



SOUTH CENTRE

South unity, South progress.

South Centre intervention to the UPOV Consultative Committee on the issue of interrelations with the FAO ITPGRFA

17 March 2016

Chairman, distinguished delegates,

I appreciate the opportunity for the South Centre, an intergovernmental organization of developing countries, to make an intervention to the UPOV Consultative Committee on this issue. We applaud this effort towards promoting the participatory and inclusiveness of the process.

South Centre is here today because we recognize the importance of both formal and informal seed systems and ensuring equity in farming systems, particularly in developing countries. There is an urgent need for countries to take measures to protect and promote farmers rights, in accordance to Article 9 of the FAO ITPGRFA and toward achieving the United Nations (UN) agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Countries through the SDGs are committed to tackling hunger not only by increasing agricultural productivity but also the incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, and family farmers, as well as by ensuring sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices adapted to climate change.

Countries are also committed through the SDGs and international agreements to maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, and ensure access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

Protecting farmers' practices with respect to saving, using, exchanging and selling seeds and other propagating material is central to achieving these objectives.

The issue of interrelations of UPOV and the ITPGRFA is crucial to advance the realization of farmers' rights.

The result from of the discussion on interrelations should be to facilitate the enactment and implementation of legislation by members of UPOV Union and contracting parties of the FAO ITPGRFA that promotes the full and fair exercise of farmers' rights.

South Centre responded in 2014 to the invitation of the Governing Body of the FAO ITPGRFA by submitting comments on the issue of interrelations between the FAO ITPGRFA, UPOV and WIPO. The submission is publicly available on the treaty website <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/south-centre-submissions-interrelations-upov-wipo>

With regards to the current exercise to identify possible areas of interrelations, South Centre suggests that the draft list of issues be extended to include in addition to Article 9 provisions, including 9.1, the Preamble of the FAO ITPGRFA and Article 6.

South Centre agrees that there is a need for deeper analysis on the issue of interrelations between UPOV, the FAO ITPGRFA, as well as with the WIPO. Thus, we support the establishment of an independent experts committee to undertake a report.

We also support the idea of a symposium to share experiences and views on the implementation of the UPOV Conventions and the FAO ITPGRFA. We kindly request, in continuing with the participatory and open nature of the discussion, that observers and in particular, farmer organizations, are invited and supported to participate in the symposium.

I thank you for your attention.

Viviana Munoz Tellez for the South Centre