

# FARMERS' RIGHTS

## The critical role of farmers

For centuries, farmers and indigenous communities have domesticated wild plants and made them suitable for agriculture. They bred in new traits, such as higher yields and resistance to drought or disease, and shared their seeds and knowledge freely. Humankind continues to benefit enormously from the past and present experience and collective sharing of farmers all over the world.



Farmers' Rights are crucial to ensuring farmers can continue their roles as custodians and innovators of crop diversity.

## Role of the Treaty

The Treaty is the only legally binding international agreement which recognizes the enormous and continuous contribution of farmers and indigenous communities in the conservation and development of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.



To meet the challenge of safeguarding the world's food security there is an urgent need to ensure that the rights of farmers are recognized, protected and promoted.

More than half of the world's food today is produced by 1.5 billion small-scale farmers.



Ensuring Farmers' Rights helps to safeguard crop genetic diversity, which is the basis of all food and agriculture production in the world.



Georgina Smith/CIAT

Traditional agriculture techniques have been developed over many generations and this valuable knowledge is shared within farming communities.



Farmers have the right to **participate in decision-making processes** at the **national level**.



**80% of seed used by smallholder farmers in developing countries are sourced from the informal seed system\***.

\* [bioversityinternational.org/sdgs/](http://bioversityinternational.org/sdgs/)

## The Treaty and Farmers' Rights

The Treaty gives national governments responsibility for implementing Farmers' Rights through provisions on:

**The Protection of traditional knowledge (TK).** TK includes know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity. It offers huge potential for building resilience and adapting agriculture to climate change.



**The right to equitably participate in sharing benefits.** Sharing benefits includes: access to seed and propagating materials; participatory plant breeding between farmers and scientists; strengthening farmers' seed systems, community seed banks and conservation; and, other capacity building activities that contribute to the conservation of crop genetic diversity.

**The right farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed and propagating material, subject to national law.** The informal seed supply system consists of farmer-managed seed production activities and is based on traditional knowledge and local distribution mechanisms. Farmers produce, disseminate, and access seed directly from their own harvest, through exchange and through local seed and grain markets.



Farmers showcasing knowledge and **exchanging experiences on traditional agrobiodiversity products** at the "Potato Park", Cusco, Peru



Farmers make a **significant contribution** to world food security and to achieving the globally agreed **Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity targets**.



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