

## **CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT**

### **EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEED TREATY (IT PGRFA)**

#### **International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty**

**Ali Razmkhah**

#### **Agenda 15.1 Cooperation with the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA)**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to address this item. I am speaking on behalf of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty.

1. We welcome the Commission's recent landmark report, the first ever State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. This report shows that PGRFA cannot be seen in isolation, but is a living part of evolving ecosystems. The State of the World report also shows that agroecology is an important approach for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA through an ecosystem approach. This perspective underlines the fundamental importance of protecting Farmers' Rights to save, exchange, and sell their seeds to ensure that they continue to adapt their biodiverse seeds to diversified and agro-ecosystems, which are evolving to cope with new contexts and climate change.
2. We therefore call on the Commission to include an in-depth analysis of Farmers' Rights in the third State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. We note that the second State of the World included only 1.5 pages on this. For this in-depth analysis, the Commission should take advantage of the findings of the AHTEG on Farmers' Rights.
3. We also call on the Treaty and Commission to ensure that Farmers' Rights be taken up as a major topic on the agenda of the international symposium on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in 2020.

4. We welcome the cooperation of the Treaty and the Commission on targets and indicators, and call on them to recognise that biodiverse peasant seed systems, dynamically managed in the context of collective rights, and corporate industrial seed systems do not have the same objectives or ways of functioning, and that differentiated targets and indicators to monitor each of them are necessary.
5. Lastly, while we welcome and appreciate the need for cooperation between the Treaty, the Commission and the CBD, we see that controversial issues, such as DSI are passed from one forum to the other in an effort to postpone any meaningful decisions. The Commission, though due to discuss DSI in 2021, may defer a decision on this matter to its 2023 session. The Treaty cannot wait until that date to resolve this issue in order to continue its work on the other issues on its agenda. We urge the vast majority of governments here in the room, which recognise that genetic information is an integral part of genetic resources, to prevent this mis-use of the UN system in the interests of a small number of seed corporations.