



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

Celebrating the Guardians of Crop Diversity

Ninth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GB-9)

The International Treaty works with farmers, plant breeders & policy-makers around the world to save, share and take care of the seeds that feed us all.

GB-9 Key Messages:

1. **Conserving crops is vital for the future of humanity:** The world is currently facing the triple threat of climate change, biodiversity loss and rising food insecurity. The COVID-19 global pandemic and, more recently, the war in Ukraine have exposed our common vulnerabilities and act as warning signs that we must strengthen multilateral cooperation to save, share and take care of the basic building blocks of our food. **Conserving crop diversity today ensures food security tomorrow.**

More info: In order **to ensure a sustainable future, it is essential to have a sustainable present.** It is critical to save the crop diversity we have left. Genebanks around the world play a critical role in safeguarding the seeds and other plant material that grow into the crops that feed us. It is imperative that multilateral cooperation for conserving and sharing the seeds of plants that feed us is given due attention in the UN **Global Biodiversity Framework**, which is expected to be as much a turning point in conserving biodiversity as the Paris Climate Accord has been for climate action.

2. **Farmers are among the unsung heroes and guardians of the world's crop diversity, and contribute directly to global food security:** Smallholder farmers and indigenous communities have managed the world's crops and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture for millennia, and should be adequately included in national and international policies, such as the UN Global Biodiversity Framework.

More info: The variety of the foods available to humanity today is due, in large part, to farmers and local and indigenous communities around the world. They are simultaneously **custodians and innovators.** Smallholder farmers and indigenous communities, particularly those in the centres of origin and diversity, have been the guardians of the world's plant genetic resources for millennia, and along with genebanks, play a vitally important role in maintaining the biological diversity of our food crops. They are pivotal when it comes to saving, sharing, and caring for the seeds of the food crops that feed the world.

3. **Every segment of society has a role to play in saving the diversity of the plants that feed the world:** The responsibility of ensuring the conservation of crop diversity and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture is a **universal** one. In order to tackle the substantial risks of food biodiversity loss, we must mobilize support from **all sectors of society**, including strengthening domestic resource mobilization and developing new innovative funding schemes.

More info: Farmers, genebanks, seed companies, the food industry, consumers, teachers, parents, governments – everybody has an important role to play in encouraging, supporting and ensuring that current and future generations can enjoy a healthy and diverse diet containing a wide variety of plant diversity. This requires new ways to mobilize support for the sustainable use of the existing bounty of food crops, and for the conservation of these precious resources for future generations.

General International Treaty Key Messages:

1. **Saving, Caring & Sharing:** The International Treaty makes sure the plants that feed the world continue to exist and remain available for the common good of all. It **works around the world to take care of the seeds and plants that feed and nourish us all.**
2. **Multilateral System:** The International Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing is currently the **largest global genepool for sharing plant genetic material for food and agriculture.** It has already enabled more than 6 million transfers around the world at an average daily rate of 1000 transfers a day.
3. **Farmers' Rights:** The International Treaty is the **first legally-binding international instrument to formally acknowledge the enormous contribution of indigenous people and smallholder farmers as traditional custodians of the world's food crops,** and it calls on nations to protect and promote their rights to save and use the seeds they have taken care of for millennia.

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