

2014

**Sub-Regional Focal Point General
Assembly for Southern Africa 23–
25 October 2014 JOHANNESBURG,
SOUTH AFRICA**



AFRICAN UNION
**INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES**

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AFRICAN UNION
INTERAFRICAN BUREAU
FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES
AU-IBAR



African Animal Genetic Resources



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Strengthening the Capacity of African Countries to Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of African Animal Genetic Resources

General Assembly of the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa

**Mapungubwe Hotel and Apartments - Johannesburg, South
Africa
23rd to 25th October 2014**

November 2014

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Acronyms

AAGRIS:	African Animal Genetic Resources Information Systems
AGIN:	African Goat Improvement Network
AnGR:	Animal Genetic Resources
ARIS:	Animal Resources Information System
AU:	African Union
AU-IBAR:	African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources
CCARDESA:	Center for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Africa
COMESA:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DAD-IS:	Domestic Animal Diversity-Information System
DAD-Net:	Domestic Animal Diversity Network
DAFF:	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (South Africa)
FAnGR:	Farm Animal Genetic Resources Project
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FP:	Focal Point
GA:	General Assembly
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GMO:	Genetically modified organism
GPA:	Global Plan of Action
ILRI:	International Livestock Research Institute
IPR:	Intellectual Property
ISC:	Interim Steering Committee
ITWG-AnGR:	Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources
LIMS:	Livestock Information Management System
MS:	Member States
NAC:	National Advisory Committee
NAP:	National Action Plan
NARS:	National Agricultural Research Systems
NC:	National Coordinator
NFP:	National Focal Points
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NSAP:	National Strategies and Action Plan
OIE:	World Organization of Animal Health
PANVAC	Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre
PS:	Permanent/Principal Secretary
REC:	Regional Economic Communities
RUFORUM:	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
SACAU:	Southern African Community of Agricultural unions
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
SC:	Steering Committee
SLU:	Swedish Agricultural University
SoW-AnGR:	State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources
S-RFP:	Sub-Regional Focal Point
SRO:	Sub-Regional Organization
TAD:	Transboundary animal disease
TOR:	Terms of Reference
TWG:	Technical Working Group
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme

Acknowledgements

AU-IBAR wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to the National Coordinators, National Focal Points, CCARDESA, ILRI, COMESA, SACAU, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), University of Sokoine and all stakeholders who participated in this very important workshop. AU-IBAR appreciates the sharing of knowledge and information as well as the constructive contribution by the participants to the deliberations of the workshop. This resulted in the workshop achieving its goals of initiating the process of the establishment of a Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa and will contribute immensely to the implementation of the Genetics Projects. AU-IBAR is grateful to the Government of the Republic of South Africa for hosting the General Assembly. The European Union and the African Union Commission are sincerely thanked for providing the funding for the project.

Executive Summary

A General Assembly (GA) was conducted from the 23rd to 25th October 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa for the establishment of the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa. . Thirty nine (39) participants attended the GA, representing 13 Member States from the Southern African region, SADC, COMESA, CCARDESA, AU-IBAR, ILRI, University of Sokoine, Civil Society and non-state Organizations (SACAU and Heifer International). Participants included National Coordinators and Focal Points as well as government department representatives (scientists, livestock registrars), technical partners and consultants. The main objectives of the GA were to (i) establish the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa; (ii) discuss policy and regulatory frameworks for AnGR; (iii) discuss setting up of regional gene banks for AnGR (iv) discuss the proposed African AnGR Information System (AAGRIS) and (v) discuss characterization, inventory tools and technical standards for AnGR. The GA was officially opened by Dr. Modisane, Chief Director in the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). Dr. Nouala, representing the Director of AU-IBAR, welcomed the participants. The Interim Steering Committee (ISC) presented its report including the proposed Action Plan. The GA requested the ISC to present the activities as short, medium or long-term and this was duly done. The short-term activities were noted as follows: Assessment of national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks for AnGR; assessment of existing information systems and conduct of an information needs assessment for database/information system; identifying knowledge gaps in AnGR; identifying breeds at risk; Support/facilitate establishment or strengthening of National Focal Points and formulation of National Action Plans; establish the status of breed characterization. Medium and long-term activities were also presented. The GA adopted and approved the Action Plan. The draft Terms of Reference for the S-RFP were presented and after some deliberations, a small task force reviewed the TORs and made suggestions which were adopted by the GA. The election of the Steering Committee was conducted and the following were elected: Zimbabwe (Chair), Botswana, South Africa and Malawi; South African Studbook Association, Heifer International, SADC, COMESA; CCARDESA, Heifer International, AU-IBAR, FAO, ILRI and RUFORUM. A presentation by AU-IBAR on the prevailing policies, strategies and legislation for AnGR in the various Member States in Southern Africa clearly indicated that these were lacking in most of the countries and this was impeding the development of AnGR. The participants made suggestions on how the policy and legislative environments for AnGR could be improved for better management of these resources in the region with particular emphasis on transboundary breeds, crossbreeding, the use of biotechnology, access and benefit sharing and intellectual property rights. The sustainability of the S-RFP beyond the Genetic Project support was discussed and suggestions made by the GA included: mainstreaming of AnGR activities within existing national and regional structures; allocation of resources at national levels towards implementation of AnGR activities; that AnGR programmes are included in National Strategic and Annual Plans and made a priority on the SADC and COMESA agenda. The proposed African Animal Genetic Resources Information System (AAGRIS) was presented with the preliminary findings from the stakeholder needs assessment. The GA welcomed the initiative and suggested some improvements and warned to guard against similar pitfalls as other databases and information systems. Results of an e-discussion and workshop on tools and protocols for characterization and inventory for AnGR, were presented as well as a road map on the way forward. The proposal for the establishment of regional gene banks for AnGR and the Network of African Gene Banks was presented. The main recommendations of the GA were: (i) that AU-IBAR should make efforts to attend the upcoming COMESA joint ministerial meeting (11-15 November 2014), to raise awareness on the project and make a presentation on the establishment of the S-RFP for Southern Africa; (ii) AU-IBAR should consider re-analyses of current livestock databases and determine the appropriate interventions, to avoid the creation of yet another information system which could be underutilized; (iii) creation of awareness of AnGR issues should be conducted at high levels including at Permanent Secretaries level and heads of regional

organizations; (iv) the GA emphasized that promotion of conservation of AnGR in their natural environments should be a priority with gene banking as a necessary back-up strategy; (v) that AU-IBAR reassesses the outputs and lessons learnt from the breed surveys conducted in the region under the UNDP/FAO/SADC regional project on AnGR.

Introduction and Background

The Global Plan of Action (GPA) for animal genetic resources (AnGR) emphasizes the importance of strong regional institutional frameworks, such as Focal Points (FP) and regional networks, to ensure coordinated and collective action in the management of AnGR. Member States in Africa have established National Focal Points (NFP), which are generally anchored in the Ministries of Agriculture. Africa has made efforts in the process of establishing and/or strengthening Sub-Regional Focal Points (S-RFP) for the management of AnGR in all regions of Africa. Regional workshops to initiate the establishment of these institutions were conducted. Priority intervention areas for AnGR for the various regions were identified and roadmaps with timelines and responsibilities were developed and agreed to. Full reports of these workshops are available. It was agreed that these institutional structures should be put in place before the end of 2014.

The management of AnGR depends to a very large extent on the regulatory and policy situation, among other factors. In Africa, most of the policies affecting AnGR tend to be imbedded in agricultural or at best general livestock policies at country level. This tends to obscure the importance of AnGR to livestock production. This dearth of clear policies on AnGR has resulted in many African countries losing valuable AnGR particularly through indiscriminate crossbreeding and haphazard breeding strategies. Africa has experienced an influx of imported breeds, for crossbreeding with indigenous breeds to “improve” upgrade or replace them. However, in most African countries, these genetic improvement programs have been implemented without clear policies, regulatory frameworks, long-term or strategic thinking. This has resulted in indiscriminate, uncoordinated or uncontrolled crossbreeding activities motivated mainly by immediate gains in productive performance. As a result, many indigenous breeds have been lost through dilution or extinction. Conversely, there have been few genetic improvement programs targeting the selection of highly-adapted indigenous breeds. Genetic improvement through selection is generally ignored as it is deemed cumbersome and long-term with no immediate noticeable or apparent short-term gains.

Africa is home to some diverse and highly adapted animal genetic resources (AnGR) providing food and many other products. However, these AnGR are faced with numerous challenges including genetic erosion, dilution and in extreme cases, extinction. The 1st State of the World’s Animal Genetic Resources (SoW-AnGR) reported that actual population sizes for over two-thirds of African breed populations were missing. Tools and protocols for characterization and inventory of breed populations are available. However, their use by African countries is generally limited. Few countries conduct regular censuses of their livestock populations but most do not report on breed population numbers. It is therefore, difficult for most countries to monitor the status and trends of the various AnGR. For this reason, very few African countries were able to submit updated AnGR information and data to the Domestic Animal Diversity-Information System (DAD-IS) for 2014 as requested by the FAO.

In SADC, some Member States, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, are implementing various *in vivo* and *in vitro* conservation programmes for AnGR. The 1st SoW-AnGR report indicated that globally countries have tended to establish more *in-vivo* conservation interventions than *for in-vitro*, 52% vs 37%, respectively (FAO 2007). *In-vitro* conservation activities are relatively costly in setting up and there is also a lack of technical capacity to manage them. One of the key activities of the Genetics project on conservation is to “support the establishment of regional/sub-regional facilities for *ex situ* conservation, in particular cryogenic storage and establish gene banks for AnGR”. Physical assessments of conservation facilities for AnGR in selected countries in SADC, namely Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe were conducted. Preliminary analyses were carried out to determine the capacity and suitability of conservation

facilities in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Botswana and South Africa have state-of-the-art facilities for *ex situ* conservation with potential to serve as regional conservation centres. Zimbabwe has Matopos Research Institute (28,000ha) which is home to conservation herds of transboundary breeds, Tuli and Nguni cattle breeds, the Matebele goat and Sabi sheep and has the potential to serve as a regional *in vivo - in situ* conservation facility.. SADC can share conservation facilities, information and co-operate on the management and development of these breeds.

There is need to support the setting up of an African Animal Genetic Resources Information System (AAGRIS) which will function as a “one-stop-shop” where users will be able to obtain relevant information and data to acquire knowledge, inform policy makers, raise awareness and promote best practices in the management of AnGR. The information system will be housed within the Animal Resources Information System (ARIS) managed by AU-IBAR.

Therefore, a General Assembly was held for the Sub-Regional Focal Point (S-RFP) for AnGR in Southern Africa from 23rd to 25th October, 2014 in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa with the main objectives to (i) establish the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa; (ii) discuss policy and regulatory frameworks for AnGR; (iii) discuss setting up of regional gene banks for AnGR (iv) discuss the proposed African AnGR Information System (AAGRIS) and (v) discuss characterization, inventory tools and technical standards for AnGR.

The General Assembly was organized in participatory plenary and group work sessions with facilitation from the Genetic Project team. The report of the proceedings is presented below.

Proceedings of the General Assembly

Opening Session

Welcome Remarks - AU-IBAR (Dr Simplicie Nouala)

Dr Nouala, representing the Director of AU-IBAR officially welcomed the participants to the General Assembly. He informed the participants that AU-IBAR through the Genetic Project which is supported by the European Union, had initiated the establishment of S-RFPs in the various regions of Africa in line with the Global Plan of Action. The process involved the establishment of Interim Steering Committees to lead the way towards the creation of substantive S-RFPs. He thanked the ISC for the work done up to the General Assembly. Dr Nouala stated that the task before the participants was to validate the Terms of Reference and elect a substantive Steering Committee. He emphasized that the management of AnGR is better when approached from a regional perspective and that regions can formulate frameworks to suit their needs. He stressed that it was important to have frank discussions and come up with consensus even when there are no agreements on all issues. He warmly thanked the participants for finding time to attend the General Assembly and for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, for agreeing to host the meeting. Dr Nouala stressed the need to move to implementation of actions rather than just coming up with recommendations at the end of the meeting.

Welcome Remarks (Dr. Modisane, Chief Director, DAFF)

Dr. Modisane on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and the government, warmly welcomed the participants to South Africa. He also thanked AU IBAR for choosing South Africa to host the GA at the beautiful venue at Faircity Mapungubwe Hotel and Apartments. He stressed that it was important to strengthen the capacity of both new and old personnel involved in the management of AnGR in the region, by improving co-ordination and networking. He also emphasized the

need to develop the infrastructure required for the conservation of AnGR, to contribute to improving food security and development of livestock production. The alignment of the regional conservation initiatives with global trends is a must for the Southern African region. Generally, there is an underestimation of the contribution of livestock to food security. Yet livestock contributes significantly to livelihoods and food security through milk, meat and other products. In the environment of growing global concerns on deteriorating climate, which has adverse effects on essential factors of livestock production, it is important to develop climate-suitable livestock production systems. Therefore, this initiative by AU IBAR for the management of AnGR in the Southern African region is coming at an opportune time. He hoped that the workshop would be fruitful and achieve its planned objectives and that participants will be able to interact and share their views and experiences. He dutifully declared the workshop open.

Adoption of Workshop Objectives and Agenda

Participants introduced themselves and their functions in their respective countries. Dr. Pissang presented the objectives of the workshop and the proposed agenda. Some changes were made to the agenda due to the fact that some members of the project team were only arriving towards the end of the workshop (**Annex 1**). The discussion on sustainability of the S-RFP was also shifted to the morning session. The agreed agenda focused on the following major issues:

- Establishment of the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa
- Policy and regulatory frameworks for AnGR
- Regional gene banks for AnGR
- African AnGR Information System (AAGRIS)
- Characterization, inventory tools and technical standards for AnGR

The agenda was adopted.

Establishment of the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa

The General Assembly started with the presentation of the report of the Interim Steering Committee (ISC). Mr. Zulu, the Chairperson highlighted that the ISC had met in May at the sidelines of the CCARDESA General Assembly. During the meeting, the ISC discussed the draft TORs of the Steering Committee of the S-RFP for Southern Africa using those developed for the S-RFP West and Central Africa. Appropriate modifications were made to reflect the peculiarities and needs of the Southern African region. He briefly reported on the Action Plan and was asked to present a detailed plan with short, medium and long-term activities. These were presented by Mrs. Januarie (Namibia) as the Deputy Chairperson of the ISC. These were as follows (short-term -ST; medium-term - MT and long-term – LT):

- Assessment of national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks for AnGR (ST)
- Assessment of existing information systems and conduct of an information needs assessment for database/information system for the management of AnGR (ST)
- Identifying AnGR knowledge gaps as potential research topics (ST)
- Identifying breeds at risk and those of economic importance (ST)
- Supporting/facilitating establishment or strengthening of National Focal Points, National Advisory/Consultative Committees for management of AnGR (ST)
- Supporting the formulation of National Action P for the management of AnGR (ST)
- Establishing the status of breed characterization in Southern Africa and identify priority entry points (ST)
- Development of coherent regional policies and regulatory frameworks for the management of AnGR especially transboundary breeds (MT)

- Harmonizing tools and protocols for characterization (MT)
- Characterization and Inventory of transboundary breeds (MT)
- Strengthening Regional livestock breeders associations (MT)
- Supporting priority research initiatives (MT)
- Documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt on management of AnGR (MT/LT)
- Facilitating exchange visits (MT/LT)
- Establish Sub-regional gene bank for AnGR (MT/LT)
- Training of Animal breeders (MT/LT)
- Establishing or strengthening research laboratories supporting biotechnologies for AnGR (MT/LT)
- Develop protocols for benefit sharing including IPR (LT)
- Developing/harmonizing tools for identification and recording (LT)
- Developing and implementing strategies for conservation and sustainable utilization of transboundary breeds (LT)

Presentation of the TORs of Sub-Regional Focal Points and its organs

Dr. Pissang presented the background to the establishment of the Sub-Regional Focal Points, the structure of the S-RFP and the roles and responsibilities of the various governance structures. After the presentation, there were deliberations of whether the General Assembly or the Steering Committee would approve budgets, Action Plans and the general consensus was that the SC would approve and the GA would endorse and concentrate on issues of policy. There was also debate on whether the SC should implement activities or simply assist the Regional Coordinator. It was also suggested that the Regional Coordinator should report to someone. It was agreed that the GA should not elect the Chair of the SC as this task should be left to the SC. There were discussions on the mechanisms for replacing members of the SC, the frequency of meetings of the SC and the GA. In the end it was agreed that a small committee would review the TORs and report back to the GA.

Elections of the Steering Committee Members

After some debate, it was finally agreed that the SADC standing rules would prevail in the election of the SC members. Therefore, the following were elected to the SC with 13 members, representing four Member States; one Breeders Association; two RECs; one sub-regional R&D institution; one NGO; and four technical partners. These were: Zimbabwe (Chair), Botswana, South Africa and Malawi; one Breeders Association (initially Namibia was nominated pending discussions, however, after Namibia indicated the procedures which were required, it was agreed to contact breeders associations in South Africa); SADC, COMESA; CCARDESA, Heifer International, AU-IBAR, FAO, ILRI and RUFORUM.

Presentation on existing policies and legislation on AnGR in Southern Africa

The presentation by Dr. Nengomasha assessed some prevailing issues on policies, strategies and legislation for AnGR in the various Member States in Southern Africa and attempted to highlight issues, shortfalls and gaps which may hinder the proper conservation, utilization and general management of AnGR. The assessments were based mainly on submissions by Member States to the 2nd State of the World's Report on Animal Genetic Resources (SoW-AnGR). It was clear that only a few countries in the region have policies and legislation directly formulated and designed for the management of AnGR. Most of the policies and regulations relate to prohibition of imports and exports of AnGR due to fear of disease, particularly

transboundary animal diseases (TADs). Some policies and legislation were very old and requiring updating. Many of the countries still have draft versions of policies under development. The presentation also noted that there were no policies and legislation on crossbreeding or on transboundary breeds. The issue of biotechnology was an emotive one in the region.

The subsequent discussions highlighted the need for greater advocacy for AnGR in the region which may require some innovative approaches to change perceptions, particularly on the advantages of indigenous or exotic breeds. Some positive trends were however, reported in Namibia where policy makers are being convinced on the importance of AnGR culminating in a meeting on AnGR planned for 19 November 2014. It was also noted that products from indigenous breeds could be branded, especially those produced organically for niche marketing. It was noted that many countries in the region do not have functional breeders' societies and this is hampering the management of some important breeds. The establishment of breeders' societies would significantly contribute to the proper management of AnGR in the region. The meeting also agreed that it would be good if an assessment is conducted on the genetic impact of imported breeds in the region. It was also acknowledged that exotic breeds have their merits and can significantly contribute to the region's livestock production.

Report back of Committee on Terms of Reference for S-RFP

The committee tasked with deliberating on the TORs for the various organs of the S-RFP reported back to plenary. The committee agreed with the memberships of the General Assembly and the Steering Committee. The committee proposed that the General Assembly (GA) shall:

- Endorse technical and financial reports;
- Approve the long-term strategic vision of the AnGR program;
- Task the SC with special assignments when needed;
- Constitute Technical Working Groups (TWG) as well as review results and possibly endorse recommendations of the working groups and task forces;
- Task the Secretariat to implement recommendations;
- Make decisions on the governance of the AnGR program.

Decision making and frequency of GA meetings

- Only Member States can vote.
- Voting at the GA is by majority vote and each MS will have one vote.
- The GA shall have one ordinary meeting every two years.

Steering Committee

- For the organizations that are part of the SC that are also involved in the project implementation, the SC members should be different from the implementing staff
- The chair of the SC will be one of the 4 National Coordinators (NC)
- After the first term, the 4 NCs will be selected based on alphabetical order starting from A. Each year, the country that provides the Chair, will exit the SC and will be replaced.
- After the first term, the representative of the breeders association or a similar organization will be selected based on alphabetical order starting from Z. He/she will be replaced after one term (3 years).
- At the first SC meeting, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the SC shall be chosen. The term for the Chair is one year, the following year the Vice-Chair will become Chair and a new Vice-Chair elected.
- The Secretariat of the SC shall be the Sub-Regional host institution (CCARDESA).
- The other member institutions of the SC will remain the same. If there are staffing changes in any of the institutions, this shall be communicated in writing to the Secretariat.

The SC shall:

- Approve the Annual Work Plan and Budget;
- Approve technical and financial reports;
- Review program progress;
- Provide advice on technical and policy issues on AnGR in Southern Africa;
- Play an active role in discussing and engaging policy makers on matters arising from the program activities;
- Present program progress to the GA
- Oversee the implementation of the decisions of the GA.

Decision making and frequency of SC meetings

- All SC meetings shall be deemed official and representative if the members present at the beginning of each meeting form a quorum. A quorum of the SC meeting shall be made up of at least 50% of the members.
- The SC shall take decisions by consensus, in the event no consensus is reached, decisions shall be taken by voting. In event of a tie, the Chair shall have a deciding vote.
- The SC shall meet at least two times a year: once physically and once electronically.

Group work on existing policies and legislation on AnGR

Three groups were formed randomly to discuss the following issues emanating from the presentation on the existing policies and legislation on AnGR.

What are the gaps in the existing policies on AnGR? Specify

- What should be done about these gaps and how? What are the options (intervention entry points)
- What are the levels of implementation of existing policies?
- How is implementation of policies and regulations monitored and evaluated? What are the mechanisms?

How should Member States and the RECs develop regional policies?

- For transboundary breeds?
- For crossbreeding, conservation and Access and Benefit Sharing of AnGR?
- What policies/regulatory mechanisms are necessary to prevent “loss” of AnGR from the region especially to the developed countries (e.g. Boer Goat, Tuli cattle etc. to USA, Australia)?

Policy formulation process

- What steps and timelines should be followed in the development and formulation of these policies (detailed roadmap)?
- What is the level of consultation in development of policies on AnGR
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in this process?

Group presentations on existing policies and legislation on AnGR

Group 1:

The group noted that policies and legislation should be based on research, suggesting evidenced-based decision making processes. Policies and legislation should cover broader issues on AnGR such as genetic improvement/selection, import/export, crossbreeding other than just breeding. These instruments should also consider and/or recognize that there a novel species which are now recognized as farm animals such as crocodiles and others. It would be advisable if AU-IBAR can develop guidelines for MS and RECs for the development of these policies and legislation on AnGR.

On crossbreeding, the group felt that each country should set up its own strategies and directions for crossbreeding. However, there is need for countries to use existing research findings to develop crossbreeding strategies. The group observed that there are existing documents which could be used for the development of these instruments and these include the FAO guidelines for low input production systems and that countries could share experiences especially those which have the instruments in place.

On transboundary breeds, countries that share breeds need to harmonize policies and legislation on AnGR. Transboundary breeds provide a greater genetic pool from which neighbouring countries can tap into. There is need for research to confirm that transboundary breeds, for example, the Nguni cattle breed are indeed the same breed across borders. The instruments should address issues of access and sharing of genetic resources. The use of transboundary breeds should involve RECs as important stakeholders.

On biotechnology, the group felt that there was need to distinguish between genetically modified organisms and biotechnology. The current positions of MS in the region on GMO's vary widely although the ideal should be to have common positions. The Southern African region should also recognize that in many parts of the world, GMO feeds are widely used for livestock. Member States should be encouraged to use biotechnology for breed conservation and improvement. However, within the region, it would be preferable if GMO products carry clear identification/notification and MS can utilize these at their discretion. It was reported that SADC has a Working Group on Biotechnology but this is not necessarily working on AnGR. And SACAU has held a conference on biotechnology and encourages farmers to make their own decisions on the subject. It was suggested by the GA that SACAU, CCARDESA, AU-IBAR and the consultant Dr. Tawonezvi, constitute a team to work on a position paper on issues related to biotechnology and AnGR.

The group emphasized strong advocacy measures based on research evidence to support the finalization of draft policies where they exist. It was agreed that most of those "draft" policies are not necessarily on AnGR.

Current legislation on imports and exports are OIE regulations for veterinary purposes and not for AnGR although the legislation could be expanded to cover AnGR. The legislation should include monitoring the use of imported genetic materials to prevent "affecting" local genetic materials.

On benefit sharing and IPR, the MS and RECs should review and adopt the *African Model Legislation for the protection of the rights of local communities, farmers and breeders and for the regulation of access to biological resources* developed by OAU. The existence of breed societies would be very useful for such an initiative. Every effort should be made to recognize the hard work, particularly of communities (community property rights) and prevent unauthorized use of indigenous genetic materials under their tutelage. Transboundary breeds should be subject of common property rights and for this the RECs should coordinate the draft protocols for harmonization and utilization of common property rights for two or more countries. And common property rights should not preclude the important issue of access to these AnGR for research purposes.

Group 2:

The group suggested that all countries should conduct assessments on breeds at risk of extinction. The group identified the gaps and potential interventions as follows:

- Lack of appropriate/updated legislation – conduct stakeholder consultation for policy formulation; conduct assessment of AnGR status
- Lack of enforcement mechanisms for import and export policies – harmonize policies on imports/exports;
- Lack of monitoring of exotic breeds/traceability – registration of all breeds
- Lack of traceability of animal resources – develop user-friendly tools for livestock recording, census
- Limited capacity on the management of AnGR – identification of animal breeders and building their capacity; resource mobilization
- Limited biotechnology facilities and skills – strengthen capacity for research, universities and private sector; establishment of regional gene banks

On the development of regional policies, the group suggested that there is need to identify and characterize transboundary breeds and develop and harmonize guidelines on the management of these breeds. The region should develop policies on these breeds and promote the exchange of germplasm.

On crossbreeding policies, the group suggested identification and assessment of crossbreeding policies, if any, and/or develop and harmonize these as regional policies. There is need to raise awareness on the positive and negative effects of crossbreeding and assist communities to design by-laws for crossbreeding and conservation.

Member States should develop mechanisms for conservation and prevent loss of AnGR especially to the developed countries.

The group developed a framework for regional policy formulation process starting with stakeholder consultations; setting up of National Advisory/Consultative Committees; raising awareness on benefits of formulation of regional policies; implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

A point of discussion was the poor utilization of the Livestock Information Management System (LIMS) as countries are not inputting any data and information. Similar challenges could befall AAGRIS.

Group 3

The group proposed the establishment of task forces to consult with key stakeholders leading to the review of current policies and legislations and development of these. This process should be evidence-based. There should be efforts to promote the establishment of Breeders' Societies and raising awareness of AnGR. The group also proposed the establishment of recording and identification monitoring and evaluation systems; conduct of breed surveys and characterization to define breeds; build capacity on management of AnGR (workshops, training, studies); comprehensive engagement of key stakeholders on IPR.

On the low level on implementation of policies and legislation, the group suggested improving advocacy and access to resources to implement programmes and devise a timeframe for Policy Monitoring Plan and evaluation (\pm 5years).

The regional policy development would entail the following:

- Conduct situational and SWOT analysis (short-term 1-2 years)
- Validate findings and make recommendations
- Develop proposals for harmonization of policies at regional level
- Stakeholder validation (3 -5 years)
- Domestication of harmonized policies (>5 years)

- Monitoring & evaluation (continuous)

The key stakeholders and their roles include:

Community (Farmers): custodians of the AnGR

National: NFP- initiate and facilitate the process and to reach consensus at national level; national institutions to provide information on performance records; civil society to promote advocacy for policy reviews/formulations

Regional: RFP - initiate and facilitate the process and to reach consensus at regional level;

Technical Institutions (ILRI, FAO etc.): provide technical guidelines on policy formulation and best practices

AU-IBAR and Member States: resource mobilization for the process

Sustainability of S-RFPs

Two groups were formed to deliberate on how the S-RFP for Southern Africa could be sustained and avoid the situation which occurred in the past.

The key suggestions of the groups were as follows:

- NFPs must be fully functional
- There must be commitment from governments of Member States
- AnGR issues should be included in the budgets for Ministries
- AnGR issues should graduate from project to country programmes
- The S-RFP must strengthen the institutional capacity by supporting the General Assembly, Steering Committee, NFPs, NCs to sustain the management and conservation of AnGR
- Create awareness by rotating GA meetings
- Develop a convincing Concept Note on the value of AnGR,
- AnGR programmes are included in Strategic and Annual Plans
- Regional hosting of S-RFP by CCARDESA is a major opportunity for sustainability
- Make AnGR a priority on the SADC agenda
- AnGR as a priority in the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa
- Can count on continued support from FAO, ILRI, AU-IBAR
- Utilize experiences from the past SADC/FAO/UNDP Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FAnGR) programme
- Most Member States have NCs in place to support the sustainability of the S-RFP

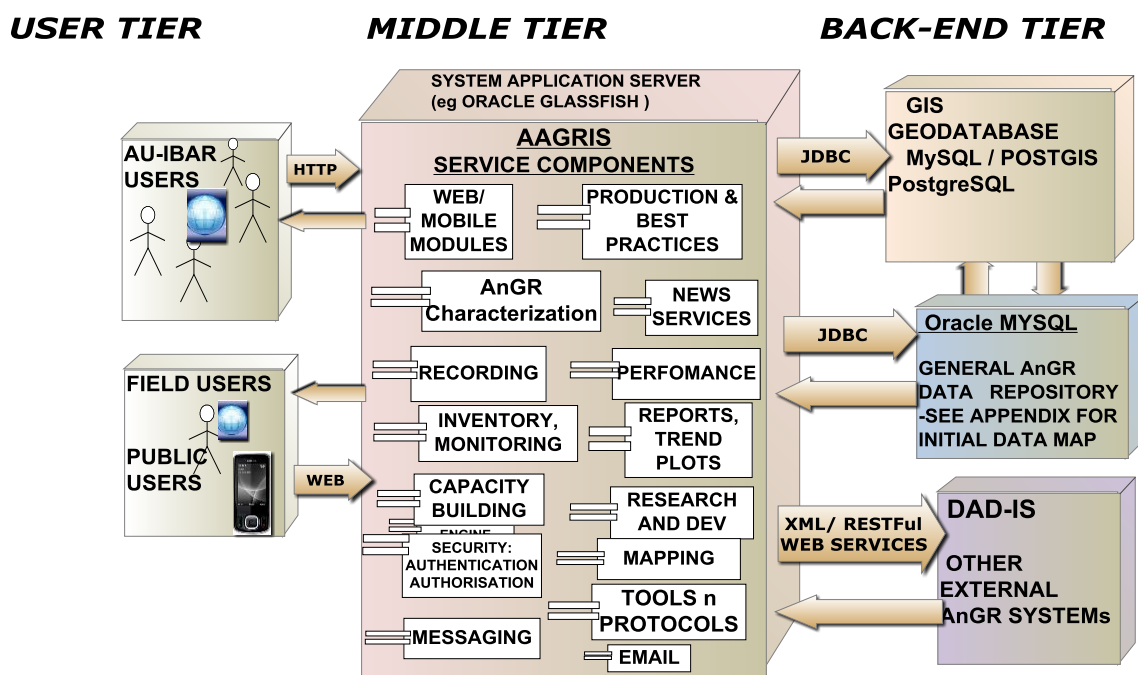
Some strategies were proposed to contribute to the sustainability and these included:

- NCs should preferably be in agencies tasked with policy guidance on AnGR activities
- Encourage breeders' societies to take responsibility over AnGR issues
- Embark on awareness creation and advocacy on AnGR, including factsheets and presentations
- Enable access to communication (email, internet) for NCs and form coordination structures and networks
- Lobby MS and SADC structures for increased support for AnGR
- Undertake resource mobilization through regional AnGR project proposals – these can contribute to sustainability
- Facilitate preparation of AnGR project proposals targeting emerging themes such as Climate Change, Biodiversity
- Capacity building such as the Swedish Agricultural University (SLU) programme to support training of animal breeders/geneticists

Presentation on the African Animal Genetic Resources Information System (AAGRIS)

After a brief introduction on the proposed African Animal Genetic Resources Information System, the consultant involved in the development of the system gave a presentation.

The presentation covered the on-going needs assessment and the proposed system solution. The system will be designed as a “user-owned” system. The consultant noted that user and stakeholder needs assessments were conducted using a questionnaire for which there had been 60 responses at the time of reporting. The questionnaire requested for stakeholders needs in terms of various aspects including: content, data and information, who would provide regular updates, regularity of updates, indicators for tracking status and trends, shortcomings of existing information systems and specific usability features and technical functionality. The interoperability of AAGRIS with DAD-IS of FAO and other databases/information systems was also discussed. From the available information, it is apparent that stakeholders would want information and data on: characterization of AnGR; AnGR mapping and spatial distribution; conservation; livestock recording and performance testing; monitoring of trends; policies and legislation on AnGR; funding and collaboration opportunities; AnGR research and news updates; AnGR value-chains; AnGR experts database. The proposed system architecture was presented, as shown below:



**African Animal Genetic Resources Information System
PROPOSED MULTI-TIER ARCHITECTURE**

In the discussions, it was agreed that National Coordinators working with the National Advisory/Consultative Committees would provide the data and information. National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) could also contribute some data and information. However, it is important that data and information for AAGRIS are provided from only authentic and official sources. Information and data on fisheries and wildlife will be included in AAGRIS. It was suggested to the consultant that there could have been regional specificities and priorities which were not reflected in the presentation. The consultant was advised to aggregate the responses by (i) region (ii) stakeholders and (iii) issues/themes. It was also stressed that AAGRIS is not a project but is part of ARIS. Participants suggested that there was a lot of information already available in the region, such as the breed factsheets produced for the FAnGR project.

Group work on AAGRIS

It was decided that since some participants had not had the opportunity to respond to the needs assessments questionnaire sent out by the consultant for AAGRIS prior to the GA, it would be prudent for them to group discuss the following issues raised in the questionnaire:

- What information and data would you want to be included in the proposed African AnGR Information System?
- What kind of information and data can you contribute to AAGRIS?
- Who will be responsible in the regular updates (how regular) of information and data for AAGRIS
- Shortcomings of the existing information systems
- What features and technical functionality would you want to see in AAGRIS?

Group 1:

The group reported that information is required on: breed characterization - qualitative and quantitative; population size - by species, breed and status if endangered, threatened using the FAO classification; policies; economic impact of breeds. The group reported that there may be need to set up a technical working group to analyze the existing data and information collected during the 2001-2002 breed surveys. The group highlighted that among the main challenges are the inadequate expertise on AnGR; poor data collection and sometimes difficulties in getting information from the private sector; focus is mainly on farm animals neglecting the other species; limited data analyses skills and poor collaboration with government Statistical agencies. National Coordinators and researchers should be responsible for the inputting the data and information into AAGRIS while policy/decision-makers, farmers, RECs, among others, will be recipients of information and data. On how to improve data and information collection, the group suggested better collaboration with Statistical agencies; more surveys/censuses conducted; strengthening extension services for better data and information collection through training; involve researchers and students in data collection; ensure that NCs have access to internet.

Group 2:

There should be information on the geographical distribution of breed populations. Environmental information (agro-ecological zones) should be included in AAGRIS. Other information and data to be included are: research findings on breed performance and characterization; inventory of policies and legal frameworks; status of endemic and transboundary diseases; productions data; and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Information and data are available on breed surveys conducted under the FAnGR project; breed information; animal disease information. The major challenges according to the group include: lack of institutional memory due to high staff turnover; accessibility of data and information; poor coordination among stakeholders; LIMS not utilized fully; lack of resources (financial, software, human). What is required is to train data collectors; establish performance recording systems; develop user-friendly tools for grassroots level use.

Group 3:

The group reported that the following information and data are available: population data, production data; levels of offtake, imports and exports; animal diseases, breed data; environmental data; economic indicators to GDP related to AnGR. However, the group felt that the following should also be included, for farmers: data on productivity such as growth rate, milk yield etc.; marketing information - prices, channels, demand etc.; best management practices - feeding, housing, health, disease control etc.; for policy makers: policies and legal frameworks; general importance of livestock/AnGR; environmental & economic impact; animal population trends; effects of climate change; for researchers: breed characterization - phenotypic,

genotypic; productive and reproductive performance, adaptability data, animal diseases; for development partners: importance of livestock/AnGR; challenges and opportunities; socio-economic impact of AnGR; policies and legal frameworks; environmental issues related to AnGR; for private sector: marketing information, regulations and permits, certification standards, business financing, risks; and for NGOs and civil societies they require all information and data pertaining to farmers, development partners and policy makers. The group noted that the key shortcomings of existing information systems include: poor and inaccurate data provided by countries; submission of data and information by countries is poor; inadequate capacity of available human resources; lack of cooperation by countries to adopt the regional systems - countries tend to prefer their own systems; sensitivity and security of information and data; poor infrastructure to support system; limited skills and knowledge of users; poor internet connectivity. There is need for capacity building and creating awareness on the issues of AnGR; stakeholder participation and interest; continuous monitoring and evaluation.

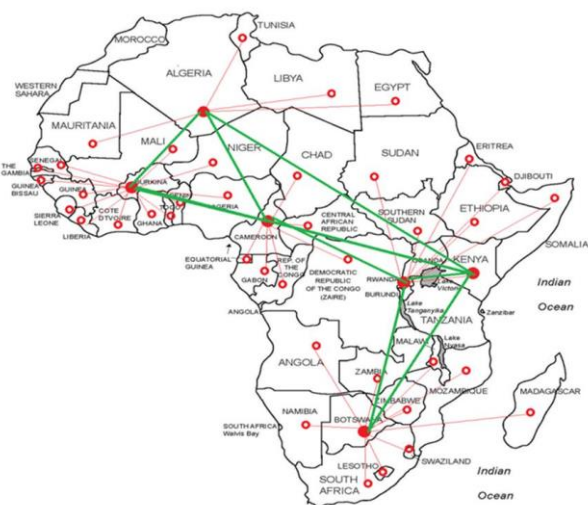
Presentation on tools and protocols for Characterization and Inventory for AnGR

Dr. Mbole-Kariuki presented on the e-discussion and the workshop on the characterization and inventory tools and protocols for AnGR. She highlighted that the activity sought to build consensus on the tools and methodologies used in the characterization and inventory of AnGR. An e-discussion was conducted to answer the query “**What does Africa really want from AnGR tools?**” The e-discussion indicated various shortcomings including: technical incapacity; financial constraints; dis-harmony in the use of AnGR tools; policy impediments; lack of political will; insensitivity or unawareness of the existence of the tools; inactive and/or lack of Committees or consortiums for AnGR; lack of common databases and information hubs. The preferred characteristics of the characterization tools for Africa were also discussed and that the tools should be: standardized; affordable; uniformly applicable; robust; customized; informative; user-friendly; readily available and accessible; and modernized. The e-discussion also established consensus on what approaches are required in the short-term for immediate benefit. These included: revision and harmonization of tools; building a sound technical base; formulation and implementation of policies; raising awareness; fund-raising; establish common African information hubs and consortiums. In the long-term, there is need to establish Livestock Monitoring Committees as sentries of AnGR. The workshop held in Dar es Salaam was to: examine the existing tools and protocols for characterization and inventory; design a strategy to improve utilization of tools and to agree of roadmap with roles and responsibilities. SWOT analyses of the existing tools were conducted culminating in the revision of phenotypic (morphometric, environmental, production and reproduction, adaptive, socio-economic, biological samples, indigenous knowledge), molecular (Single Nucleotide Polymorphism, genome sequencing) and inventory (livestock surveys) tools. The workshop also agreed to adopt the African Goat Improvement Network (AGIN) Protocol photography specifications for phenotypic tools and to conduct training and capacity building for molecular and inventory tools. A road map was also agreed to and key stakeholders identified.

Establishment of regional gene bank

In his presentation Dr. Bosso highlighted the key issues for consideration in the establishment of gene banks for AnGR. He stressed the importance of establishing gene banks, chief among them to preserve and safeguard the wealth of genetic diversity, especially those threatened with extinction, and create a back-up for future generations. The characteristics and critical points of gene banks including: agreements between host institution and owners of stored materials; documentation on stored materials; identification of stored materials; information about stored materials. Issues of ownership and access to the stored materials were

also highlighted. Examples of Material Transfer Agreements and the legal issues were also presented. The findings of the assessments of gene bank facilities and the recommendations thereof were also presented for consideration by the General Assembly. He reported that field assessments were conducted in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The recommendations were that the Department of Agricultural Research in Gaborone, Botswana could be a potential candidate to host the regional gene bank for Southern Africa. The reasons were provided including the existing infrastructure and equipment, the proximity to CCARDESA as hosts for the S-RFP for Southern Africa. It was however, stressed that this was just a recommendation and that the region was free to establish the regional gene bank where it preferred. It was also reported that PANVAC would act as a depository back-up conservation site for the genetic materials from Africa. A roadmap was proposed for the development of a Network of African Gene Banks and the schematic map is shown below.



The proposed network is premised on the model of the European Network of Gene Banks. The proposed governance structure of the network was also presented. It was announced that the Genetic Project would support the establishment of the African Gene Bank and some of the activities. However, long-term financial support should be considered outside the project.

General Discussion

In the general discussion that followed the group presentations, the issue of frequency of data and information submission was mentioned. This would be important to enable monitoring of status and trends of AnGR. No particular decision was made and this requires further discussions by stakeholders.

The participants agreed on the need for a regional approach on the issue of a centre of excellence for the characterization of breeds. On the tools for characterization and inventory, the question of how to monitor that countries are following the tools, was raised. The AGIN was noted as a good example which could be used to monitor how the standards and tools are being used by countries. Participants stressed the need to ensure that Permanent Secretaries in the region are kept informed of progress in the project and AU-IBAR should take lead on this. It was however, noted that most official information comes through the Foreign Affairs ministries and this may be a bottleneck in getting information to the PSs. Some participants also enquired why ILRI was not selected as the back-up gene bank. It was explained that as the African Union, it was proper to utilize the institutions of the Union and PANVAC as a sister department already has the facilities which can be used for this purpose. Furthermore, ILRI is an international institution and not African. It was generally agreed that the process of establishing a regional gene bank may take time and in the meantime the Genetic Project will support other conservation programmes which countries may have in their National Action Plans for AnGR.

Official closing remarks

Dr. Nouala officially closed the workshop. He advised National Coordinators to communicate with AU-IBAR if they felt marginalized or if there was little activity. He thanked the participants for finding time to attend the General Assembly and for their invaluable contributions during the workshop. He hoped to meet some of the participants at the ITWG in Rome in November 2014 where Africa needs to agree on AnGR issues and have common positions, as well as the meetings for 2015.

Outcomes of the General Assembly

The following were the key outcomes of the General Assembly.

- a) The ISC presented its report including the proposed Action Plan for the region which was discussed and adopted. The activities proposed were categorized into short, medium and long term.
 - 1.1. The General Assembly agreed to focus for the time being on the short term actions, namely: (i) Assessment of national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks for AnGR (ii) Assessment of existing information systems and conduct of an information needs assessment for database/information system for the management of AnGR (iii) Identifying AnGR knowledge gaps as potential research topics (iv) Identifying breeds at risk and those of economic importance (v) Supporting/facilitating establishment or strengthening of National Focal Points, National Advisory/Consultative Committees for management of AnGR (vi) Supporting the formulation of National Action P for the management of AnGR (vii) Establishing the status of breed characterization in Southern Africa and identify priority entry points
 - 1.2 The medium to long-term activities included: (i) Development of coherent regional policies and regulatory frameworks for the management of AnGR especially transboundary breeds (ii) Harmonizing tools and protocols for characterization (iii) Characterization and Inventory of transboundary breeds (iv) Strengthening Regional livestock breeders associations (v) Supporting priority research initiatives (vi) Documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt on management of AnGR (vii) Facilitating exchange visits (viii) Establishing sub-regional gene bank for AnGR (ix) Training of Animal breeders (x) Establishing or strengthening research laboratories supporting biotechnologies for AnGR (xi) Developing protocols for benefit sharing including IPR (xii) Developing/harmonizing tools for identification and recording (xiii) Developing and implementing strategies for conservation and sustainable utilization of transboundary breeds
- b) The draft Terms of References for the S-RFP were discussed, amended and adopted. The TORs focused on the governance structure of the S-RFP including the General Assembly and the Steering Committee. For each of these organs of the S-RFP, the membership, the roles and responsibilities, the decision making and the functioning mechanisms and tenure were clearly stipulated.
- c) The Steering Committee for the S-RFP for Southern Africa was elected after the criteria for election were agreed to. The GA agreed to use the standing SADC rules and regulations. Four Members States were elected: Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which will Chair the SC. Upon confirmation, the South African Studbook Association will represent the Breeders' Associations and Heifer International will represent the NGOs and civil society. SADC, COMESA; CCARDESA, AU-IBAR, FAO, ILRI and RUFORUM will also be represented in the SC.
- d) On the identification of policy gaps and intervention entry points, building on the Inventory and analysis of policies and legislative frameworks of the region, the GA suggested the basis, scope and

guidelines for consideration in the development of policies more generally related to AnGR and more specifically those for transboundary breeds, crossbreeding, the use of biotechnology and intellectual property rights. In conclusion, a task force comprising Zimbabwe (Dr. Tawonezvi), CCARDESA, SACAU and AU-IBAR was put in place to work on a position paper on issues of biotechnology and AnGR.

- e) On the sustainability of the S-RFP beyond projects support, the GA suggested to the following:
- Deliberate mainstreaming of AnGR activities within existing national and regional structures;
 - Allocation of resources at national levels towards implementation of AnGR activities AnGR issues should be included in the budgets of Ministries;
 - Establishment/ strengthening of coordination structures at national and regional level (National Advisory/Consultative Committees);
 - Undertaking creation of awareness and advocacy on AnGR using factsheets and pre-designed presentations;
 - That AnGR programmes are included in National Strategic and Annual Plans
 - That AnGR is made a priority on the SADC and COMESA agenda
 - Undertaking resource mobilization through concerted project proposal development at both national and regional levels.
- f) On the report on needs assessment and the preliminary structure of the African Animal Genetic Resources Information system (AAGRIS), the General Assembly welcomed the initiative and suggested some improvements focusing on better targeting of stakeholders, other data and information to be included, identification of existing information and its accessibility. The GA noted the need to overcome the challenges associated with the existing databases and information systems such as failure or impediments to provide or update data and the generally low usage of such tools by the stakeholders. The issue of who submits the data and information to AAGRIS was discussed and it was agreed that National Coordinators would be responsible, using the system designed for ARIS where different stakeholders are granted different levels of access and responsibilities.
- g) On the tools and protocols for characterization and inventory for AnGR, the participants agreed to adopt the African Goat Improvement Network (AGIN) Protocol photography specifications for phenotypic tools and to conduct training and capacity building for molecular and inventory tools. The road map presented was agreed to and key stakeholders identified.
- h) On the challenges and options for the establishment of the regional gene banks the key aspects to be considered in establishing regional gene banks included: ownership and access to the genetic materials kept in the gene banks; the possible use of model Material Transfer Agreements and a legal framework to support public-private partnerships in gene banking. An African Gene Bank Network was proposed, premised on the model of the European Network of Gene Banks.

Recommendations

1. AU-IBAR should make efforts to attend the upcoming COMESA joint ministerial meeting (11th – 15th November 2014), to raise awareness on the project and make a presentation on the establishment of the S-RFP for Southern Africa.
2. AU-IBAR should consider conducting analyses of current livestock databases and determine the appropriate interventions, to avoid the creation of yet another information system which could be underutilized;

3. To improve consideration and funding of AnGR activities at country and regional levels, creation of awareness should be conducted with high level officials including at Permanent Secretaries level and heads of regional organizations;
4. The GA emphasized that priority should be given to measures that promote conservation of AnGR in their natural environments. However, gene banking was necessary as a back-up strategy in case the live populations are lost. Therefore, AU-IBAR was tasked with re-engaging the SADC secretariat on regional cooperation regarding gene banking and to learn from the SADC experience on the operation of a Regional Gene bank for Plant materials.
5. For AAGRIS, the AU-IBAR Genetics project should re-assess the outputs and lessons learnt from the breed surveys conducted in the region under the UNDP/FAO/SADC regional project on AnGR.

A draft General Assembly Communique was produced and read to the participants (copy is shown in the Appendices). It was agreed that the next General Assembly will be held in 2016 and the Steering Committee will propose the country to host the event.

Appendices

Annex 1: Agenda of workshop



“Strengthening the capacities for the management of animal genetic resources in Southern Africa” Regional Workshop

Proposed agenda:

Day 1		Facilitator
Official Opening		
9:00 - 9:30	- Welcome Remarks - AU-IBAR - Official Opening - Hosting government	Host country representative
9:30 - 9:45	Introductions and presentation of Objectives and Expected Outputs of the Workshop	Chairperson ISC
09:45-10:00	Adoption of Agenda by the General Assembly	Sub-Regional Coordinator
10:00-10:30	Health Break and Group Photo	All
SESSION 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-REGIONAL FOCAL POINT		
10:30-11:00	Presentation of the report of the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) Validation of the action plan proposed by the Interim Steering Committee	Chairperson ISC
11:00-12:00	Presentation of TORs, criteria for SC Validation of the criteria for the election of the members of the Steering Committee (SC)	AU-IBAR
12:00-13:00	Election of the Steering Committee	Chairman ISC
13:00-14:00	Lunch	All
SESSION 2: POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR AnGR		Chairperson- Steering Committee
14:00-14:30	Presentation of the inventory and analysis of policies and legislative frameworks	AU-IBAR
14:30-16:00	Group work on identification of policy gaps and intervention entry points	ALL
16:00-16:30	Health Break	All
16:30-17:30	Report back to plenary	Chairperson SC
End of Day		

Day 2		
SESSION 2: POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS (continued)		Chairperson- SC
09:00-09:30	Report from the TORs review Committee (GA, SC & Secretariat)	AU-IBAR
09:30-10:00	Report back to Plenary by Groups	ALL
10:00-10:30	Health Break	All
10:30-11:00	Sustainability of the S-RFP	ALL
11:00-12:00	General discussions of GA	ALL
13:00-14:00	Lunch	All
Afternoon off for the delegates		

	SESSION 3: REGIONAL GENE BANKS FOR AnGR; AFRICAN ANGR INFORMATION SYSTEM (AAGRIS)	Chairperson SC
12:00-12:30	Presentation: Establishment of regional gene bank(s)	AU-IBAR
12:30-13:30	Group Work: Challenges and options	ALL
13:30-14:30	Lunch	<i>All</i>
14:30-15:30	Report back to plenary	ALL
15:30-16:00	Introductory presentation on AAGRIS including needs assessment and preliminary structure	Consultant/AU-IBAR
16:00-16:30	Health Break	All
16:30-17:30	Group Work: Validate information needs assessment and preliminary structure for AAGRIS	ALL
	End of Day	

Day 3		
8:30	Introductory presentation on AAGRIS including needs assessment and preliminary structure	
9:00	Group Work: Validate information needs assessment and preliminary structure for AAGRIS	
	Report back to plenary (AAGRIS)	
10:00-10:15	Health Break	All
	SESSION 4: CHARACTERIZATION, INVENTORY TOOLS & TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR AnGR	Chairperson-SC
10:15-13:00	Presentation and discussions on tools and protocols for Characterization and Inventory for AnGR	AU-IBAR
13:00-14:00	Lunch	All
14:00	Presentation: Establishment of regional gene bank(s)	
14:30	Group Work: Challenges and options	
16:00	Health Break	All
16:15	Recommendations/Workshop Communique	
17:00	Closing Remarks	

Annex 2: Communique



COMMUNIQUE

Strengthening Regional Capacities on the management of Animal Genetic Resources: General Assembly of the Sub-Regional Focal Point (S-RFP) for Southern Africa

23 - 25 October 2014

Faircity Mapungubwe Hotel Apartments - Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The African Union - Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with CCARDESA (Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research Development for Southern Africa) organized a workshop from 23rd - 25th October 2014, focusing on Strengthening Regional Capacities on the management of Animal Genetic Resources: General Assembly of the Sub-Regional Focal Point (S-RFP) for Southern Africa.
2. The workshop was organized under the framework of the implementation of the Project ***“Strengthening the Capacity of African Countries to Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of African Animal Genetic Resources”***.
3. The aim of the workshop was to facilitate the convening of a General Assembly (GA) for the substantive establishment of the Sub-Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) in Southern Africa, as a way of enhancing the management of AnGR through better regional coordination and networking. Specifically, the GA was organised to give the region, an opportunity to:
 - Validate the proposed governance structure and Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee for the S-RFP for Southern Africa;
 - Conduct the election of members of the Steering Committee;
 - Propose mechanisms for the sustainability of the S-RFP;
 - Introduce discussions on the adequacy of existing policies and regulatory frameworks on the use of AnGR in Southern Africa;
 - Initiate discussions on the development of national and regional guidelines for the formulation and harmonization of policies for crossbreeding and *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation;
 - Engage in discussions on procedures for the operation of regional gene bank(s);
 - Discuss the preliminary results of the consultancy for the establishment of the African Animal Genetic Resources Information System (AAGRIS).
4. The meeting was attended by representatives (comprised mainly of AnGR National Coordinators) from 13 Southern Africa Member States, Regional Economic Communities (COMESA), Sub-Regional Research Organizations (CCARDESA), International Research Institutions (ILRI), Civil Society and non-state Organizations (SACAU, Heifer International), Universities (Sokoine University of Agriculture), Livestock Registrars (Botswana and South Africa), National Research Centres (South Africa Agricultural Research Council - Animal Production Institute) and consultants.
5. Dr Nouala, representing the Director of AU-IBAR officially welcomed the participants to the General Assembly. He informed the participants that AU-IBAR through the Genetic Project supported by the European Union, had initiated the establishment of S-RFPs in the various regions of Africa in line with the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources. The process involved the establishment of Interim Steering Committees (ISC) to lead the way towards the creation of substantive S-RFPs. He thanked the ISC for the work done until the General Assembly. Dr Nouala stated that the task before the participants was to validate the Terms of Reference and elect a substantive Steering Committee. He emphasized that the management of AnGR is better when approached from a regional perspective with regions leading the process. He stressed that it was important to have frank discussions and come up with consensus even when there are no agreements on all issues. He warmly thanked the participants for finding time to attend the General Assembly and for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, for agreeing to host the meeting. Dr Nouala stressed the need to move to implementation of actions rather than just coming up with recommendations at the end of the meeting.
6. Dr B. M. Modisane, Chief Director for Animal Productions and Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries representing the Government of South Africa welcomed the participants to the workshop. He thanked AU-IBAR for choosing South Africa to host this important meeting. Dr Modisane recalled the significant importance of building new or strengthening the existing capacities particularly in the arena of animal genetic resources. Capacity building coupled with infrastructure development in AnGR will increase the success of the region as well as the improvement of the food security and livelihoods. Dr Modisane also emphasized on the importance of the alignment to the regional initiatives and global trends. Dr Modisane hoped the workshop will be an opportunity for good

interaction between participants to share views. He finally wished the gathering, fruitful deliberations that will give a clear way forward for the region and declared the workshop officially open.

7. The General Assembly deliberations were in the form of presentations during plenary sessions and group work sessions. The presentations made included:
 - a) Activity report and the suggested action plan by the Interim Steering Committee;
 - b) Draft TORs for the Sub-Regional Focal Point (S-RFP);
 - c) An overview of AnGR related policies and legislative frameworks in the SADC region;
 - d) Proposal towards establishment of regional gene bank(s);
 - e) Progress in the harmonisation of tools and protocols for characterization and inventory for AnGR;
 - f) Introduction on AAGRIS: report on the needs assessment and the proposed structure.

The group discussions were organized around the following issues:

- a) Validation of the action plan proposed by the ISC;
- b) Validation of the criteria for the election of the members of the S-RFP Steering Committee (SC);
- c) Identification of policy gaps and intervention entry points;
- d) Sustainability of the S-RFP beyond the AU-IBAR project's support;
- e) Validation of information on the needs assessment and proposed structure for the AAGRIS;

OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

- i) ***The Action Plan proposed by the ISC*** for the region was adopted and consolidated into Short, Medium and Long term actions.
 - 1.2. The General Assembly agreed to focus for the time being on the short term actions, namely: i) Assessment of national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks - ii) an information needs assessment - i.e. assessment of existing resources/ information systems - iii) establishing the status of breed characterization in southern Africa and identification of priority entry points - iv) identification of breeds at risk and those of economic importance v) supporting/facilitate establishment or strengthening of National Focal points /national advisory committees for management of AnGR vi) supporting the formulation of National Action Plans (NAP) for the management of AnGR and vii) identification of AnGR knowledge gaps in the short term, in order to address them through undertaking research initiatives.
 - 1.3 The medium and longer term actions included the need to: - Harmonize tools and protocols for AnGR characterization - Support priority research initiatives - Strengthen Regional livestock breeders associations - Work with National Coordinators (NCs) to provide regulatory framework for each country - Work through the Steering Committee to harmonize the AnGR regulatory framework - Develop coherent regional policies and regulatory frameworks for the management of AnGR especially trans-boundary breeds - Collaborate in characterization and inventory of trans-boundary breeds - Document and disseminate indigenous knowledge on management of AnGR - Develop protocol for benefits sharing including Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in consultation with FAO for support - Work through the SC to facilitate development of AnGR project proposals by NCs - Develop/harmonize tools for livestock identification and performance recording - Develop and implement strategies for conservation and sustainable utilization of trans-boundary breeds - Establish Sub regional Gene bank - Facilitate exchange visits for experience sharing on AnGR - Undertake training of animal breeders - Establish or strengthen research laboratories supporting biotechnologies for AnGR - Document and disseminate best practices and lessons learnt for the conservation, utilization and management of AnGR.
- j) ***The Draft Terms of references for the S-RFP*** were discussed, amended and adopted. The TORs focused on the governance structure of the S-RFP including the General Assembly, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat. For each of these organs of the S-RFP, the membership, the roles and responsibilities, the decision making and the functioning mechanisms were clearly stipulated.

- k) ***The Steering Committee for the S-RFP for Southern Africa*** was elected after validating the criteria of election. Four Members States were elected: Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe. South African Stud book association will represent the breeders associations and the Heifer International will represent the NGOs.
- l) ***On the identification of policy gaps and intervention entry points***, building on the Inventory and analysis of policies and legislative frameworks of the region, the GA suggested the basis, scope and guidelines for consideration in the development of policies more generally related to AnGR and more specifically those for transboundary breeds, crossbreeding, the use of biotechnology and property rights. In conclusion, a task force composed of Zimbabwe, CCARDESA, SACAU and AU-IBAR was put in place to work on a position paper on the products of modern bio-technology.
- m) ***On the sustainability of the S-RFP beyond projects support***, the GA suggested to the following:
- Deliberate mainstreaming of AnGR activities within existing national and regional structures;
 - Allocation of resources at national levels towards implementation of AnGR activities;
 - Establishment/ strengthening of coordination structures at national and regional level (National Advisory Committees);
 - Undertaking awareness creation and advocacy on AnGRs using fact sheets and pre-designed presentations;
 - Undertaking resource mobilisation through concerted project proposal development at both national and regional levels.
- n) ***On the report on the needs assessment and the preliminary structure of the Information system (AAGRIS)***, the General Assembly welcomed the initiative and suggested some improvements focusing on better targeting of stakeholders, other data and information to be included, identification of existing information and its accessibility. The GA noted the need to overcome the challenges associated with the existing databases and information systems such as failure or impediments to provide or update data and the generally low usage of such tools by the stakeholders.
- o) ***On the challenges and options for the establishment of the regional gene banks*** the key aspects to be considered in establishing regional gene banks included: the issues on ownership and access to materials kept in gene banks - the possible use of model Material Transfer Agreements and a legal framework to undergird Public-private partnerships in gene banking.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

The participants extended their appreciation to the Government of South Africa and AU-IBAR for the warm welcome and the good organisation of the workshop and made the following recommendations:

6. AU-IBAR should attend to the upcoming COMESA joint ministerial meeting (11th - 15th November 2014), for awareness raising to give a presentation on the project and the establishment of the S-RFP for Southern Africa.
7. AU-IBAR should undertake further analysis on the challenges of current livestock databases and determine the appropriate interventions, to avoid the creation of an underutilized Information System;
8. For improved consideration and funding of AnGR activities at country and regional levels, awareness creation should be carried with high level officials including at Permanent Secretaries level and for heads of regional organizations;
9. The GA emphasized that priority should be given to measures that promote conservation of AnGRs in their natural environments. However, gene banking was necessary as a back-up strategy in case the live populations are lost due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, AU-IBAR was tasked with re-engaging the SADC secretariat on regional cooperation regarding gene banking and to learn from the SADC experience on the operation of a Regional Plants Genebank.
10. For the relevance and the necessity to obtain information and data to be fed into the AAGRIS, the AU-IBAR Genetics project should re-assess the outputs and lessons learnt from the breed surveys conducted in the region under the past UNDP/FAO/SADC regional project on AnGRs.
11. The gathering resolved that the next GA will be held in 2016 and the name of the host country will be proposed by the Steering Committee.

Johannesburg, 25th October 2014

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Annex 3: List of Participants

AnGR REGIONAL WORKSHOP, 23 - 25 OCTOBER 2014, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

No	COUNTRY/ ORGANIZATION	DELEGATES NAME
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