

STATEMENT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY
EIGHT SESSION OF THE ITPGRFA GOVERNING BOPDY
International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty

Marciano da Silva

7. Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the International Treaty

Thank you, Madam Chair,

I am a member of the Brazilian Small-scale Farmers Movement and I speak on behalf of La Via Campesina and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC).

As we have seen in many parts of the world, the current trend of privatising natural resources, from minerals and oil to seeds, is leading to increasingly violent confrontations with indigenous and peasant communities, who are trying to defend their territories, their way of life and the biodiversity which we all need. Attacks on governments that defend farmers' rights and indigenous communities, including the one we witnessed yesterday in a country which has made an enormous contribution to the Treaty, further weaken their resilience.

Forty years ago, governments began to discuss the creation of an international framework for plant genetic resources, and fifteen years ago the Treaty entered into force. Thirty years ago, we were also talking about farmers' rights yet, to date, no concrete progress has been made. Only industry access has been facilitated, with no success where payment and fair and equitable distribution of benefits are concerned.

The increasingly challenging global political situation is a result of the political instability which exists in many regions – and the deterioration of democracy leads to a loss of PGRFA.

What do biodiversity and Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture mean to us?

They support agroecological production. They are a vehicle for our knowledge. They promote environmental resilience. They improve the health of people and of our planet. They are a result of our knowledge and our collective rights and cultures. They require freedom to choose support systems and crops. They strengthen our food autonomy. Today, we wish to applaud the actions of governments who, both here and in their national territories, have defended our inalienable rights to keep, use, exchange, and sell our seeds.