



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for
the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty**

Note by the Secretary

At its [second meeting](#) of the Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights (AHTEG), the Expert Group agreed on a revised version of the [template](#) for collecting information on examples of national measures, best practices and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights

This document presents the updated information on best practices and measures of implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by African Centre for Biodiversity (Acbio) on 29 July 2019.

The submission is presented in the form and language in which it was received.

Template for submission of

Measures, Best Practices and Lessons Learned from the Realization of Farmers' Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty

Basic information

- Title of measure/practice

Public procurement of farmers' seed varieties for food programs

- Date of submission

5 February 2019, revised 31 July 2019

- Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place

Brazil

- Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person)

Articulação do Semi-árido (ASA) Brasileiro, <http://www.asabrasil.org.br/>
Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar e Cooperativismo

- Type of institution/organization (categories)

CSO/farmer networks, government

- Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s))

National Association on Agroecology (ANA)

Secretaria de Agricultura Familiar e Cooperativismo

Paraíba State government

Description of the examples

Mandatory information:¹

- Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words) including:
 - Implementing entity and partners
 - Start year
 - Objective(s)
 - Summary of core components
 - Key outcomes
 - Lessons learned (if applicable)

¹ This mandatory information is required in order for the measure/practice to be included in the Inventory.

Articulação do Semi-árido (ASA) Brasileiro worked with Paraíba State government to recognize farmer seed, strengthen seed production and facilitate distribution at state level. Later, these activities were connected to national programmes on agroecology, family farming and food and nutrition security. The objectives were to preserve biodiversity; to stimulate production and exchange of seeds of local varieties; and to promote food security and sustainable farming practices. In 2002, a state law was passed in Paraíba to allow direct transfer from the government to farmers; in 2005, the procurement of farmer varieties for distribution through the national Food Acquisition Program (PAA) was initiated, which was later extended to national level. Procurement through the PAA included a pillar on seed purchase; in addition, seed production, quality control and seed fairs were supported by government agencies, including the public sector agricultural research agency EMBRAPA. The integration of traditional food crops and farmer varieties into public procurement programs has helped to strengthen and diversify production of family farms and resulted in healthier diets. In 2011, the PAA was being implemented in about 40% of municipalities in Brazil, reaching 25,000 government and non-government organizations, with 15 million people benefiting from food distribution through the program annually.

- Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate

Farmer associations/CSOs in Paraíba started with practical work on farmer varieties, including mapping and making these varieties visible. Mobilisation to protest biases against family farmer varieties in government policy convinced the Paraíba state government to acquire local seeds for the seed banks. But local seeds were not recognised in national law as seed. The state government circumvented this by buying the seed as grain and then transferring it to ASA-PB to distribute through seed bank mediators. A state law was passed in 2002 to allow direct transfer from the government to farmers, and in 2003 the national government formally recognised local varieties. Initially there were restrictions to exchange only between farmers or in the same organisation. From 2004, national government food security programmes opened space for procurement of family farmer varieties. In 2005 the Paraíba government started procuring family farmer seed varieties for distribution through the national Food Acquisition Program (PAA). Restrictions on exchange of farmers' varieties were lifted following the adoption of the National Policy for Agroecology and Organic Production (PANAPO I) in 2012, legalising commercialization between family farmers of different states.

- Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words)

Procurement through the government's Food Acquisition Programme included a pillar on seed purchase including farmers' varieties, with assistance provided to farmers to produce and distribute their seed. Seed was directly purchased from and distributed to family farmers. This created a big incentive for local producers. The limit per household was R\$ 16,000/year and, if the transaction was through an organization, R\$ 6 million/year. Procurement was run exclusively by CONAB with resources from the MDS. Policy recognised farmer groups, such as family farmers, agrarian reform settlements and indigenous communities and populations, and recognised seed production activities in these communities. The Ministry of Agrarian Development supported seed fairs to promote multiplication of local varieties. Nevertheless, farmer varieties still had to go through formal quality control processes. ASA-PB began partnering with research institutes, including Embrapa, the public sector agricultural research agency, which helped with acceptance and legitimacy. Projects compared the performance of farmer and conventional (formally improved) varieties using participatory approaches. Participatory research and experimentation included seed health and quality and the effects of intercropping based on three years of experiments.

- Description of the context and the history of the measure/practice is taking place (political, legal and economic framework conditions for the measure/practice) (max 200 words)

Family farmer and CSO networks have a long history of mobilisation in Brazil. Work on seed fitted well into a context of a progressive government from 2003 that launched a range of initiatives to strengthen the role of family farmers, agroecological production and food security, including Bolsa Familia, a law and program to strengthen family farming, the PAA, the School Meal Program (PNAE), and the National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production. Constant mobilisation and popular pressure led to spaces for participation in key institutions from municipal to national levels. At national level these included the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) and the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CONDRAF).

- To which provision(s) of Article 9 of the International Treaty does this measure relate

Art. 9.1 X

Art. 9.2a X

Art. 9.2b X

Art. 9.2c X

Art. 9.3 X

Other information, if applicable

- Please indicate which category of the Inventory is most relevant for the proposed measure, and which other categories are also relevant (if any):

No.	Category	Most relevant ²	Also relevant ³
1	Recognition of local and indigenous communities', farmers' contributions to conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, such as awards and recognition of custodian/guardian farmers		X
2	Financial contributions to support farmers conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA such as contributions to benefit-sharing funds		
3	Approaches to encourage income-generating activities to support farmers' conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA	X	
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge		X

² Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

³ Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).

5	In-situ/on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites		X
6	Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA through community seed banks ⁴ , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.		X
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		X
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		X
9	Training, capacity development and public awareness creation		X
10	Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.		X
11	Other measures / practices		

- In case you selected 'other measures', would you like to suggest a description of this measure, e.g. as a possible new category? _____

- Objective(s)

Rescue and preserve biodiversity, stimulate the production and exchange of farmer and Creole seeds and promote the autonomy and sustainability of farming practices.

- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers⁵

Family farmers, agrarian reform settlers and indigenous communities producing farmer seed varieties; provision to households who were part of the PAA, amongst others. Hundreds of thousands reached across Brazil.

- Location(s) and geographical outreach

National

- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice

State and national resources, NGO and farmer contributions.

- How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?

⁴ Including seed houses.

⁵ Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.

Public procurement has assisted in strengthening polyculture and family farming, and the reintroduction of traditional crops into food systems (e.g. babassu palm, umbu, maxixe and jambu). The procurement of a wider range of foods—more than 3,000 types—resulted simultaneously in a healthier diet that included products with high nutritional value, and fostered the diversification of family farm production.

- Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)

In 2011 the PAA was being implemented in about 40% of municipalities in Brazil, reaching 25,000 government and non-government organisations, with 15 million people benefiting from food distribution through the program annually. Public procurement of farmer's varieties is part of a wider integrated approach to supporting family farming, agroecology and reducing hunger and food security. This integrated approach has resulted in a significant improvement in food security nationally, with Brazil being removed from the global Hunger Map in 2014.

- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice

National Programme to Strengthen Family Farming (PRONAF) from 1996

Food Acquisition Programme (PAA) from 2003

Zero Hunger strategy and Bolsa Familia from 2004

National School Feeding Programme (PNAE)

Family Farming Law (#11.326/2006)

Brazil Without Extreme Poverty Plan 2011

National Agroecology and Organic Production Plan (PLANAPO) 2012

- Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?
- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice

Lessons learned

- Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).

The implementation of the PAA has demonstrated that public policy can simultaneously support family farming while addressing food security and nutrition as well as biodiversity conservation.

Although the institutional market for school feeding already existed, the procurement mechanism, under the Public Tenders Act (Law N° 8,666/1993) restricted participation of family farming and its organisations, given the difficulties of competing with the large companies in the agri-food sector. A mechanism therefore that favoured the inclusion of family farmers in institutional markets was the Public Open Call (Law n° 11,947), to permit differentiated treatment for family farmers.

However, institutional innovations did not stop at this mechanism. To encourage the participation of family farming in the institutional market, Law 11,947 ensured a minimum share (30%) of the school feeding market for family farmers. To this effect, rules were constantly being reviewed and revised with the creation of new mechanisms to ensure peasant consultation and participation. Again, this points to political will on the part of the Brazilian government and other actors (parastatals) and a well organised peasant movement who were clearly able also to articulate their demands.

- What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)

Challenges include the high cost of such programs (referring to the total support package rather than just the seed acquisition component); some coordination challenges and unsuitable regulations which may impede progress (such as seed laws that insist on rigid formal sector quality controls); and in some instances corruption and/or limited capacity.

- What would you consider conditions for success, if others should seek to carry out such a measure or organize such an activity? (max 100 words)

Conditions for success include strong political will; financial capacity in government and solid financial mechanisms to ensure sustainability; an administration that is free to act without donor or other constraints; infrastructure required prior to implementation; combining social relief and development; connecting urban and rural, and tailoring support for each of these; an integrated, intersectoral approach; strong CSO participation and a participatory approach; a sound legal framework; and well-targeted aid.

Further information

- Link(s) to further information about the measure/practice

Fernandes, G. 2017. 'Sementes crioulas, variedades e orgânicas para a agricultura familiar: Da exceção legal à política pública'. In R. Sambuichi, I. de Moura, L. de Mattos, M. de Avila, P. Spinola and A. da Silva (eds) A política nacional de agroecologia e produção orgânica no Brasil: uma trajetória de luta pelo desenvolvimento rural sustentável. Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), Brasília, pp.327-357.

Ferreira de Moura, I., Miranda, C. and Linhares de Asis, R. 2017. 'Agroecology in the Brazilian government agenda: Developments between 2011 and 2014'. Cuadernos de Desarrollo Rural, 14:79, pp.1-15 <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.cdr14-79.abga>

Grisa, C. and Schmitt, C. 2013. 'The Food Acquisition Program in Brazil: Contributions to biodiversity, food security and nutrition', in J. Fanzo, D. Hunter, T. Borelli and F. Mattei (eds) Diversifying food and diets: Using agricultural biodiversity to improve nutrition and health. Routledge Earthscan, London/New York.

Petersen, P., Fernandes, G., Silveira, L. and Dias da Silva, E. 2016. 'Seed banks and national seed policy in Brazil'. Farming Matters, April <https://www.ileia.org/2016/04/16/seed-banks-national-policy-brazil/>

Raffray, M. 2012. 'Brazil's Zero Hunger strategy'. Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural briefing paper. http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/Note_FaimZe_ro_Sept2012_EN_vp.pdf

FAO-IFAD 2017. "Overcoming hunger and rural poverty: Brazilian experiences". FAO/IFAD, Brasilia/Rome.

Food Acquisition Programme - Law No. 10,696/2003 and Decree No. 7,775/2012, Available from http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/LEIS/2003/L10.696.htm#art19 and http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Ato2011-2014/2012/Decree/D7775.htm#art1

National Agroecology and Organic Production Policy. Decree No. 7,794, of 20 August 2012,
http://www.planalto.gov.br/CCIVIL_03/ Ato2011-2014/2012/Decreto/D7794.htm.