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Implementation of the Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition Project in Brazil

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Brazil is home to the world's greatest biodiversity, representing around 15 to 20% of the total number of species on Earth. Much of the biodiversity is edible and nutritious, yet neglected or underutilized. Brazilian agriculture is mostly based on few (and exotic) species, which directly reflects on the dietary habits of the population. As a consequence, Brazil faces high rates of overweight, obesity and micronutrient deficiencies across different population groups. As part of the GEF funded *Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition* (BFN) initiative, Brazil believes that biodiversity for food and nutrition can help fight its current diet-related problems. BFN, coordinated in Brazil by the Ministry of Environment, is working to effectively embed biodiversity into the national food and nutritional security policy framework. As such, the project is adopting three approaches: 1) Knowledge base - nutritional composition analysis of 70 edible underutilized plant species is being carried out in partnership with Federal Universities in all 5 Brazilian geo-political regions, through compilation of data already available in literature, according to the methodology developed by INFOODS/FAO, and laboratory analyses. Data will be available on an online database being developed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, as part of SiBB (Information System of Brazilian Biodiversity) platform and will provide evidence for the inclusion of native species of actual or potential economic value in other partner initiatives. 2) Policy and regulatory framework – BFN is working with partner Ministries and the National Food Security Council (CONSEA) to influence ongoing activities, programmes and policies related to food and nutrition security and participated actively in the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to comply with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity in an effort to halt biodiversity loss in Brazil. 3) Increased awareness and outscaling – One of the reasons for biodiversity loss in Brazil is the limited appreciation of the use of biodiversity for food and nutrition to date. A programme for an online course on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition has been developed, targeting mainly policy makers and technical staff working on the implementation of nutrition, agriculture and social development policies. To raise awareness on biodiversity for food and nutrition, several cultural gastronomic events have been organized in different cities, with cooking workshops and tasting of native biodiverse foods.