

**Intervention by Civil Society Organisations to the Plenary of the  
7<sup>th</sup> GOVERNING BODY (GB7) of the International Seed Treaty (IT PGRFA)**

**Intervention on Agenda 14: Sustainable Use**

Thank you Chair for giving us the floor.

We would like to recognise and thank the Secretariat for their work over the biennium, summarised in Paper IT/GB-7/17/16 and for their efforts to include the organised views of Civil Society in the design and implementation of the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use of PGRFA. We also recognize the work of the Secretariat on facilitating information exchange and training on Farmers' Rights, however, this has been severely constrained due to lack of regular budgetary support.

The farmers who conserve and sustainably use PGRFA and wider agricultural biodiversity, as a vital part of their agroecological production, are providing food to more than 70% of the world's peoples. The PGRFA these farmers dynamically manage and maintain also underpin the productivity, resilience and, ultimately, the security of **all** food systems. Therefore, for everyone, and in particular for these PGRFA-sustaining farmers, Article 9 is inextricably linked to Article 6 and is central to the realisation of the goals of the Treaty. We anticipate that the 2<sup>nd</sup> FAO Agroecology Symposium in April 2018 will reinforce this approach.

Article 6.2 of the Treaty is clear about the model of production that enhances PGRFA on-farm and *in situ*; implicitly it is also clear that other (industrial) models of production, using fewer, and increasingly proprietary genetic resources, will erode PGRFA making it impossible for food production to adapt to new threats and pressures such as Climate Change.

We, therefore, would encourage CPs to continue to implement the Programme of Work and report on this to the Secretariat. We also encourage the Secretariat to seek ongoing collaboration with other bodies and, especially, the organisations of farmers who conserve and sustainably use PGRFA.

We recognise that the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee on Sustainable Use of PGRFA (ACSU) has had a direct impact in stimulating activity on Article 6. It has performed effectively in embedding the Programme Work on Sustainable Use and it is now, we believe, up to the Secretariat to monitor implementation and report back to the next GB.

ACSU has given limited attention to work on Farmers' Rights. The proposed TOR for the next biennium also does not explicitly include urgent and necessary work on Farmers' Rights.

Therefore, in order to address the issues of Farmers' Rights, we would advocate that regular budgetary support should be given to the proposed *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Farmers' Rights, as recommended by the Co-Chairs of the Bali consultation, in order to stimulate necessary actions on the implementation of Farmers' Rights.

This is closely related to the implementation of Article 6. Among other threats to sustainable use, any restriction on Farmers' Rights to save, use, exchange and sell PGRFA runs counter to the objectives of sustainable use and is detrimental to the Treaty. Hence, it should be consistent in national policies and seed laws, and we would like to recall the article 6.2g of the Treaty which calls for the review, and, as appropriate, adjustment of breeding strategies and regulations concerning variety release and seed distribution.

Without the full implementation of Farmers' Rights, the realisation of Article 6 will not be possible and, on both counts, the Treaty will have failed in its purpose.

Thank you, Mr. Chair