

**Guy Kastler – La Via Campesina and the International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food
Sovereignty**

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Agenda item 13: Global Information System

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. Open internet access to digital sequencing information on PGRFAs, shared by the Treaty's Global Information System, could act in breach of either the Treaty, or the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The digital sequencing information found in each PGRFA could be considered as an integral part to the latter, and accessing such information is linked to benefit-sharing obligations and to the ban on claiming intellectual property rights, and indeed any other right that may limit access to: the PGRFA, its genetic parts or components. It is clear to us, peasant farmers, that living plants can only be considered as a whole.

Some researchers and the industry, however, believe quite the opposite. They believe that digital sequencing information is not linked to the PGRFA that it is found in. In this scenario, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples thus applies, and in particular the obligations regarding free, informed prior consent and benefit-sharing. Digital sequencing information that bears information on an associated function does not constitute a scientific creation once it has been patented. The information directly comes from the traditional knowledge of the farmers and indigenous communities who have bred and conserved the PGRFAs that contain these sequences and describe their function.

Against this background, the Treaty should not disseminate such digital sequencing information that comes from PGRFAs without restriction, until the following have been achieved: ensure that benefit-sharing is upheld, a ban is in place on claiming intellectual property rights or any other rights that limit facilitated access to the PGRFAs found in the Multilateral System, their genetic parts or genetic components.