, competitive and resilient food systems in OIC member states through exploration of modern scientific and creative methods for sustainable food production,

Having reviewed the various issues relating to protection of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PAGRFA), especially the status of Gene Banks in OIC member states,

Emphasising the urgency of stimulating, supporting and coordinating national actions aimed at protecting, conserving and sharing of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture in OIC member states,

Reiterating the importance of collective actions towards providing pest-resistant and climate-resilient agricultural inputs, seeds and crops in order to stimulate food production as well as nutrition security for the teeming populations of OIC member states,

Recognizing the potential of public-private partnership to enhance the conservation and use of genetic resources, and in ways that contribute to national economic growth, including jobs creation

Conscious of the need to address and reverse the current growing trends of malnutrition and food-related stunted growth among the vulnerable groups in OIC member states,

Emphasising the fact that addressing the effects of climate change and global warming necessitate urgent action on conservation and sharing of plant and animal genetic resources for increased food and nutrition security as well as bio-diversity,

Recalling the provisions of the relevant IOFS and OIC responses to the devastating effects of COVID-19 on food security, lives and livelihood of member states, especially the vulnerable segments of their populations,

Noting with anxiety the perennial invasion of pests and locusts in some its member states and their damaging effects on agricultural production, thereby necessitating adoption of new pest-resistant seeds and crops,

Expressing appreciation for the massive participation of member states and representatives of OIC and other international organisations in the virtual IOFS Workshop on Conservation and Sharing of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,

Having considered the various recommendations of member states and participants at the Workshop under reference,

**ENDORSES the following Framework of Action:**

I- National Action for Conservation and Sharing of PAGREFA

The capacity for conservation of plant and animal genetic resources by member states varies considerably and requires further extra-national efforts to mobilise the required human and material resources to promote acquisition, conservation, sharing and sustainable use of these resources on both local and national levels. To this end, intra-OIC collaboration shall be intensified among relevant institutions and agencies of member states, through regular exchange of researches and knowledge-sharing.. Member States with advanced knowledge in the area of acquisition and conservation of these genetic resources are encouraged to demonstrate requisite solidarity through supporting other less endowed countries in order to increase regional acquisitions and accessions, which in turn would enhance regional action in this domain.

The envisaged exchange of expertise would include supporting member states in updating their national reports on plant and animal genetic resources, including mounting national awareness campaigns, infrastructure development and establishment of relevant IT portals for plant and animal genetic resources.

The foregoing activities and programmes are to be accorded priorities by member states in their technical assistance support to member states. Accordingly, relevant national and regional development funding agencies in OIC/IOFS member states are invited to provide necessary support for these projects and programmes. In addition, the private sector and net-worth philanthropists in OIC/IOFS member states shall be encouraged to accord priority to these programmes in the interest of promoting a resilient food system within the regional space.

II- Creation of a Gene and Seed Wakf (Endowment Fund)

In view of the on-going popularization of Islamic financial products and Islamic Social Finance and the need for creative means of financing development and research projects, the creation of a Seed and Gene Wakf Fund as an endowment fund by net-worth individuals in member states can be very useful. The Wakf would be utilised for supporting research and development on seed varieties, plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, including infrastructure development for conservation and sharing of seeds and animal genetic resources.

In this regard, efforts shall be intensified to promote Wakf (endowment) mechanisms such as: Private Wakf like the Sheikh Abdul Latif Jameel (J-PAL) Evidence-based Poverty Alleviation Initiatives ; Corporate Wakf, such as Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture

(IRCICA)-OIC Wakf in Istanbul, Turkey; IsDB Wakf, such as Awqaf Properties Investment Fund (APIF) and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD); or the OIC Wakf under the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), among others.

It should be emphasized that before the advent of modern statehood and government, the institution of wakf had succeeded in promoting education, training and research in the Muslim world. Considering the inability of government to singlehandedly meet all the financing needs for development and indeed food security, the traditional Islamic social finance of wakf (endowment), zakat and Sadaqat (Charity) can be utilized in a more systemic manner for promoting biodiversity for food and agriculture in OIC member states. The proposed Wakf will be digital-enabled so that financial solutions can be delivered effectively and efficiently to the countries and their institutions.

### III- Establishment of a Technical Committee

In order to deepen the implementation of the recommendations of this Workshop as well as enhancing ownership of the project by IOFS member states, it is suggested that a Technical Committee be created with membership from member states, private sector and national Gene Banks or research institutions. The mandate of the Committee would include, among others, advising IOFS Executive Board and Secretariat on modalities for coordinating the implementation of the Framework of Action as well as the recommendations of the Workshop.

### IV- Advocacy for Accession to International Treaties

IOFS envisages a strong collaboration with other regional and global institutions in the area of food security and desires to strengthen the advocacy for food system resilience through implementation of global legislative and regulatory instruments on acquisition, conservation and sharing of genetic resources. To this end, IOFS shall take considerable interest in promoting awareness for accession to the various global treaties on bio-diversity and genetic resources. This will include organising training sessions or seminars, aimed at increasing awareness on the objectives of major international treaties such as International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, 2001; and International Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), 2004, cross-country sharing protocols of germplasm, among others.

### V- Creation of Centers of Excellence

Training, research and development are very vital to promoting inclusive action on bio-diversity for food and agriculture. The processes of collecting, documentation, preservation and regeneration of landraces, village populations and crop wild relatives are specialised work that require constant training and familiarization with global standards. Accordingly, countries with relatively high level and specialised skills in this domain can share their expertise, including modern molecular techniques, with other member states through the instrumentality of sub-regional centers of excellence. Initiatives that also facilitate south-south cooperation between countries can also be deployed. It is envisaged that periodic workshops can be sponsored by member states to deepen intra-OIC cooperation in this domain through general meetings of sub-regional Centers of Excellence on PAGRFA. In this regard, the Workshop commends the role of ICBA as a foremost Gene Bank in the sub-region and confirms its suitability and potentialities as a Center of Excellence for the purpose of this Framework of Action.

### VI- Development of Physical Infrastructure

A major aspect of OIC/IOFS actions would be geared towards supporting infrastructure development along the food value chain, which place priority on the upstream genetic resources

acquisition, conservation and use. To this end, the cooperation framework would underscore development of physical infrastructure for genetic resources, including field conservation centers, establishment of laboratories, and studies of traditional knowledge and origins of plants and animal species, upgrading of national collections and accessions, among others.

#### VII- Regulatory and Institutional Capacity Building

In addition to the foregoing, the need for knowledge-sharing shall be extended to empowering countries to develop and upgrade their national regulatory and institutional frameworks through deliberate regional efforts and collaboration with such regional institutions as the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), COMSTECH and ICBA, among others.

**Issued at Dubai, 6 July 2020**