

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

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**Intervention on Agenda 17.3: Cooperation with the
Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA)**

Thank you Chair

I am speaking on behalf of CSOs present at this session of the Governing Body.

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is a very important body in the governance of these vital resources – indeed all agricultural biodiversity. It is, of course, also the Mother of our Treaty.

As Parties know, one element that dominated the negotiations, over 7 long years, was having an internationally-binding instrument that would ensure the realisation of Farmers' Rights for the peasants across all regions who provide food to more than 70% of the world's peoples. This was in order that present and future generations would be able to benefit from the wisdom, knowledge and diversity of the PGRFA developed by these peasants over millennia and which they continue to dynamically manage on-farm. This management enables PGRFA to continue to adapt to new, and ever more pressing, challenges, such as Climate Change. We deeply believe that farmers' seed systems are the backbone not only of the past but also will be for the future of world food production. This is reflected to some extent in the Voluntary Guide on National Seed Policy Formulation adopted by the Commission.

It was this recognition of biodiversity-enhancing peasant farmers as essential for the success of the Treaty that Farmers' Rights and their realisation became, and still are, a crucial pillar of the Treaty, relevant not only within the context of Article 9 but across all Articles of the Treaty. The full realisation of Farmers' Rights is of paramount importance to the Treaty. The proposed Working Group, with membership including representatives of the organisations of these farmers, is essential.

We remind you of this history lest you forget the significant contribution made by the Commission then – and its contribution that continues today, now across all biodiversity for food and agriculture, which is also sustained by small-scale food providers worldwide. We expect this perspective will be incorporated in the Commission's report on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

It is the Commission that must retain the oversight of the Governance of all GRFA. The relations of the Treaty with the Commission should continue to be seen in this light.

In this context, we are impressed by the level of coordination and cooperation between the Secretariats of the Treaty and Commission and their commitment to work together on key processes and would wish this to continue as proposed in the draft resolution and with a mutual focus on the promotion of farmers' seed systems, protected by Farmers' Rights.

Thank you.