

**Intervention by Civil Society Organisations to the Plenary of the
7th GOVERNING BODY (GB7) of the International Seed Treaty (IT PGRFA)
Ed Hammond Third World Network
Intervention on Agenda 13: Global Information System**

Thank you, Mr. Chair

We see some value to clearly organized and accessible information about seeds. For example information on identity, location, and transfer of PGRFA can be very useful in identifying cases of biopiracy.

But today, under the rubric of information, we speak of things well beyond data about where seeds are located and who is using them.

For example, at the last GB, IRRI announced publication online of hundreds of genomes of farmers rice varieties, with no apparent regard for Farmers Rights and benefit sharing implications.

I'm not going to belabor the points, made amply at the Special Event on Sunday and in this Plenary on digital sequence information. The threat to the Treaty is very real, existential even, and must be urgently addressed, and we welcome the discussion to come on the new agenda item on DSI, where we will follow closely and participate.

In the context of dematerialization, GLIS needs to be very careful with whom it works, and to ensure that its partners will uphold the Treaty. In this regard, we are very concerned.

Today's Financial Times says that scientists frequently would rather share a toothbrush than share data they consider particularly valuable. So we must be careful whose ends the GLIS serves, because some wish to misappropriate it.

The DivSeek project as documented in black and white in its own records made public under law, discusses an intention to exploit alleged ambiguities and to manipulate discussion in the Treaty, for the benefit of the interests of one, or maybe a few, of its Parties.

We also have concerns in relation to any GLIS relationship with GODAN, whose approach to information may be inequitable.

Utmost attention must be paid to ensure that GLIS does not undermine the traditional knowledge and rights of farmers and indigenous peoples, including their rights to sequences and their right to control them, including locally.

Finally, we reject the suggestion that GLIS technical work on identification of accessions and interoperability of information systems will itself address the critical questions of ABS and the MLS in relation to DSI, or that the GLIS technical committee is an appropriate venue for such a policy discussion. Rather we look forward to the urgent substantive discussion on those matters under the new agenda item and a distinct process.