



**CSM Proposal for a an HLPE report on, and a special event of the CFS on
“Coherence in the Global Governance of Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture to Food Security and Nutrition”
as part of the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work
(MYPOW) 2018-2019**

Background information regarding each proposed topic together with strong justification of food security and nutrition policy aspects

Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GRFA) are an important component of agricultural biodiversity, which underpins the food system and is essential for realising the Right to Food. The governance of genetic resources takes place in multiple international bodies – some of them under the UN system and some of them not – with different rules of decision-making and with different interests¹. Reviewing, in the CFS context, the specific contribution of each of these bodies’ policies and regulations to the role of genetic resources for improving food security and nutrition would be important for providing greater guidance on how these bodies could better contribute to food security and nutrition. It would also improve policy coherence among them, something which is currently lacking. Diverse, locally adapted seeds and breeds, selected, developed and conserved in situ and on-farm under local growing conditions, are essential for ensure the possibility of adapting to future climate changes and to promoting resilience. While some governance structures promote sustainable use of seeds on-farm, others restrict peasant farmers’ access to GRFA and gene banks and promote varieties under some form of intellectual property, developed for industrial monocultures. These varieties cannot be used for selection and development of new and better adapted populations / varieties. Meanwhile, farmers are organising themselves to improve their access to seeds: Farmers’ organisations/ CSOs report a surge of autonomous local and regional initiatives in community-based seed systems, which increase the exchange of seeds, knowledge and experience, locally and at intra- and cross-regional levels.

¹ For example, the UN system includes the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The World Intellectual Property Organisation is a self-funding agency of the United Nations. Outside the UN system, there is the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

Description of how the topic contributes to CFS objectives and mandate as well as explanation of the value add/rationale for the Committee addressing this matter

CFS MANDATE and VALUE ADDED:

Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and wider agricultural biodiversity underpin a resilient model of food production that contributes to enhancing food security and nutrition for all human beings. Since there is currently a deep incoherence in the governance of genetic resources for food agriculture and a proliferation of different governance regimes dealing with the issue, the CFS is the only body that has the mandate to convene a process that could improve policy coherence and coordination in order to enhance food security and nutrition.

CONTRIBUTION TO CFS OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Through improving the coherence of the global governance of genetic resources for food and agriculture, the issue would address two of the three overall objectives of the CFS:

(A): “Enhanced global coordination on food security and nutrition questions”

There is a lack of coherence by the various governance regimes where decisions are made about genetic resources for food and agriculture. Furthermore there is a need to include farmers' organizations and other small-scale food producers in these governance spaces as meaningful participants (currently they are allowed in as observers, if at all).

(B): “Improved policy convergence on key food security and nutrition issues”

Decisions on the governance of genetic resources for food and agriculture and wider agricultural biodiversity are taken by different institutions (the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Convention on Biological Diversity, UPOV, and the World Intellectual Property Organization). There is no coordination between them since it is not questioned that that each has no right to encroach on the prerogatives of the other. The final outcome is a confusing, contradictory and inefficient global strategy to conserve, sustainably use and develop agricultural biodiversity, and , *inter alia*, to improve access to these resources by small-scale food producers and strengthen farmers' rights over their seeds (as required under article 6 and article 9 of ITPGRFA).

RELEVANCE AND GLOBAL IMPACT:

Genetic resources are one of the fundamental and always necessary resources for producing food and for achieving food security and nutrition. This is true of all production systems and in all regions of the world. Food producers rely on genetic



resources not only as the basis of their production but also for direct consumption and nutrition.

NO DUPLICATION:

While some of the above-named institutions provide reports to each other's governing bodies and working structures, this has not led to increased policy convergence and coherence. For example; restricted access to, and reduced diversity of, GRFA facilitated by some of the organisations conflicts with the need for increasing agricultural biodiversity in agro-ecosystems favoured by others.

KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE:

The numerous challenges in coherence and effectiveness of various governance mechanisms over PGR are examined in depth by many experts. For example:

- Halewood, M. et. al. 2013, Crop Genetic Resources as a Global Commons: Challenges in International Law and Governance, Earthscan.
- "Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and Farmers' Rights: an analysis of the relationship between the Nagoya Protocol and related instruments" (C. Chiarolla, S. Louafi, M. Schloen) in The Nagoya Protocol in Perspective: Implications for International Law and Implementation Challenges (Brill/Martinus Nijhoff: 2013).
- Berne Declaration 2014, Owing Seeds, Accessing Food: A Human Rights Impact Assessment Of UPOV 1991 Based on Case Studies in Kenya, Peru and the Philippines).

ROME-BASED AGENCIES SUPPORT:

FAO is the main RBA working specifically on PGR, but both IFAD and WFP are also very concerned with issues such as the impacts of climate change on PGR, livelihoods and nutritional aspects, etc.