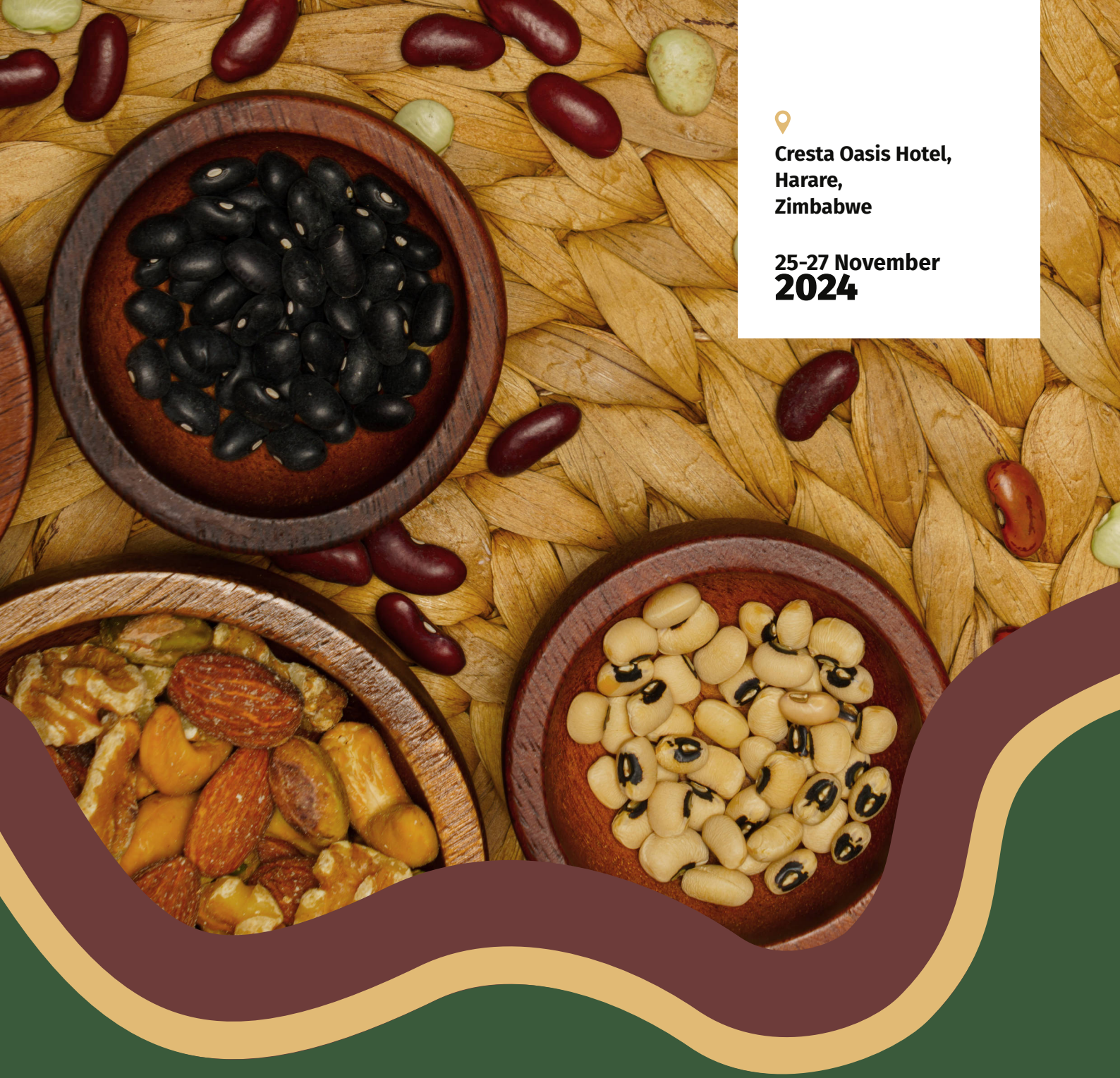


Cresta Oasis Hotel,
Harare,
Zimbabwe

25-27 November
2024

FROM BREEDING FOR DIVERSITY TO SEED REGULATIONS / LAWS

How to promote an enabling environment for farmers' seed systems?

Sharing experiences between Europe and Africa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CTDO would like to express sincere gratitude to all those who contributed towards the successful holding of the workshop, and to all the presenters who were able to share their knowledge and expertise.

Special thanks go to our sponsors, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Benefit Sharing Fund of the ITPGRFA for their generous support, which made the workshop possible.

The organization wishes to thank the farmers, farmer representative organisations, CSOs, government departments, academia, and other research institutions for taking active participation and sharing ideas during the workshop. Finally, CTDO also expresses its profound gratitude to the organizing committee members, whose dedication, insights and expertise aided the smooth flow of the workshop.

ABBREVIATIONS

BSF	Benefit Sharing Fund
CTDO	Community Technology Development Organisation
CSB	Community Seed Banks
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CAS	Consistency, Accessibility and Suitability
DUS	Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability
EU	European Union
GB	Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FMSS	Farmer Managed Seed System
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
NGB	National Gene Bank
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHM	Organic Heterogeneous Materials
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding
QDS	Quality Declared Seed
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SCCI	Seed Control and Certification Institution

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During November 25th to27th, 2024, an international workshop took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, to promote the sharing of experiences between Southern Africa and Europe on breeding for diversity and an enabling legal environment for farmers' seed systems. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA, also referred to as the Treaty), with the support of several non-governmental organisations, projects, and donors supporting farmers' seed systems in various African countries, bringing together more than 70 actors including policymakers.

The ITPGRFA functions as a platform for contracting parties to address critical issues on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and Farmers' Rights, among other issues. The Treaty encourages contracting parties to develop appropriate policies and legislation that are more supportive towards cultivating agrobiodiversity and enabling farmers' seed systems.

The Tenth Session of the Governing Body meeting requested contracting parties and stakeholders to organise regional workshops to raise awareness on the implementation of Article 5 & 6, and 9 of the Treaty. Recognising the importance of the diverging legislative frameworks and its obligations under the Treaty, CTDO held a multi-donor workshop with AIC, SDC, NORAD, SIDA, GIZ, and BSF of the Treaty with the participation of a variety of civil society organisation and policy makers, which included OXFAM, Rete Semi Rurali, COSPE, FiBL, CTDO PELUM ASSOCIATION, ESAFF, CICOD, CTDT, ZAAB, TPHPA, ELDS, NIRAS, National Gene Bank Mozambique, and DARSS ESWATINI. The objective of the workshop was to promote the sharing of experiences among regions and countries on breeding for diversity and the provision of an enabling legal environment for farmer managed seed systems within the framework of the ITPGRFA.

The outcomes of the workshop were as follows:

- A Regional Position Paper (Report) on national implementation of Articles 5, 6 and 9 of the Treaty.
- An Information Document for the next session of Governing Body of the Treaty (GB11), as requested by the GB Resolutions on Farmers' Rights and Sustainable Use.
- Inputs to be provided to the African Union policy process on farmer-managed seed systems.
- The foundations laid for a possible comparative analysis across projects and countries and make a new proposal derogating the formal seed system.

Rationale and Objectives of the Workshop

The models of seed legislation in Africa and Europe are very similar, with each system providing

for the registration of varieties in catalogues, the certification of seeds marketed, the alignment of the registered varieties to the properties of distinctness, uniformity and stability (DUS), and with the public authorities playing a leading role in the phase of registration and certification. With this linear approach having originated in Europe in the latter half of the twentieth century, it has evolved as the standard to follow and is employed by many countries in the Global South with the goal of creating a commercial seed system. But the idea that this formal system is the only one dominating the European landscape is mistaken, just as it is mistaken to think that this approach fits the needs of all farmers in Europe and beyond. Instead, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of multiple seeds systems and the importance of diversity both within and between seed systems to strengthen food and nutrition security, as well as for preserving and supporting agrobiodiversity.

Following the Tenth Session of the Governing Body of the Treaty held in November 2023, the adoption of new resolutions concerning conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources (Res. 06/2023) and Farmers' Rights (Res. 07/2023) encourage a shift in the legislation governing seed systems. Indeed, the European Union has embarked on an overhaul of its seed regulations to align itself with new objectives such as the conservation of agrobiodiversity. We henceforth find ourselves at diverging pathways as the European Union rehauls its legislative framework to make room for diversity and farmers' seed systems while most countries in the Global South adopt the old European seed legislation focused on uniformity and the formal seed sector.

The Harare workshop aimed to address this central issue by reviewing the key regulatory bottlenecks in relation to breeding for diversity and farmers' seed systems, and exploring how an enabling environment for the latter could look like. Findings will be used to provide inputs to the ongoing policy process of the African Union on farmer-managed seed systems.

Common Needs & Bottlenecks

Countries presented their national contexts and legal frameworks in the workshop, during which all countries identified the existence of two main seed systems: the formal or commercial seed system and the informal or farmer-managed seed system (FMSS). The formal seed system supplies only about 20% of total seed demand and is dominated by a select few high value crops such as maize and vegetables. FMSS are estimated to supply the remaining 80% of seeds of many different species possessing high genetic diversity.

Presenters noted the critical role of smallholder farmers in conserving, selecting, and storing, exchanging, and producing seed of locally adapted varieties. Despite this critical role, FMSS face many challenges, ranging from unpredictable weather patterns to poor post-harvest handling and lack of mechanization. Coupled with a general lack of governmental support, farmer-managed seed may suffer from poor physical quality with low germination rates, subsequently contributing to crop failure and poor yields.

Amongst key challenges being faced in trying to promote FMSS, presenters noted the lack of supportive policies and legislation, absence of political will, inadequate funding, and lack of appropriate documentation and recognition of farmers' knowledge and innovation. Despite some countries recognizing the existence of FMSS in their national seed policy (e.g. Uganda), national seed laws almost exclusively recognize the formal seed system. All countries, for example, only allow seed of a registered variety to be sold or distributed at the national level. And since the variety registration system sets strict conditions regarding the Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) of a variety, this makes it difficult to register farmer varieties that are more heterogeneous.

Whereas some countries have implemented the Quality Declared Seed (QDS) system to facilitate a cheaper and decentralised seed quality control mechanism, this system also requires varieties to be formally registered, and many workshop participants questioned its suitability for the needs and characteristics of FMSS.

It was observed that seed security entails sovereignty by the farmers to have freedom to choose the types of crops and varieties they want to grow and being able to access good quality seed of well-adapted varieties at the right time. In this context, it was stressed that there is need to recognize both seed systems (the formal and FMSS) as not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other. Yet, with the existing regulatory frameworks almost exclusively supporting the first, it was considered essential to establish legal and institutional support for FMSS, including the recognition of farmers as maintainers and developers of agrobiodiversity.

Towards an Enabling Environment for Farmers' Seed Systems

The second day of the workshop was organised as a World Café around five thematic areas along the seed value chain: 1) Community Seed Banks (CSBs) & gene banks, 2) breeding, 3) variety registration, 4) seed certification, and 5) seed production & marketing. All participants provided inputs on bottlenecks and good practices/experiences.

Group 1 addressed issues affecting gene banks, CSBs, and the interactions between them. Participants called for more governmental support for CSBs or their institutionalisation into government programs, with formalised linkages between CSBs and national gene banks being established. One option mentioned was to decentralize seed banks to the provincial level and

create networks and systems that ensure accessibility of services (seed distribution). In addition, the multiple functions of CSBs were emphasised, ranging from CSBs acting as centres of excellence or knowledge hubs within local communities, to operating as local income-generating businesses. Among the proposals were the review of educational curriculums to include the seed banking concept and the creation of a Community of Practice around CSBs.
Group 2 focused on breeding, in particular participatory plant breeding (PPB) and participatory variety selection. It also included issues relating to access and benefit-sharing and intellectual property rights. Key takeaways were the importance of local registers or inventories of farmers' varieties and the establishment of community protocols and by-laws on biodiversity. The need for policy support for PPB was highlighted, such as the incorporation PPB into (decentralised) national breeding programs and curriculums, and the involvement of the private sector as off-takers of materials generated from PPB.

Group 3 discussed issues around variety registration, including testing for DUS and Value for Cultivation and Use. The relevance and suitability of these formal testing procedures for FMSS was questioned, and an alternative approach was proposed in which farmers' knowledge and scientific expertise are integrated, focusing on the Consistency, Accessibility and Suitability (CAS) of candidate varieties. The involvement of farmers in variety registration was a crucial element to the process. In addition, a notification system was proposed instead of a registration system to simplify processes and enhance accessibility for farmers. It was suggested that size and turnover of breeding companies and seed producers could influence regulatory requirements, allowing for more tailored approaches to seed management.

Group 4 focused on seed certification and quality control. Participants indicated that FMSS have always operated without formal seed inspection and will continue to rely primarily on trust-based relations. It was felt, however, that the current situation which allows for either no formal quality control on the one hand, or full OECD-compliant standards (allowing for international trade) on the other, is too narrow and does not strengthen the use and production of quality seed in FMSS. The development of a more diverse, tailor-made and decentralised seed certification system was considered necessary. The participatory guarantee system was highlighted as an example of a self-regulating system in which farmers and/or CSBs monitor seed quality, with an external inspection body (e.g. the national gene bank) in place to perform post-market inspections to ensure the reliability of the participatory guarantee system.

Group 5 looked at seed production, exchange and marketing. The importance of local seed production and sharing was emphasised, without formal requirements or barriers stifling local seed systems. For maintaining the agrobiodiversity in FMSS, strategic partnerships are needed between farmers, CSBs, agricultural research centres, and (inter)national gene banks to preserve and rejuvenate planting materials. Farmer seed enterprises can be supported by simplified registration requirements, decentralised quality assurance mechanisms, and access to appropriate credit facilities, while extension services and ARCs can provide technical

support in seed production and post-harvest processing and storage. Land tenure security was identified as a crucial precondition for all of the above.

Launch of the Harare Community of Practice (CoP)

On the third and final day of the workshop, all inputs were collected, and the event was brought to a close. When discussing next steps, participants agreed to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) in order to share learnings and best practices towards the development of an enabling policy framework for farmer-managed seed systems.

1. INTRODUCTORY SPEECHES

1.1 Welcome Remarks - Andrew Mushita (Executive Director, CTDO)

Andrew Mushita, the Executive Director of CTDO, welcomed all the participants who attended the workshop. Mr. Mushita noted that globalisation presents many challenges in our global food system, particularly for smallholder farmers, which presents the need to forge close partnerships among countries to craft policy models that are adaptable, appropriate, and conducive towards building communities that are resilient to climate change. He further called for continued sharing of knowledge and experiences between the Global North and South in relation to Farmer Managed Seed Systems. Optimism was expressed regarding the revival of the national agricultural development and planning, as guided by the National Agricultural Policy Framework, which will go a long way in fostering sustainable agriculture development in Zimbabwe.

The presence of the vast range of participants from the region and funders of different projects supporting farmer managed seed systems in Africa were acknowledged, as well as the role of various social actors and policy makers in revitalising the farmer seed systems in Africa.
Mr. Mushita concluded his speech by expressing hope that the global workshop would highlight possible avenues for cooperation between countries of the South and the Global North.

1.2 Workshop Background - Riccardo Bocci (Technical Director, Rete Semi Rurali)

Riccardo Bocci gave the background and objectives of the workshop by outlining that its creation emanated from different partners and projects addressing issues related to FMSS. It felt crucial that different global players should work together to address policy issues regarding the promotion of FMSS and not work in silos, and hence the meeting in Harare was critical to bring together participants from Europe and Africa to share knowledge and experiences on how to come up with effective policies or legislation regulating FMSS. It was observed that Europe is transitioning away from the strictly formal seed system and granting some appreciation for the complementarity role played by FMSS. Mr. Bocci highlighted the importance of breeding for diversity as opposed to breeding for uniformity, with the former leading to the diversification of livelihoods and sustainable conservation of landraces, for which it is essential to create an enabling environment for the recognition of farmers' seeds. He stressed that the expected outcomes of the workshop will feed into GB 11 and the current African Union (AU) Policy development processes.

Background to the AU Policy Framework on FMSS

The African Union Commission Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (AUC-DARBE), in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), organized the 5th Steering Group Meeting of the African Seed and Biotechnology Platform (ASBP) in Nairobi, Kenya, from the 14th - 18th of December 2024. The meeting brought together Steering Group members, co-opted members, and experts in climate resilience, biodiversity, and food systems.

Since its inception, the Platform has adapted to various emerging challenges relating to agriculture such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the need to build resilience within agrifood systems. It serves as a policy think tank, stimulating discussions, improving decision-making, supporting evidence-based advocacy, and enhancing knowledge sharing on seed systems across Africa.

The Nairobi meeting was premised on the outcomes of the Second General Assembly of the Platform meeting held in April 2024, which emphasized the need to address these challenges and promote opportunity crops or NUS to improve resilience, food and nutrition security.

During the Nairobi meeting, a scoping study on farmer-managed seed systems was presented, together with the outcomes of the Harare workshop. These were used as inputs that guided the production of a Policy Framework, Strategy and Action Plan on farmer-managed seed systems. The three draft documents will proceed to be subjected to the national and regional consultation processes within the continent. This will be undertaken during the course of 2025.

2.0 THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY, FARMER MANAGED SEED SYSTEMS, AND AGROBIODIVERSITY

2.1 Farmers' Perspectives on Seed Systems – Edna Sandi and Hazvi Marawu (Zimbabwe)

Edna Sandi and Hazvi Marawu, two farmers from Zimbabwe, gave their perspectives on the current seed system in place in Zambia and how it impacted their work and livelihoods. The farmers bemoaned the lack of recognition of farmer's varieties as the current seed laws favour the formal commercial system which has witnessed huge loss of plant genetic resources due to genetic erosion. The farmers highlighted how, over the years, the formal seed system has depended on FMSS without the smallholder farmers benefiting from the utilisation of their traditional breeding knowledge. However, farmers, through activities such as Farmer Field Schools, seed and food fairs, field days, CSBs, PPB, and PVS, have sought to create an enabling environment for the advancement of FMSS.

2.2 FAO Regional Office Speech – Berhanu Bedane (Live stock Development Officer, FAO Southern Africa)

FAO Regional Office representative Mr. Berhanu Bedane highlighted the work that the regional office is engaged in related to mainstreaming biodiversity into national agricultural policies and legislation. The Office have been involved in the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices such as integrated soil fertility management, sustainable forestry management, integrated pest management, agroecology, agroforestry, and smart agriculture, to mention a few.

Bedane highlighted that the work of FAO included assisting national governments to come up with Agriculture National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plans in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and have developed biodiversity information hubs designed to support government's efforts.

The FAO, through the SADC joint plan of work, has supported the SADC secretariat and member states to effectively participate at various COP meetings through organizing pre-COP meetings and funding the secretariat and national delegations.

FAO has further strengthened the SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre through a technical cooperation facility where the heads of gene banks and National Focal Points

of the ITPGRFA meet to plan and review progress. Through the facility, funds are availed to countries to regenerate and multiply their critical accessions and facilitate the duplication of these accessions at SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre and Svalbard Gene Bank in Norway.

Furthermore, the FAO, through the Benefit Sharing Fund, has provided funds to the region to carry out different projects on conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources.

In Zimbabwe, through funding from the Africa Development Bank, FAO is providing technical support for the development of an Agriculture Seed Development Plan that will provide an enabling policy and regulatory environment for the development and growth of the broader seed industry. The proposed seed policy will specifically address issues related to integrated seed systems, issues to do with production, marketing, and seed trading of farmer seeds in the country and formulation of strategies for participation of smallholder farmers in seed production and marketing.

2.3 Speech from the Treaty Secretariate - Kent Nnadozie (Secretary General, ITPGRFA)

Presenting virtually from Rome, Kent Nnadozie stressed the importance of maintaining agricultural biodiversity. He reiterated that FAO places an increased emphasis on inclusive seed systems. He further called on parties to gather evidence and build up support for the upcoming GB11, particularly on Article 9 of the Treaty concerning Farmers' Rights. He concluded his speech by emphasizing the FAO's role in supporting biodiversity and wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

2.4 Official Opening Speech - Honorable Deputy Minister E. Haritatos, representing Honorable Minister Dr. A.J. Masuka (Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Zimbabwe)

The Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Honourable Evangelis Haritatos, represented the Minister and read the Official Opening Speech. He reiterated that the Government of Zimbabwe recognises the role smallholder farmers play in the conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources, particularly their role in managing seed through multiplying, breeding and selection,

saving, and retention and utilization. Mr. Haritatos emphasised the need to enable farmers to maintain and develop crop diversity, based on their rich knowledge of traditional agro-ecological practices. The Deputy Minister pointed out that the Government has put in place new transformative and inclusive developmental pathways guided by Zimbabwe's vision 2030, which embraces the National Development Strategy 1 (2021 – 2025) and the Zimbabwe National Agricultural Policy Framework. He further highlighted that Zimbabwe has shown its commitment to the promotion of conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources through ratifying and acceding to various international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, and the ITPGRFA.

The Deputy Minister also appreciated the complementarity of the formal and informal seed systems in creating a resilient agricultural sector in the country. He highlighted that the country has made strides towards the recognition of Farmers' Rights as articulated in the ITPGRFA which advocates for sustainable use and conservation of all plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their use.

The Deputy Minister further highlighted that the country has developed the National Strategy and Action Plan on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2022-2032) which aims to establish a legal and institutional framework for the management of Plant Genetic Resources in line with the provisions of the International Treaty. The Deputy Minister further highlighted that Zimbabwe was at an advanced stage with the development of a legal regulatory framework for the registration of Farmer Varieties. He implored farmers, industry, researchers and CSOs to continue working with their governments to develop and strengthen farmer seed systems through inclusive robust legislation and regulatory frameworks that allow for the recognition of Farmer Varieties.

3.0 ON PLURALISTIC SEED SYSTEMS & FARMERS' RIGHTS

3.1 Towards Diversified / Pluralistic Seed Systems – Andrew Mushita (Executive Director – CTDO)

Andrew Mushita gave a brief background on the current global seed structure. He pointed out that, worldwide, approximately 2.5 billion people depend on farms for their livelihood, the majority being smallholder farmers. In Africa, 70% of the food supply is provided by smallholder farmers. This is insufficient to feed the growing population, with more than 20 million people in Africa being food insecure annually. As a result, African food imports are rising from USD 35 billion to an estimated USD 100 billion per annum by 2030 (Special Reports-June 29, 2021). In addition, the global seed market was valued at 67.09 billion in 2022 and is estimated to reach a value of USD 111.03 billion by 2030 at an annual growth rate of 6.50% annually (Seed Market –Global Industry Assessment and Forecast Report, 2022). The growth is being driven by the rising demand for seeds from the food, beverage, animal feed, and biofuel industries, mostly in China and India. In Africa, the seed market is dominated by a few multinational corporations, namely BASF, Bayer AG, Group Limagrain, Risk Zwaan Zaadteelt en Zaadhandel B.V., and Syngenta. In Southern Africa, Du Pont (Pioneer), Monsanto and Syngenta have 100% ownership of Pannar, Carnia and Sensako, and MRI Seeds, respectively. The existing status quo has left many people, especially in rural and vulnerable communities, facing hunger due to lack of access to good quality seed of their local landraces.

Mr. Mushita argued that the Farmer Managed Seed System does not only support seed development but also contributes to secure and diverse livelihoods. He stressed that there is need to recognize two different seed systems (the Formal and FMSS) as not mutually exclusive but complementary to each other. In this case, he outlined the alternative criteria to UPOV's DUS fort registering farmer varieties, with the requirements for new varieties to be **Consistent, Accessible and Suitable** (CAS).

Andrew Mushita reiterated that to establish and enforce two parallel seed systems, there is a need to assess the local context for the design of appropriate long-term interventions across multiple seed systems. It is envisaged that a framework of this kind would ensure farmer ownership, sustainability and coherence among the different stakeholders.

Accordingly, the FMSS can be enhanced through establishing Farmer Field Schools for participatory research with CSBs acting as centres of excellence and knowledge hubs. Mr.

Mushita suggested that institutional linkages with various stakeholders including policymakers, universities, local authorities, extension service providers, development partners, NARs, and institutes such as the CGIAR, are critical for forging partnerships and building synergies.

In his closing remarks, Andrew noted that the polarized debates on whether the formal or farmers' seed systems are best and if one system should replace the other are not productive. Given the strong linkages and interdependence of the two systems, he stressed the need for enhancing the complementarity of the two seed systems. Mushita reiterated the need to create an enabling policy environment for farmers to make their own choices in terms of seed.

3.2 The Relevance of Farmers' Rights and Conservation and Sustainable use of PGRFA – Mario Marino (Technical Officer, ITPGRFA)

Mario Marino, the technical officer of the ITPGRFA, started his presentation by highlighting the Treaty's aims and its key provisions. The aims of the Treaty include the following:

- Recognizing the enormous contribution of farmers to the diversity of crops that feed the world.
- Establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials.
- Ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from the use of these genetic materials with the countries where they have originated.

Mr. Marino further highlighted the main provisions of the Treaty which include the following:

- Farmers' Rights (Article 9)
- Conservation and Sustainable use of PGRFA (Articles 5 and 6)
- Multilateral system
- Access and benefit sharing

On Farmers' Rights, Marino emphasised that Article 5 (Conservation) provides for Contracting Parties to promote/support farmers' and local communities' efforts to manage and conserve their crop genetic resources on-farm. Article 6 (Sustainable use) provides for Contracting Parties to enhance sustainable use by promoting PPB, use of

local varieties, on-farm diversity, and to review and adjust regulations on variety release and seed distribution.

Article 9 provides for the recognition of the enormous contribution made by farmers, the protection of traditional knowledge, equitable participation in sharing benefits, participation in decision-making, and the rights that farmers have to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed/propagating materials.

The Technical Officer highlighted some of the challenges for conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources as follows:

- Legal, policy and institutional issues
- Technical and scientific issues
- Seed distribution and marketing of landraces and farmers' crop varieties
- Resource constraints

However, he indicated that the Treaty has developed Options for the implementation of farmers' Rights (link to the document). The purpose of the Options is to encourage, guide and promote the realization of Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty.

3.3 Zimbabwe Experiences in Promoting Farmer Varieties - Regis Mafuratidze (Program Manager, CTDO)

Regis Mafuratidze began his presentation by highlighting the obstacles and challenges that are affecting the agriculture sector in Zimbabwe. He alluded to the fact that the agriculture sector is affected by many challenges such as climate-induced impacts and the country's inclination towards the formal seed system. He indicated that the tendency to support the formal seed system exists even though farm-saved seeds have supported smallholders for centuries and account for over 80% of the national seed requirements.

On the country's legal framework, Mr. Mafuratidze indicated that FMSS find some space within the existing legal frameworks such as the National Agriculture Policy Framework, which supports the development of indigenous farmer systems through strengthening seed selection, seed preservation and storage. He further pointed out that the Zimbabwean Government came up with the National Strategy and Action Plan on PGRFA (2022 – 2032) that seeks to develop mechanisms for the recognition and protection of farmer varieties through establishing standards for maintenance and registration, as well as developing a national catalogue of the same. It was highlighted that the country has in place the Plant Breeders' Rights Act and its attendant articles [Article 17.3(c) &

Article 17.3(d)] that provides for the protection and realisation of plant breeders' rights and encourages the development of new plant varieties.

Mr. Mafuratidze highlighted the various practices being done in Zimbabwe to promote farmer varieties. The presenter highlighted that CTDO, working with the Government, has facilitated the establishment of 22 CSBs across the country. The organization is also working with the SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre to digitalise plant genetic resources within the existing CSBs. Furthermore, several farmer field schools on PPB were established to improve/develop local seeds as well as to promote traditional knowledge through experiential learning and on-farm trials and demonstrations. The Government of Zimbabwe also supported the Pfumvudza/Intwasa Program as part of continuous efforts to support climate resilient agriculture systems. The country-wide program promotes diverse and climate smart agricultural practices such as intercropping, crop diversification and mulching.

Mr. Mafuratidze also highlighted the significance of Seed and Food Fairs and Farmer Seed Enterprises in strengthening resilience among rural farmers. The Farmer Seed Enterprises provide opportunities for smallholder farmers to produce and market their seed on a commercially viable scale.

Regis Mafuratidze highlighted several strategies that can be adopted to promote farm-saved seeds:

- Create access to resources for smallholder farmers.
- Facilitate mutual learning.
- Conduct research on systems interface and policy discourse.
- Improve farmers' experimental designs.
- Create opportunities to share research.
- Bridge local knowledge gaps through conducting education and awareness

On challenges being faced in trying to promote the FMSS, the presenter noted that lack of supportive policies and legislation, absence of political will, inadequate funding and lack of appropriate documentation of farmer knowledge and innovation hampers efforts to promote farmer varieties.

He concluded his presentation by giving recommendations for the recognition of farmer varieties. He called for:

- Documentation and dissemination of successful FMSS practices
- Facilitate increased dialog between all actors involved in Agriculture at national level
- International / Regional support

Plenary
Questions / Comments

One of the participants wanted to know the name of the draft PGRFA Bill currently under development by the Zimbabwean Authorities. Some participants were interested to know what Zimbabwe has done to re-introduce farmer varieties in local farming communities. Yet some were worried that it seemed the FMSS embraces seed only. One participant from Uganda, Ronald Bagaga, said that there seemed to be a contradiction in Mr. Mafuratidze's presentation with regards to what he called call lack of supportive legal framework on one hand and the existence of several pieces of legislation in the country.

Responses

Mr. Mafuratidze indicated that the name of the draft Bill is called the PGRFA Management Bill, and the drafting is led by the Government. He opined that the Bill, which was in motion by then, would go a long way in promoting PGRFA, particularly farmer varieties. He also stated that the Markets and Seeds Access Project (MASAP) initiated a study to towards registration of farmer varieties and the seed laws reviews. He indicated that the findings have already been validated by stakeholders and shall lead to the development of an Issues Paper that will be forwarded to the government for consideration. He expressed hope that some of the recommendations raised will influence policy and legislative development in the country.

Responding to efforts done to re-introduce farmer varieties, Onismus Chipfunde, research scientist at the Genetic Resources and Biotechnology Institute, highlighted that as part of its mandate, the National Gene Bank of Zimbabwe repatriated materials from the National Gene Bank and distributed them to farmers for on-farm production and multiplication. The government of Zimbabwe formally approached CTDO to aggregate the number of accessions in all the CSBs in the country.

Regis alluded to the fact that although Zimbabwe has a legal framework regulating the seed sector, it has no seed policy currently, and the NAPF does not fully cater for FMSS. The country's seed legislation does not fully support FMSS, hence the call for a specific legal framework regulating the FMSS.

3.4 Enabling Farmer Participation in the Zambian National Seed System - Charles Nkhoma (Executive Director, CTDT Zambia)

Charles Nkhoma presented on farmer participation in the Zambian National Seed System. He began his presentation by highlighting the country's legal framework, which only recognizes the formal seed system. Under Zambian legislation, only seed of a registered variety can be sold or distributed in Zambia. Furthermore, he highlighted that the current variety registration system sets conditions that make it difficult to register farmer varieties, as it is based on the principle of Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS). There are growing calls for the country's laws to fully recognize the FMSS since it is the main source of planting material for many smallholder farmers and guarantees availability of seeds at planting time.

On the rationale for recognizing the FMSS, Mr. Nkhoma highlighted that the FMSS provides up to 90% of all the seeds planted by farmers in Zambia. He further pointed out that seed security entails sovereignty by the farmers to have freedom to choose the types of crops to grow and the types of seed to use and to grow those crops.

Mr. Nkhoma indicated that Zambia proposes a variety registration framework that facilitates inclusion of farmer varieties and participation of farmers in the national seed value chain. He stressed that the proposed framework should allow for registration of farmer varieties and subsequent seed production. The proposed framework should allow for administering farmer variety registration process in the country.

He also proposed redesigning the legal and institutional framework to accommodate farmer varieties as follows:

- The farmer variety registration framework is implemented under the Plant Variety and Seeds Act and relevant amendments made to its regulations.
- The Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI) delegates some authority to the Zambia Agriculture Research Institute to be the Agency for registration of farmer varieties.
- The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute designates the National Plant Genetic Resources Centre (national gene bank) as secretariat for the purposes of administering this delegated authority.

Mr. Nkhoma gave highlights of the activities being done in Zambia to promote farmer varieties. He indicated that PPB activities seek not only to create new varieties but also

to improve or restore deteriorating farmer varieties. He emphasised the involvement of local farmers in several breeding activities, particularly in creating biodiversity registers and setting breeding objectives. Mr. Nkhoma described how local communities expedite trait prioritization on cowpeas during PPB activities. In terms of seed production, Mr. Nkhoma pointed out that CTDT Zambia had trained and formally registered 272 seed producers. He further indicated that farmers have used this capacity to grow seeds of local varieties and produced seeds of registered commercial varieties.

Mr. Nkhoma went on to highlight the role CSBs play in promoting conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. He indicated that the seed stored in CSBs is used to rebuild threatened populations. Furthermore, CSBs act as distribution and aggregation point for foundation seed and for sales of farmer produced seed. However, it was opined that for these activities to be effective, there is need for up-scaling and institutionalization of the PPB in national programs through creating dedicated programs and collaborations between government, private sector and CSOs.

In conclusion, Mr. Nkhoma indicated that stakeholders in Zambia have called for the amendment of the Zambian seed legislation, particularly of the Plant Variety and Seeds Bill to cater for the existence of FMSS. He also highlighted that they have held the 'No to UPOV' Campaigns in support of the FMSS. Authorities were advised to put in place a comprehensive seed policy that caters for both the formal and FMSS.

Plenary
Questions / Comments

The participants were interested in the government's perspective on Zambian variety protection.

Responses

The presenter highlighted that the Zambian government is prioritizing wheat and barley for variety protection, and this therefore calls for greater efforts to lobby government to also consider farmer varieties. There are also wide calls for the government to repeal the Plant Breeders' Act and the Seeds Bill in Zambia.

3.5 Country Experiences (Italy/EU) - Pier Giacomo Bianchi (CREA-DC, Italy)

Pier Giacomo Bianchi presented on the European Union/Italian Country Experience. Mr. Bianchi began by highlighting that the Italian agriculture sector has approximately 1.1 million smallholder farmers, each with an average farm size of 11 ha per family. The sector contributes about 2% to the Gross Value Added of the country and employs 3.7% of the population.

In terms of utilised agricultural area, Mr. Bianchi noted that 57% (7.2 million ha) constitutes arable Land, while meadows and pastures occupy 25% (3.1 million ha. Woody crops occupy the remaining 17% (2.2 million ha) of the land. Major food crops grown include cereals (durum wheat, soft wheat, rice, barley, corn), vegetables (tomato, lettuce, chicory, artichoke), industrial crops (sunflower, soyabeans) and fodder (Lucerne, Fodder corn).

Mr. Bianchi indicated that the agricultural sector of Italy, and the wider EU region, is highly formalised with clear seed production and marketing rules. The Italian seed system can be situated within the international framework whereby the country is a member of the EU, OECD and UPOV, and thus seed laws in countries are guided by these respective bodies. Mr. Bianchi pointed out that some countries in Africa including Zambia, Uganda and Zimbabwe also participate in the OECD seed schemes. He further pointed out that the Council for Research in Agriculture and Economics (CREA) regulates seed production and marketing in Italy. In terms of the seed laws and regulations in the EU/Italy, the presenter noted that the seed laws and the national plant variety protection legislation place more emphasis on seed quality, listing of varieties and seed certification. Mr. Bianchi indicated that EU countries have initiated several measures to promote conservation varieties. Initiatives to protect agro-biodiversity in the framework of the EU legislation for seed marketing have been in place since the framework for Conservation Varieties was adopted in 2008 (Commission Directive 2008/62/EC of 20 June 2008).

The Italian / EU seed sector is promoting the Public Private Partnership which is coordinated by OECD with International Seed Federation, in collaboration with African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Africa Seed and Biotechnology Program (ASBP), African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) and alignment with the African Continental Vision expressed in the Africa Seed and Biotechnology Program (ASBP). It will focus on training on seed marketing rules in African countries.

Mr. Bianchi concluded by detailing the work of CREA in Italy. The CREA is made up of several units which include the Seed Certification Department, multiple seed testing stations, plant health laboratories and experimental stations. In terms of the initiatives to exploit biodiversity in the framework of the EU legislation for seed marketing, CREA has been involved in variety testing and the evaluation of species threatened by genetic erosion. Works around organic varieties of wheat, corn and Luzerne were initiated under the EU seed marketing.

Plenary
Questions / Comments

The coexistence of UPOV regulations and FMSS as well as the benefits that farmers receive under the current PVP rules were questioned. Do conservation varieties turn a profit?

Responses

It was indicated that UPOV and FMSS can co-exist, as in the case of Italy. Mr. Brianchi further pointed out that the Italian laws are there to protect the farmer – not the private sector (seed companies). Mr. Bianchi alluded to the fact that the seed certification scheme in Italy caters for conservation varieties (i.e. farmer varieties).

3.6 Farmer Managed Seed System in Tanzania: Policies and Legal Frameworks – William Chrispo Hamisy (Senior Research Officer, Tanzania National Plant Genetic Resources Centre)

William Chrispo Hamisy presented on the Farmer Managed Seed Systems in Tanzania: Policies and Legal Framework. In his introduction, he highlighted the contribution of the agricultural sector to the economy. Agriculture is the mainstay of the Tanzanian economy, contributing approximately 24.1 % to the Gross Domestic Product, 30% of the export earnings and 77.5 % of the national labour force. He further highlighted that agriculture is largely subsistence agriculture, dominated by smallholder farmers (0.2 – 2.0 ha).

Mr. Hamisy also highlighted that the country' s seed sector is made up of public and private institutions as well as universities. Furthermore, the country has two distinct seed systems, namely the formal and informal (FMSS) sector. The formal system is largely characterised by the existence of good quality seeds yet supply only 20 % of the seed

requirements of the country and is dominated by a few high value crops such as maize and beans, among others. On the other hand, the FMSS supplies about 80% of seeds, usually of high species and genetic diversity, though they are perceived to be of poor quality, mixed and not recognised by the seed laws of the country.

The presenter noted the critical role of smallholder farmers in producing, selecting and storing, exchanging and using seed. Despite this critical role, recurrent droughts, poor post-harvest handling and lack of mechanization coupled with lack of political will goes against the promotion and subsequent recognition of the FMSS. Often, local seeds supplied are of poor physical quality with low germination rates, and therefore subsequently contributing to crop failure and poor yields.

On the country' s legal framework, Mr. Hamisy indicated that the Tanzanian legal framework consists of the National Agriculture Policy (2013), the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, the National Environment Policy (1997) and the Seed Act [2007] (including its associated regulations) which recognizes the formal seed system. He further highlighted the objectives of each policy and its focus. Mr. Hamisy highlighted several opportunities for FMSS and the commercialization of farmers' varieties in Tanzania. He indicated that the FMSS in Tanzania face greater prospects due to:

- High farmer preference of farm-saved seeds
- Availability of high diversity of farmer varieties with preferred attributes and traits.
- Legal framework – The Seed Act recognize the FMSS
- QDS in which farmer's varieties can be certified and registered and commercialised.
- Agricultural and Seed Policy Review
- Government positive attitudes on farmer saved seeds.

The presenter emphasised that the Gene Bank (National Plant Genetic Resource Centre) plays a key role in germplasm collection and safety duplication. To date, the Gene Bank has characterised approximately 2237 accessions and managed to distribute 2824 accessions to various users. The National Gene Bank and stakeholders target neglected and underutilised species such as Amaranthus, yams, finger millet, Lagenaria and pumpkins through promoting on-farm conservation and sustainable use. William also asserted that the NPGRC also supports CSBs, farmer field schools on PPB, Seed Fairs, farmer led seed enterprises, seed multiplication and policy sensitization programs.

Plenary
Questions / Comments

There was keen interest in knowing whether Tanzania has a legal framework in place that recognizes the FMSS, and to understand the quality guarantee system in use and how farmers benefit from the system.

Responses

Tanzania set the standards using Quality Declared Seeds. These standards are used to certify seeds in terms of quality. The criterion for certifying seeds is that the seeds must be registered first. The Quality Guaranteeing System is not yet implemented but is being studied to gauge its applicability. The National Ecological Agriculture Strategy is going to trigger the recognition of farm-saved seeds in the country.

3.7 Uganda's Experience on Farmer Seed Varieties Registration: A case of "Schedule X" – Charles Opiyo (Resilient Livelihoods Program Manager, Oxfam)

Charles Opiyo began his presentation by highlighting the pieces of legislation that support FMSS in Uganda. He noted that the seed sector in Uganda is guided by the National Seed Policy (2018), National Seeds Strategy, Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Policy (Draft) and the National Guideline for Quality Declared Seeds.

He went on further to give the rationale for registering farmer varieties from the country's perspective. It was noted that farmer variety registration is critical since it stimulates availability of better-quality seeds of diverse crops and promotes breeding for diversity, increase seed, food and income security of smallholder farmers, increase resilience of smallholder farmers and helps in safeguarding farmers from biopiracy and promote food sovereignty & Farmers' Rights.

Having noted non-recognition of farmers' contributions towards nurturing different varieties, authorities in Uganda initiated a study to find an alternative registration system for farmer varieties. The study, funded by OXFAM, was led by the National Agriculture Research Organization and National Plant Genetic Resource Centre focused on the FMSS. The study led to the drafting of "Schedule X" (Figure 1), which is a proposal of the alternative framework for farmer varieties registration in the country.

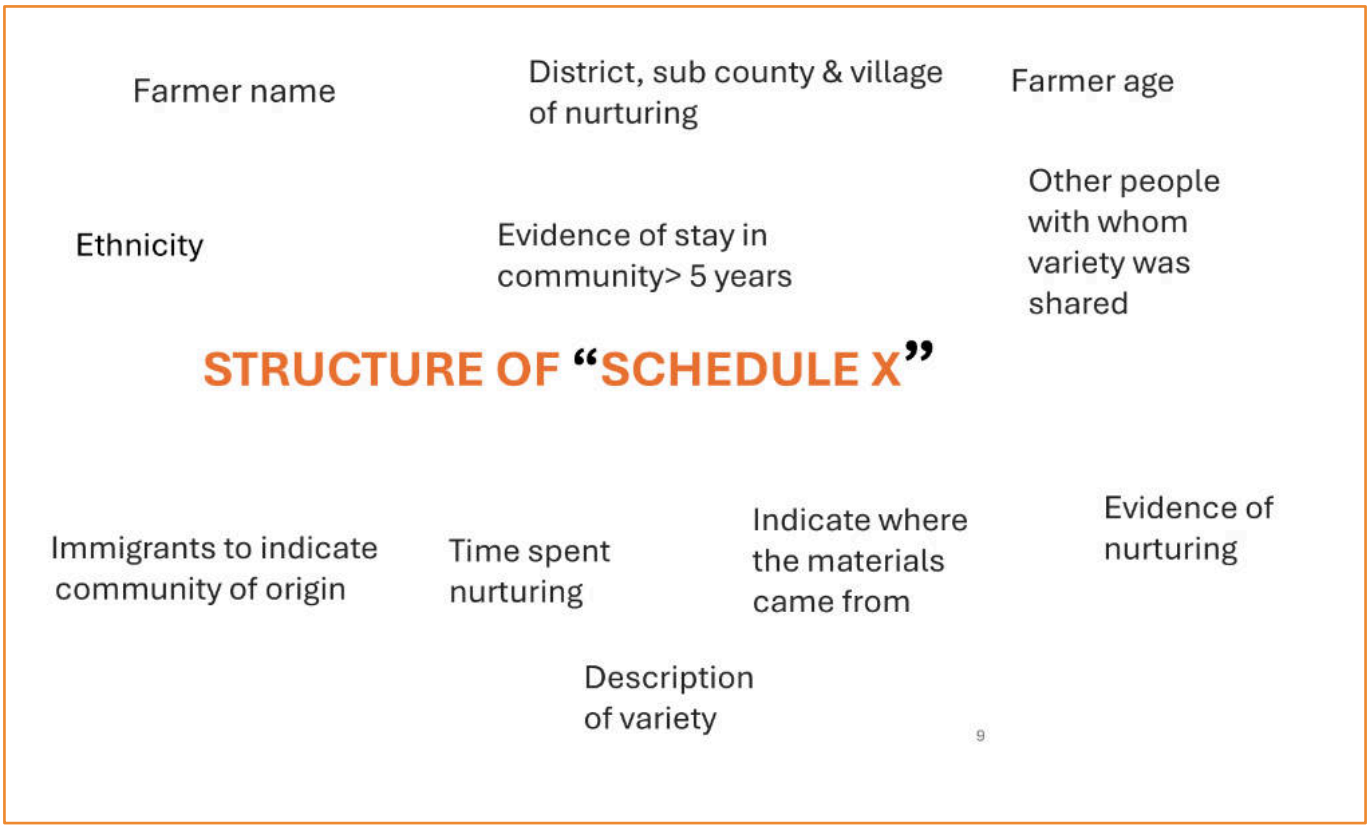


Figure 2: Schedule X schematic.

Mr. Opiyo highlighted that the drive towards registration of farmer varieties in Uganda was necessitated by the following facts:

- Stimulate the availability of better-quality seeds of a bigger number of crop varieties available to farmers in the marketplace
- Promoting (breeding for) diversity
- Increasing seed, food and income security of smallholder farmers
- Increasing resilience of smallholder farmers
- Safeguarding farmers from biopiracy and promoting food sovereignty & Farmers' Rights.
- Recognizing farmers as innovators and developers of new varieties hence are entitled to equitable sharing of benefits.
- Giving farmers the opportunity to produce basic seed for commercialization

The study was carried out with farmer field schools in selected communities where critical questions related to FMSS were asked during Focus Group Discussions. The study generated key findings and proffered recommendations for registering farmer varieties. It was concluded that 'Schedule X' is key in developing a system that registers farmer varieties and recognizes their efforts towards nurturing these varieties. However,

according to Mr. Opiyo, the study was not conclusive, hence they are aiming for similar replicable studies to be carried out in different settings to ascertain if 'Schedule X' can indeed guide registration of farmer varieties.

Plenary
Questions / Comments

Does Uganda trade farmer varieties? If registered, are farmer varieties not going to be hijacked? What of differentiating farmer varieties from community varieties or national varieties?

Responses

Uganda trades farmer varieties. The fear that farmer varieties will be hijacked if registered may be warranted if the legal framework should not leave loopholes that will make it possible for others to exploit them.

3.8 Breeding for Diversity: Seed Regulations / Laws - Victor B. Simelane (University of Eswatini)

Victor Simelane presented on Breeding for Diversity: Seed Regulations/Laws for Eswatini. He began his presentation by highlighting the country's legal framework with regards to seed systems. He indicated that Eswatini currently has no specific policies and legal frameworks relating to Farmer Seed systems, however, the domestication of Articles 5 and 6 is an on-going process. Mr. Simelane pointed out that since the establishment of the national gene bank in 1995, conservation, characterization evaluation, domestication and distribution activities have been carried out. The presenter stressed that very little has been done on domesticating national legislation for the implementation of Article 9 (Farmers' Rights). It was noted that farmers are free to save, use, sell and exchange their farm-saved material. The Eswatini Environment Management Act of 1992 acknowledges natural resource management and conservation. The seed policy supports the formal seed system, but farmers are free to use local varieties.

Mr. Simelane highlighted that most farmers in Eswatini source their seeds from markets, seed fairs, agricultural shows and from farmer seed exchange. He indicated that NPGRC, SEED Authority, UNESWA, COSPE, PELUM and farming communities are implementing the Benefit Sharing Fund Project titled '*Enhancing communities' capacities to adapt to climate change in Eswatini, Mozambique and Tanzania*', targeting crops such as sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, ground nuts, cowpea, Bambara nuts, groundnuts, common beans, mung beans, Lagenaria (bottle gourds), water melons and pumpkins. The activities involve identifying well-

performing landraces with adaptive traits (drought, heat, salinity, pest resistance) and further evaluating them using participatory variety selection and participatory variety enhancement with farmers. The presenter indicated that they are in the process of establishing multi-locational to conduct evaluation trials. Eswatini hopes to release and register several landraces as **Quality Declared Seeds (QDS**) after the breeding programs conclude.

Plenary
Questions / Comments

Participants were interested to know if they are specific policies regulating the FMSS in Eswatini. Furthermore, they sought to understand the extent to which Eswatini has been domesticating the international legal instruments. Does QDS differ from country to country?

Responses

Mr. Simelane indicated that Eswatini has no specific policies regulating FMSS. The CBD and ITPGRFA were yet to be domesticated. He further highlighted that there are no registered farmer varieties in Eswatini but there are plans to release varieties using the QDS system. One participant indicated that QDS standards do not differ from country to country, however, QDS has lower standards compared to other formal regulations. Charles Nkhoma indicated that in Zambia, farmers have been able to sell seed using QDS standards.

3.9 EU Negotiation on Seed Marketing Rules: The new opportunities for seed marketing in Europe – Riccardo Bocci (Technical Director, Rete Semi Rurali)

Riccardo Bocci indicated that the structure of the current seed marketing rules in Europe gives some space to diversity through two different categories of varieties: Conservation varieties and Organic Heterogeneous Materials. Figure 3 shows the different research projects that, starting from 2007, have worked on agro-biodiversity and populations, and supported the political change at European level. In green boxes are indicated the political processes, from the failure of the first seed marketing reform in 2013, to the ongoing new negotiations on the rules of variety registration and certification.

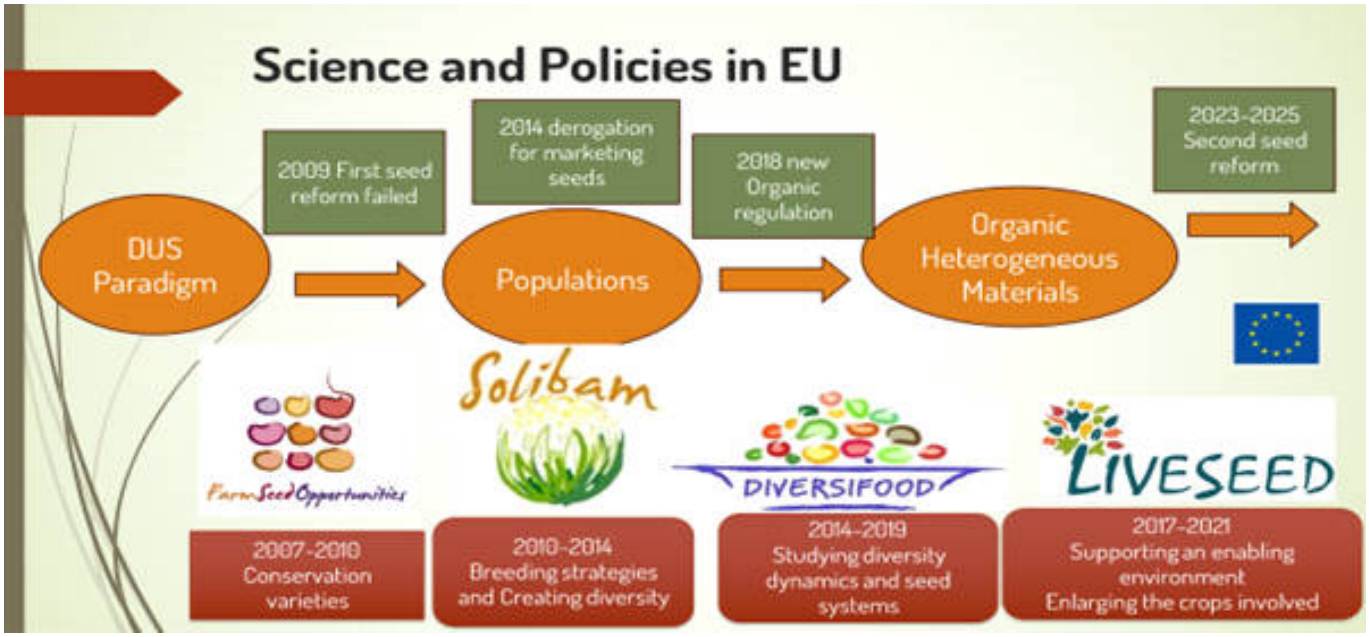


Figure 3: The new perspectives to seed marketing.

Figure 4 presents the general system of variety registration and seed certification in Europe (green boxes) and in yellow the new topics discussed in the seed marketing reform process, started in July 2023 with the regulation proposed by the EU Commission. Now the text, after having passed the vote of the EU Parliament, is under discussion at the Council level. The end of the negotiations is foreseen for mid-2026. Three points are crucial for FMSS in this proposal: i) the possibility to enlarge conservation varieties to newly bred varieties by participatory plant breeding; ii) the possibility to allow the exchange of seeds by farmers at local level of varieties not protected; iii) the maintenance of the rules of Organic Heterogeneous Materials and the new rules on Organic Varieties.

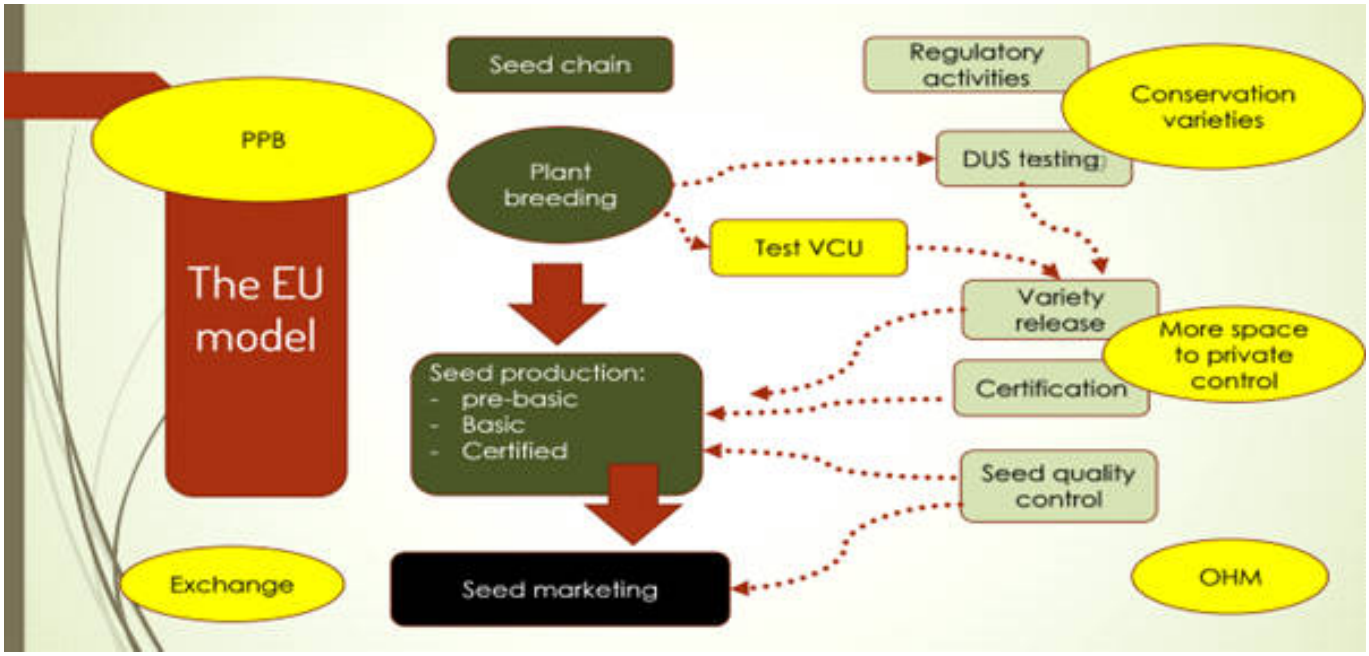


Figure 4: The EU Model

The process on conservation varieties took 10 years to be defined from 1998. Conservation varieties are heritage varieties, or local landraces, which don't have to fulfil the DUS testing for being registered. They are in public domain and cannot be protected by Plant Variety Rights. They should be grown under specific local conditions and are adapted to those conditions, and characterised by reduced uniformity, and do not require an official description.

The second category of new varieties are the so-called Organic Heterogeneous Materials (OHM). They refer to plant grouping whose individuals are not absolutely identical or homogeneous but show great diversity of botanical traits while retaining common characteristics that make it possible to identify them as belonging to a specific OHM.

OHM can be generated by one of the following techniques:

a. crossing of several types of parental materials,
b. on-farm-management practices, including selection, establishing or maintaining material, which is characterised by a high level of genetic variety.
c. any other technique used for breeding or production of organic heterogeneous material, considering particular features of propagation.

OHM is intended to adapt to various biotic and abiotic stresses due to repeated natural and human selection and therefore is expected to change over time. They are simply notified to public authorities by farmers, breeders or any other actors that developed the OHM and not registered as modern varieties.

3.10 How to develop a farmers variety registration system: SD=HS Experiences – Bram de Jonge (Seed Policy Advisor, Oxfam Novib)

Mr. De Jonge highlighted that the seeds programs that Oxfam is involved in aim to increase farmers' resilience to climate change through the improved management of agro-biodiversity and local seed systems. The programs seek to empower farmers using farmer field schools on PPB, seed production and marketing, and local food plants for nutrition.

In order to facilitate that work, the program aims to create an enabling policy environment for FMSS. One aspect the program has focussed on is the registration of farmers' varieties. Mr. De Jonge indicated that there are several reasons for registering farmer varieties. The following list, though not exhaustive, shows some of the reasons:

- To promote (breeding for) diversity
- To increase seed, food and income security of smallholder farmers
- To increase resilience of smallholder farmers
- To promote food sovereignty and Farmers' Rights

He further stated that VCU and DUS criteria are neither feasible (due to the costs involved) nor desirable. On the contrary, farmer varieties are usually valued because of their adaptability to local, agro-ecological conditions, which are often characterised by little or no external inputs and irregular water supply. The registration system should accommodate these characteristics and aim to capture the distinctive value of candidate farmers' varieties.

Mr. De Jonge referred to a recent publication that summarizes the program's key learning and recommendations concerning the development of a farmers' varieties registration system, including principles to guide the division of rights and benefit-sharing between registrants and users.

3.11 The Benefit Sharing Fund of the International Treaty – Annamarie Ausania (Technical Expert, ITPGRFA)

The objective of the presentation was to provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the Benefit Sharing Fund (BSF) of the International Treaty, highlighting the key components that define its operations, effectiveness, and broader impact. It explored the distinctive characteristics of the BSF, including its funding mechanisms, strategic objectives, and its contributions to advancing agricultural biodiversity and food security. To support these points, data-driven insights were presented, demonstrating the tangible, positive effects the BSF has had on the ground in various regions.

Next, the presentation delved into the BSF Results Framework, a critical tool for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the fund's projects. This framework is essential for ensuring that projects remain aligned with the fund's objectives and produce measurable outcomes. Building on this, the presentation then turned to the Knowledge Management and Learning approach, underscoring the significance of systematic knowledge collection, documentation, and dissemination as core elements of the BSF's operational model. This section emphasized how the BSF fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement, not only within its own structure but also among its partners and stakeholders. A key initiative in this regard is the Community of Practice, which facilitates collaboration and the exchange of expertise and lessons learned across regions, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the BSF's initiatives.

The presentation then provided an in-depth overview of the 5th Cycle of the BSF, outlining its specific objectives, strategic direction, and current projects, particularly those in Africa. Finally, the presentation concluded with a review of best practices and lessons learned from the BSF's

implementation in both Europe and Africa. Key insights were drawn from the successes and challenges encountered in these regions, offering valuable guidance and recommendations for future initiatives.

4.0 THE WORLD CAFÉ

A World Café was organised around 5 thematic working groups to discuss regulatory bottlenecks and best-practices along the seed value chain, moving from CSBs & gene banks (group 1), to breeding (group 2), variety registration (group 3), seed certification (group 4), and seed production & marketing (group 5). The groups comprised an average of 6 members (of mixed backgrounds, countries, etc.) with a designated facilitator and note taker. Each group was provided with a set of questions to guide the discussions (Refer to Annex). The discussions took approximately 1.5 hours per group. Please refer to the annex for the complete content for each group.

4.1 CSBs & Gene Banks

Group 1 addressed issues affecting gene banks, CSBs, and the interactions between them. Participants called for more governmental support for CSBs or their institutionalisation into government programs, with formalised linkages between CSBs and national gene banks being established. One option mentioned was to decentralize seed banks to the provincial level and create networks and systems that ensure accessibility of services (seed distribution). In addition, the multiple functions of CSBs were emphasised, ranging from CSBs acting as centres of excellence or knowledge hubs within local communities, to operating as local income-generating businesses. Among the proposals were the review of educational curriculums to include the seed banking concept and the creation of a Community of Practice around CSBs.

4.2 Breeding

Group 2 focused on breeding, in particular PPB and participatory variety selection. It also included issues relating to access and benefit-sharing and intellectual property rights. Key takeaways were the importance of local registers or inventories of farmers' varieties and the establishment of community protocols and by-laws on biodiversity. The need for policy support for PPB was highlighted, such as the incorporation PPB into (decentralised) national breeding programs and curriculums, and the involvement of the private sector as off-takers of materials generated from PPB.

4.3 Variety registration

Group 3 discussed issues around variety registration, including testing for DUS and Value for Cultivation and Use. The relevance and suitability of these formal testing procedures for FMSS was questioned, and an alternative approach was proposed in which farmers' knowledge and scientific expertise are integrated, focusing on the Consistency, Accessibility and Suitability

(CAS) of candidate varieties. The involvement of farmers in variety registration was a crucial element to the process. In addition, a notification system was proposed instead of a registration system to simplify processes and enhance accessibility for farmers. It was suggested that size and turnover of breeding companies and seed producers could influence regulatory requirements, allowing for more tailored approaches to seed management.

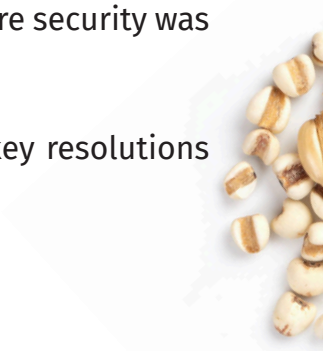
4.4 Seed certification

Group 4 focused on seed certification and quality control. Participants indicated that FMSS have always operated without formal seed inspection and will continue to rely primarily on trust-based relations. It was felt, however, that the current situation which allows for either no formal quality control on the one hand, or full OECD-compliant standards (allowing for international trade) on the other, is too narrow and does not strengthen the use and production of quality seed in FMSS. The development of a more diverse, tailor-made, and decentralised seed certification system was considered necessary. The participatory guarantee system was highlighted as an example of a self-regulating system in which farmers and/or CSBs monitor seed quality, with an external inspection body (e.g. the national gene bank) in place to perform post-market inspections to ensure the reliability of the participatory guarantee system.

4.5 Seed production & marketing

Group 5 looked at seed production, exchange, and marketing. The importance of local seed production and sharing was emphasised, without formal requirements or barriers stifling local seed systems. For maintaining the agrobiodiversity in FMSS, strategic partnerships are needed between farmers, CSBs, agricultural research centres, and (inter)national gene banks to preserve and rejuvenate planting materials. Farmer seed enterprises can be supported by simplified registration requirements, decentralised quality assurance mechanisms, and access to appropriate credit facilities, while extension services and ARCs can provide technical support in seed production and post-harvest processing and storage. Land tenure security was identified as a crucial precondition for all the above.

The thematic working groups presented their topic in a plenary highlighting key resolutions and recommendations for adoption (refer to annex).



5.0 NEXT STEPS & CLOSING REMARKS

When discussing the next steps, participants agreed to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) in order to share learnings and best practices towards the development of an enabling policy framework for farmer-managed seed systems. It was agreed that the CoP should focus on informing members about upcoming events. It should also focus on evidence generation for FMSS through drafting policy briefs and conducting field trails/demonstrations that show climate resilience of farmer varieties. The CoP should build capacity and catalyze knowledge sharing among participating members. Based on the discussions and outcomes of the workshop it was agreed to develop an information document for the upcoming GB 11 at the end of 2025. It was further recommended that the CoP should generate scientific evidence for policy and legislative engagements. For this success, the CoP should have regular meetings conducted through virtual platforms of physical meetings. In future, the CoP may need to rope in other players from many countries, such as universities, farmers' unions, consumer organizations, and community-based seed groups.

Andrew Mushita (CTDO Executive Director) and ITPGRFA representatives gave the closing remarks where they both reiterated the need to come up with a framework that will feed in to the upcoming African Union process on FMSS and GB11. Both speakers took time to thank the organizers, presenters as well as participants for their valuable contributions during the 3-day workshop. The ITPGRFA pledged continued support for the ongoing works in different countries that are geared towards coming up with legal framework that recognize the FMSS. Andrew Mushita rallied participants to continue to lobby and advocate for policies that empower farmers and promote the use of farmer varieties in their respective countries.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The workshop brought together countries of Europe and Africa to deliberate and share experiences on developing appropriate legal framework for the recognition of FMSS. Existing seed policies and laws in majority of African countries have some gaps as they do not adequately cater for the Farmer Managed Seed Systems. Participants therefore urged for the development of policy documents that will advocate for the putting in place of inclusive policies and legislation which regulate both the formal and Farmer Managed Seed Systems. The participants recommended for the drafting of policy position papers and alternative frameworks for presentation to AU and ITPGRFA GB11 meeting in Peru. The workshop was one of the many ways of building collaborative efforts to influence the policy and legislative landscape in Africa and Europe.

7.0 ANNEX

List of Projects

Name	Lead	Implementing Partners	Donor	Link to Project Site
SEFF Seeds for the Future	COSPE	Terre des Hommes Italia (Italy), Sustainable Agriculture Technology (SAT) (Zimbabwe), Community Technology Development Organization (CTDO) (Zimbabwe), Women and Land Zimbabwe (WLZ) (Zimbabwe), Rete Semi Rurali (RSR) (Italy)	AICS	https://www.cospe.org/paesi/zimbabwe/69340/seeds-for-the-future/
MASAP Market and Seed Access Project	CTDO	NIRAS A/S (Denmark), the Community Technology Development Organisation (CTDO) (Zimbabwe), and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)	SDC	https://masap-zimzam.com/
Rooted in Diversity	PELUM Uganda	Oxfam (Netherlands, Malawi, Niger, Uganda), CIRAD, Circle for Integrated Community Development (CICOD) (Malawi), Evangelical Lutheran Development Service (ELDS) (Malawi), NARO	NORAD	https://pelumuganda.org/rootedindiversity/
Cultivating Change	Oxfam Novib	Oxfam (Bangladesh, Nepal, Uganda, Laos, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Peru, Brazil), Association for Community Development (ACP) (Bangladesh), LI-BIRD (Nepal), National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) (Laos), Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (Pelum) (Uganda), Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) (Uganda), Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) (Zambia), Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) (Zimbabwe), Fomento de la Vida (FOVIDA) (Peru), Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) (Brazil)	SIDA	https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/donors-partners/about-oxfam/projects-and-programs/cultivating-change-in-a-warming-world

Name	Lead	Implementing Partners	Donor	Link to Project Site
TRAIL Transfrontier Adaptation Initiative in Lubombo	COSPE	Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), (Sub-Saharan Africa)	GIZ	https://www.cospe.org/paesi/mozambico/67018/transfrontier-adaptation-initiative-in-lubombo-trail/
Enhancing Capacities of Local Communities to Adapt to Climate Change in Tanzania, Mozambique, and Eswatini	TPHPA	Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA) (Tanzania)	FAO	https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/projects-funded/bsf-details/fr/c/1630923/?iso3=SWZ
Strengthening the conservation and sustainable use and management of selected climate resilient PGRFA to enhance smallholder farmer livelihoods in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Lesotho	CTDT	CTDT (Zimbabwe)	Benefit-sharing Fund of the FAO ITPGRFA	Strengthening the conservation and sustainable use and management of selected climate resilient PGRFA to enhance smallholder farmer livelihoods | International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Cultivating Change	Oxfam Novib	Oxfam (Bangladesh, Nepal, Uganda, Laos, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Peru, Brazil), Association for Community Development (ACP) (Bangladesh), LI-BIRD (Nepal), National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) (Laos), Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (Pelum) (Uganda), Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) (Uganda), Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) (Zambia), Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT) (Zimbabwe), Fomento de la Vida (FOVIDA) (Peru), Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT) (Brazil)	SIDA	https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/donors-partners/about-oxfam/projects-and-programs/cultivating-change-in-a-warming-world

List of Participants

Name	Organisation	Country
Fredrick Sanga	BCI	Malawi
Tsungi Bwerazuva	Champion Seeds	Zimbabwe
Lisa Zannerini	COSPE	Eswatini
Mhlonishwa Mabuza	COSPE	Eswatini
Silvio Oppo	COSPE	Italy
Fulvio Vicenzo	COSPE	Italy
Joseph Matiza	COSPE	Zimbabwe
Bheki Bulunga	COSPE	Eswatini
Piergiacomo Bianchi	CREA-DC(IT)	Italy
Mubweku W	Crop Research Institute	Zimbabwe
Andrew Mushita	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Fred Zinanga	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Thamsanqa Khanye	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Nyaradzai Chisango	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Regis Mafuratidze	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Jackie Ngundu	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Joseph N Mwitumwa	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Patrick Kasasa	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Spiwe Manjengwa	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Nobleman Zvirevo	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Edson Dhlakama	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Simba Gwati	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Dzikamai Shumba	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Jabulani Dzinesa	CTDT	Zimbabwe
Charles Nkhoma	CTDT Zambia	Zambia
Joseph Ngenda	CTDT Zambia	Zambia
Dickens Mtonga	ELDS-MLS	Malawi
Ronald Bagaga	ESAFF	Uganda
Mario Marino	FAO ITPGRFA	Italy
Annamaria Ausania	FAO ITPGRFA	Italy
Volantiana Raharinaivo	FAO SFS	Zimbabwe

Name	Organisation	Country
Kudzai Kusena	FAO-IBS	Zimbabwe
Saungweme O	GoZ	Zimbabwe
Claid Mujaju	GoZ	Zimbabwe
Albert Tsindi	ICRISAT	Zimbabwe
Ephrem Habyarimana	ICRISAT	India
Mary Tedy Asio	MAAIF	Uganda
Rutger Persson	MASAP	Zambia
Lloyd Musanesa	MASAP	Zambia
Marcy Fusire	MASAP	Zambia
Henry Chimboza	MASAP	Zimbabwe
Kuda Chirigo	MASAP	Zimbabwe
Mulumba J W	NARO – Uganda	Uganda
Onismus Chipfunde	NBG Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Davidzo Seka	NGB Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Enock Mashikini	NIRAS-MASAP	Zambia
Esther Lweendo	NIRAS-MASAP	Zambia
Brenda Sianangana	NIRAS-MASAP	Zambia
Angela Kateka	NIRAS-MASAP	Zambia
Bram de Jonge	Oxfam	Netherlands
Eco Matser	Oxfam	Netherlands
Charles Opiyo	Oxfam	Uganda
Issoufou Abdou Djibo	Oxfam	Niger
Lawrence Kanakulya	PELUM Uganda	Uganda
Farirai Jemwa	PELUM Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Sangweni Fortune	Research Services Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Riccardo Bocci	RSR	Italy
Kasonde Mubanga	SADC-SPGRC	Zambia
Bulisani Ncube	SDC	Zimbabwe
Edmore Mtetwa	Seed Services Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Frances Davies	SKI	Zambia
Gladness Brush Martin	SWISS AID	Tanzania

Name	Organisation	Country
Matteo Palentini	TDH	Italy
Artwell Mudhunguyo	TDH	Zimbabwe
Wirriam Hamish	TPHPA	Zimbabwe
Victor Simelane	UNISWA	Eswatini
Bridget Masikati	WLZ	Zimbabwe
Mutinta Nketani	ZAAB	Zambia
Lloyd Mbulwe	ZARI	Zambia
Ngoni Chikowe	ZIMSOFF	Zimbabwe

Workshop Program

TIME	Activity	Presenter/Lead
MONDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2024 / Facilitators: Fred and Frances		
8.30-9.00	Arrival and Registrations	**CTDO**
9.00-9.15	Introduction	**Fred/Frances**
9.15-9.25	Welcome Remarks	**Andrew Mushita (CTDO)**
9.25-9.45	Workshop background and objectives	**Riccardo Bocci (RSR)**
9.45-9.55	A farmer's perspective about the workshop	**Ednar Sande / Mr. Marau**
9.55-10.05	Speech from the Treaty	**Kent Nnadozie (ITPGRFA)**
10.05-10:15	Speech from FAO Regional Office	**FAO Representative**
10.15 - 10:35	OFFICIAL OPENING	**Min.of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development - Hon. Dr A J Masuka**
10.35 - 11:05	**Tea Break**	
	20 minutes presentations and 10 minutes Q & A	
11.05-11.35	ITPGRFA presentation: Art. 5-6 and 9 and resolutions	**Mario Marino (ITPGRFA)**
11.35-12.00	Towards diversified/pluralistic seed systems	**Andrew Mushita (CTDO) Bram de Jong (OXFAM) Riccardo Bocci (RSR)**
12.00 - 13:30	**Lunch Break**	
	20 minutes presentations and 10 minutes Q & A	
13.30-14.00	Country experience (Zimbabwe)	**Regis Mafuratidze (CTDO)**
14.00-14.30	Country experience (Zambia)	**Charles Nkhoma (CTDT)**
14.30-15.00	Country experience (EU/Italy)	**Pier Giacomo Bianchi (CREA-DC)**
15.00-15.30	Country experience (Tanzania)	**Government Repr.** (tba)
15.30-16.00	Country experience (Uganda)	**OXFAM**
16.00 - 16.30	**Tea Break**	
16.30-17.00	Country experience (Eswatini)	**Government Repr.** (tba)
17.00-18.00	Country experiences (Malawi/Mozambique/ South Africa/Niger)	**Comments to the previous presentations based on the countries' situation**
18.00	**WRAP UP – END OF DAY**	

TIME	Activity	Presenter/Lead
TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024 / Facilitators: Fred and Frances		
8.00-8.30	Arrival and Registrations	**CTDO**
8.30-9.00	Recap session	
9.00-10.00	EU negotiation on seed marketing rules Enabling legal frameworks to farmers' varieties	**Riccardo Bocci (RSR)** **Bram de Jong (OXFAM)** *Presenting the questions collected and presenting the guidelines for each topic of the Groups*
10.00 - 10:30	**Tea Break**	
10.30-13.00	Group discussions in 5 Groups (breeding, registration, certification, seed production and CSBs)	**1 facilitator and 1 note taker per each group**
13.00 - 14.00	**Lunch Break**	
14.00-14.30	The role of the Benefit Sharing Fund of the ITPGRFA at national/regional level	**Anna Maria Ausania (ITPGRFA)**
14.30-16.00	GROUP DISCUSSIONS – *cont.*	
16.00 - 16.30	**Tea Break**	
16.30-18.00	GROUP DISCUSSIONS – *cont.*	
	WRAP UP – END OF DAY	
WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2024 / Facilitators: Fred and Frances		
8.00-8.30	Arrival and Registrations	**CTDO**
8.30-9.30	Recap Session – 5 Group Presentations by facilitators	
9.30-10.00	Follow up actions	
10.00 - 10.30	**Tea Break**	
10.30-12.30	Preparation of the outline of the policy brief based on workshop results, including the info-document to GB11	
12.30-13.00	Closing Remarks/Session	**The Organising Committee**
13.00 - 14.30	**Lunch Break and DEPARTURE**	

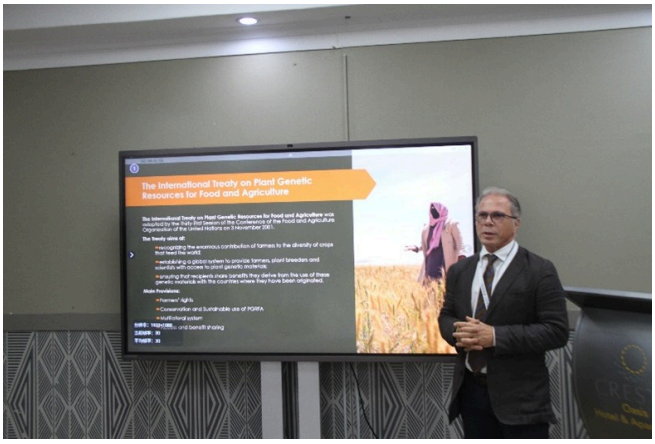
Theme	Key Recommendations / Resolutions
CSBs	• Institutionalize the CSB concept into government programs • CSBs should act as centers of excellence or knowledge hubs within local communities. • Digitalize seed banks and link them to the National Gene Banks, Regional, International. • Lobby government for policies and legislation that promote seed banking • Germplasm should be safely duplicated at local, regional and international level • Where feasible, decentralize seed banks to provincial level and create networks and systems that will ensure accessibility of services (seed distribution) are provided effectively to the CSB. • Organize CSBs to facilitate information sharing/dissemination through seed fairs, cooking demonstrations, field days, demonstration plots • Do on-farm regeneration plots for seed bank material • Register CSB as cooperatives/Business units for sustainability. • Create a sustainable funding mechanism for CSBs • Diversify the CSB activities so that it has multiple enterprises/ functions that generate income. • Advocate for policies that promote Farmer varieties and provide technical and financial support to seed banks. • Educational curriculum of member countries should be reviewed or amended to include the seed banking concept • Formalized linkages between community seed bank and National Gene Banks – create MOUs • Create a Community of Practice around CSBs.
Breeding	• Develop a criterion for description of FVs • Local communities should create registers/inventory / profile of their FVs • Describe / Characterize FVs and develop a national catalogue • Develop FVs specific laws/sui generis legal frameworks • Raise awareness, establish community protocols and by laws on biodiversity • Strengthen Community Seed Banks, formalize them to effectively maintain FVS, establishing strong linkages between CSBs and National Gene Bankss and laws that recognize heterogenous materials

Theme	Key Recommendations / Resolutions
Breeding *(Continued)*	• Put in place a regulatory framework for the registration of FVs • Review the UPOV and OECD guidelines to make room for diversity • Institutionalize PPB in national breeding programs • Decentralize breeding programs • Develop policies to support PPB • Involve the private sector as off takers of materials from PPB • Governments should be at the forefront of the breeding agenda
Variety Registration	• Create opportunities for farmers to appreciate and adopt the FMSS over time. • Traceability and Quality Management: Allow organizations like gene banks and CTDO are allowed to market seeds that are not officially registered, provided they maintain a traceability system. This emphasizes the responsibility of managing quality and traceability in seed production. • Policy Reforms and Derogations: Future policy reforms could allow seed companies working with plant genetic resources to operate without strict registration, focusing instead on quality systems and traceability. This flexibility could benefit biodiversity conservation efforts. Emphasis on policy reform for seed certification and plant genetic resources management. Suggestions include lowering standards to enhance communication and cooperation among involved entities • Quality Control and Certification: There is a need for a robust quality assessment system that ensures traceability back to the seed's origin. This is vital for maintaining the integrity and reliability of the seed supply. • Risks of Deregulation: Increased derogations could lead to more opportunities for seed companies to bypass formal registration processes, potentially compromising quality. It's crucial to establish controls to prevent misleading practices. • Differentiation of Seed Companies: Discussions around creating different rules for small seed companies suggest that size and turnover could influence regulatory requirements, allowing for more tailored approaches to seed management.

1:From breeding for diversity to seed regulation workshop delegates

2: CTDT Executive Director giving opening remarks at the Regional Seed Policy Workshop

3: Berhanu Bedane FAO regional office representative gives remarks during the opening session of the Regional Seed Policy Workshop



4: Mario Marino giving remarks on the ITPGRFA during the opening session of the Regional Seed Policy workshop

5: Regis Mafuratidze gives the Zimbabwean experience in promoting Farmer Varieties

6: Charles Nkhoma gives the Zambian perspective on enabling farmer participation in the Zambia's national seed system

7: Charles Opiyo explaining Uganda's experience on farmer variety registration- the case of "Schedule X"

8: Victor Simelani shares the Eswatini experiences in breeding for diversity and seed regulations/laws.

9: Group discussions on Breeding during the World Café

10: World Cafe Group Discussions on Variety Registration

11: World Cafe Group Discussion on Community Seed Banks

12: World Cafe Group Discussion on Seed Certification

WORLD CAFÉ GROUP DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

CSBs: Recommendations

- Institutionalise the CSB concept into government programs
- CSBs should act as centres of excellence or knowledge hubs within local communities
- Digitalize seed banks and link them to the national, regional, and international gene banks
- Lobby government for policies and legislation that promote seed banking
- Germplasm should be safely duplicated at local, regional and international level
- Where feasible, decentralize seed banks to provincial level and create networks and systems that will ensure accessibility of services (seed distribution) are provided effectively to the CSB.
- Organize CSBs to facilitate information sharing/dissemination through seed fairs, cooking demonstrations, field days, demonstration plots
- Conduct on-farm regeneration plots for seed bank material
- Register CSBs as cooperatives/business units for sustainability
- Create a sustainable funding mechanism for CSBs
- Diversify the CSB activities so that it has multiple enterprises/functions that generate income.
- Advocate for policies that promote farmer varieties and provide technical and financial support to seed banks
- Educational curriculum of member countries should be reviewed or amended to include the seed banking concept
- Formalised linkages between community seed bank and national gene banks – create MOUs
- Create a community of practice around CSBs

Breeding: Recommendations/Resolutions

- Develop a criterion for description of FVs
- Local communities should create registers/inventory / profile of their FVs
- Describe / Characterize FVs and develop a national catalogue
- Develop FVs specific laws/sui generis legal frameworks
- Raise awareness, establish community protocols and by laws on biodiversity
- Strengthening Community Seed Banks, formalize them to effectively maintain FVS, establishing strong linkages between CSBs and National Gene Banks
- Establishing CSBs/FFS-PPB networks as centers of excellence on PGRFA conservation, crop breeding, PGRFA policy lobbying
- Establish community owned seed enterprises
- Biodiversity loss (high risk)
- Biopiracy and lack of benefits for the farmers
- Engage in research, generate evidence and document it
- Domesticate international legal instruments such as CBD and ITPGRFA and fully implement them
- Include farmers in breeding programs through CSBs, FFS on PGRFA
- Put in place policies and laws that recognize heterogenous materials
- Put in place a regulatory framework for the registration of FVs
- Review the UPOV and OECD guidelines to make room for diversity
- Institutionalize PPB in national breeding programs
- Decentralize breeding programs
- Develop policies to support PPB

Variety Registration: Recommendations / Resolutions

- Create opportunities for farmers to appreciate and adopt the FMSS over time
- Traceability and Quality Management: Allow organizations like gene banks and CTDO are allowed to market seeds that are not officially registered, provided they maintain a traceability system. This emphasizes the responsibility of managing quality and traceability in seed production
- Policy Reforms and Derogations: Future policy reforms could allow seed companies working with plant genetic resources to operate without strict registration, focusing instead on quality systems and traceability. This flexibility could benefit biodiversity conservation efforts. Emphasis on policy reform for seed certification and plant genetic resources management. Suggestions include lowering standards to enhance communication and cooperation among involved entities
- Quality Control and Certification: There is a need for a robust quality assessment system that ensures traceability back to the seed's origin. This is vital for maintaining the integrity and reliability of the seed supply
- Risks of Deregulation: Increased derogations could lead to more opportunities for seed companies to bypass formal registration processes, potentially compromising quality. It's crucial to establish controls to prevent misleading practices.
- Differentiation of Seed Companies: Discussions around creating different rules for small seed companies suggest that size and turnover could influence regulatory requirements, allowing for more tailored approaches to seed management.
- Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU): The relevance of VCU testing for farmer varieties is debated. A new acronym, CAS (Consistent, Accessible, Suitable), is proposed to better reflect the needs of farmers and the market. Importance of integrating farmers' knowledge with scientific expertise for understanding farmers' varieties, potentially bypassing formal testing for Value of Cultivation and Use (VCU)
- Registration vs. Notification; Proposal to shift from a registration system to a notification system for seed varieties to simplify processes and enhance accessibility for farmers
- Differentiation of Actor; Different actors, such as cooperatives and seed companies, should have distinct registration requirements based on size and market role to ensure fair competition
- Regional Initiatives: Examples from Italy show regional initiatives registering and characterizing local varieties, highlighting collaboration with universities and adherence to national guidelines
- Importance of Farmer Involvement: Active farmer engagement in seed registration is crucial

Seed Certification: Recommendations / Resolutions

- FMSS does not need seed certification procedures as in formal seed system however, there are alternatives approaches aiming to recognize and support the role that FMSS such as the Self Certification, Quality Delayed Seed (QDS), Participatory Guarantee system and truthfully labelled seed
- There is need to decentralize seed certification for example whereby individual members of FFSs are trained to carry out field inspection as this will empower farmers, ownership, build confidence and trust.
- In Zimbabwe, the CSBs must be designated as Certifying Agency status whereby the Seed Bank Committee members can carry out simple tests for purity and germination percentages using simple media subtract such between paper – newsprint and carryout germination at room temperature
- Self-Certification is a process where individual, organizations or entity declares that their products (Farmer Varieties) meets specific standards, requirements or regulations without the need for external verification or certification by a third party authority so in case of FMSS they should carry out seed certification up to 90 % and 10% by external such as National Gene bank to certify at local level due to the fact that most FV are adoptable to their environment (for example Uganda is working towards it)
- It reduces costs because there is no need for external inspectors and certification fees. In addition, it allows entities to adapt more quickly to changing standards or requirements and it streamlines processes and reduces administrative burdens
- Participatory Guarantee system- is locally based, participatory approach to quality assurances and certification of agricultural products (In Zambia it is used for organic certification so we can borrow the procedure to register FV).
- FMSS need certification but it must be less costly, and it improve on quality and develop seed classes for FV, and they must meet the physical purity and germination percentages
- Certification according to ISTA/ OECD standards – it's not suitable because it follows the UPOV. The FAO's System-has established minimum quality standards for QDS which covers aspects such as germination, purity, moisture content and seed heathy but the seed producers must be registered with national seed authority providing information about their seed production and quality control processes and must be labelled and packaged
- Truly labelled seed
- It provides accurate and reliable information about the seed, enabling farmers to make informed decisions
- Increased trust- truthful labelling fosters trust among farmers
- Lack of third-party verification- so it can be difficult to ensure accuracy reliability
- instruments such as CBD and ITPGRFA and fully implement them
- Include farmers in breeding programs through CSBs, FFS on PGRFA
- Put in place policies and laws that recognize heterogenous materials
- Put in place a regulatory framework for the registration of FVs

Seed Certification: Recommendations / Resolutions

- Review the UPOV and OECD guidelines to make room for diversity
- Institutionalize PPB in national breeding programs
- Decentralize breeding programs
- Develop policies to support PPB
- Involve the private sector as off takers of materials from PPB
- Governments should be at the forefront of the breeding agenda
- the quality declared seed (QDS) system does not offer a legal framework to register farmer varieties because farmers need to develop their own procedures for their varieties and FV are not uniform and stable.

Seed Production and Marketing: Recommendations / Resolutions

- Creating opportunities for farmers to appreciate and adopt the FMSS over time.
- Promoting localised seed supplies
- Seed quality assurance mechanisms governed by small holder farmers used across time, with farmer and community led redress mechanisms and maintenance of diversity with known custodians and or growers of seed
- Volunteer farmers, seed keepers, seed producers tasked to multiply crop varieties – based on internal social systems of quality control existing within indigenous knowledge systems and cultures.
- No registration of seed producers nor sellers- this would stifle the local seed systems in place
- In maintaining diversity of all varieties and crops, which are needed can be addressed through strategic partnerships with CSBs, national gene banks, CG centres to preserve and rejuvenate less-commercial varieties to avoid their loss.
- Enabling open markets for farmers saved seed production
- External systems of quality assurance, redress, and maintenance required, using a participatory seed quality guarantee system co developed with small holder farmers. Communities can establish seed quality assurance committees that are capacitated by seed experts, plant breeders, seed processors and seed business technologists to enhance seed quality management and sales and distribution.
- Seed produced can simply use characterization descriptors
- Cross cutting Supportive frameworks to implement above alternatives
- Extension services and Farmer Field Schools play a critical role in governing both alternative systems which are inherently interlinked
- Land tenure security needed to secure seed production – long term investments made
- Access to appropriate credit facilities for working capital and capex for seed producers
- Support with appropriate mechanization assets for land preparation, harvesting, shelling, threshing, seed drying, processing and storage. Including appropriate SHF technologies required to identify value addition networks that would pull demand for farmer variety seed production volumes.
- Capacity enhancement on seed quality maintenance and postharvest loss mitigation.
- Business skills training to support commercialization of this sector, upscale from community-based seed exchange.
- Extension support should include early warning systems, identification and management of new weeds, pests and diseases and improved agronomic practices.
- Support from national and public variety development units to buttress maintenance of farmer varieties.
- Institutionalize the agroecological farming practices in the FFSs to promote community seed production
- Promoting local gastronomies

2025