

STATEMENT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

EIGHT SESSION OF THE ITPGRFA GOVERNING BOPDY

International Planning Committee (IPC) for Food Sovereignty

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Opening session

We represent the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, an autonomous and self-organized global platform of 6,000 organizations and 300 million small-scale food producers, rural workers, indigenous peoples and grassroots social/community movements whose mission is to advance the food sovereignty agenda.

The context in which we, farmers, indigenous peoples and small-scale food producers worldwide work, conserve and sustainably use PGRFA, is changing at an ever-increasing rate.

The Treaty entered into force 15 years ago, but now in an environment threatened by climate change, our food sovereignty, and that of our children, is at stake.

And today we are worried because two new elephants in the room are threatening the Treaty :

- The first is Digital Sequence Information and its potential to circumvent benefit-sharing (if DSI does not fall within the scope of the Treaty), as well as its potential to privatize the PGRFA in the Multilateral System by allowing patents on native traits;
- The second is gene drives. This technology could make certain important species or varieties disappear; for example Amaranth, which is considered a weed in the US, but is a vital and nourishing traditional food for many cultures worldwide.

Should we allow the development of such a technology, which could destroy our peasant seeds, wild crop relatives, animals, microbial fungi and other living organisms that are essential for sustainable ecosystems? A technology that threatens to destroy our food sovereignty, indigenous and peasant seed systems?

It is important that the 8th Session of the Governing Body's discussions consider these realities and integrate them into its decisions and work program.

We welcome the progress made on Farmers' Rights. We ask that the findings be translated into voluntary guidelines to establish legal frameworks on Farmers' Rights to allow for the protection and recognition of our peasant and indigenous seed systems for implementation in national and sub-regional.