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**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 World Agricultural Heritage Foundation (WAHF) on 26 June 2019.*

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



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

**Submitted by WAHF (measure 1)**

**Basic information**

- Title of measure/practice: Capacity building of small-scale farming/indigenous communities to manage and conserve Agricultural Heritage Systems
- Date of submission:
- Name(s) of country/countries in which the measure/practice is taking place: Tunisia, Philippines and China
  - Responsible institution/organization (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s) and contact person):
    - Dr. Parviz Koochafkan, World Agricultural Heritage Foundation, C/o CREA, 2 Via dela Navicella, Rome, <https://www.worldagriculturalheritage.org> Phone: +3911368821
    - Ms. Nadia Bergamini, Bioversity International, [Viale dei tre Denari 472/A - 00054 Fiumicino \(RM\) https://www.bioversityinternational.org/](https://www.bioversityinternational.org/), Phone: +39 06 61181
    - Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Médina de Gafsa (ASM – Gafsa), Université de Gafsa, Centre Régionale de Recherche de l'Agriculture Oasien (CRRAO), <http://asmgafsa.org.tn.ourssite.com/>
    - Prof. Teresita Borromeo, University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB), Brenda Saquing, Municipal Local Government of Kiangang, Ifugao Province
    - Prof. Qingwen Min, Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources sciences <http://igsnrr.cas.cn/ue/ne/>
- Type of institution/organization (categories): Non Governmental Organizations, Local government units, Academic institution, CGIAR
- Collaborating/supporting institutions/organizations/actors, if applicable (name, address, website (if applicable), e-mail address, telephone number(s)) : same as above



## Description of the examples

### Mandatory information:<sup>1</sup>

- Short summary to be put in the inventory (max. 200 words) including:

Based on the project Underpinning the Resiliency of Agricultural Heritage Systems and Rewarding Smallholders, Family Farmers and Indigenous Communities, funded by IFAD and implemented by World Agricultural Heritage Foundation (WAHF) in collaboration with ASM GAFSA (Tunisia), UPLB and Kiangon Municipality (Philippines) and IGSNRR (China). The project was aimed at building the capacities of GIAHS custodians to manage and conserve their agricultural heritage systems. The project helps GIAHS communities in China, Philippines and Tunisia, to also address the governance of the respective GIAHS sites. In particular, the project invested on assessing, documentation and knowledge sharing and dissemination between and among the members of the farming communities.

- Implementing entity and partners: please see above.
- Start year: under this project funding – 2016 to date
- Objective(s): The objective of the project is to promote recognition and empowerment of smallholder, family farmers – notably women, youth and indigenous peoples.
- Summary of core components: The project has promoted capacity development in the three countries, such as:
  - Training of farmers and local custodians to assess, monitor and manage the resiliency of their respective GIAHS sites, which among others, highlighting agroecological and biodiverse production as an important means to cope with climate change.
  - Documenting of GIAHS knowledge systems' and best practices in conserving and managing GIAHS sites particularly the biodiversity and genetic resources associated to it
  - Networking and social media application (AgLegacy app) to share and disseminate knowledge and other relevant information between and among farmers to strengthen management and conservation of GIAHS sites
- Key outcomes
  - Understanding of the inherent values of traditional agriculture and associated ecosystem goods and services, in particular the conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture and the important role of farmers and indigenous communities.
  - Networking, sharing and exchange of knowledge between and among farmers through conventional practice and through social media

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



- Lessons learned (if applicable)
  - The project promotes various capacity building activities for the communities and the AgLegacy app, serves as among others, an ideal platform for promoting valuation and protection of traditional knowledge systems related to crop genetic resources between and among farmers in Gafsa, Tunisia
  - Empowering small scale farmers and indigenous communities particularly those engage in traditional agriculture offers lots of potentials, e.g. to promote in situ, on farm conservation of crop genetic resources and other wild crops for food and agriculture. It also offers possibilities, to revitalize the dying wisdom of farming and the cultivation of the disappearing crops. When farmers understood the values of the traditional crops, and enable them to turn the challenges into opportunities to improve their livelihoods, not only the crops are being conserved, but also their children and other youth could opt to remain in the rural areas.
  - The social media AgLegacy also serves as the medium for farmers to participate in decision-making, and facilitated knowledge sharing and learning.
  - Recognition of the role of farmers in conserving and sustaining the crop genetic resources, and their traditional knowledge systems.
  - Recognition of their GIAHS, is a recognition of farmers themselves and gives back the pride and confidence of farmers.
  - Allow farmers to be involved and to take part in decision-making.
  - To promote and encourage farmers, it needs to be mainstreamed in the existing policies and programs at all levels possible, coupled with demonstration activities that farmers themselves and other stakeholders would see both with tangible and intangible benefits.
- Brief history (including starting year), as appropriate: WAHF was established in 2013 after my retirement in FAO, with the aim to continue my advocacy for the recognition of/and dynamic conservation of GIAHS.
- Core components of the measure/practice (max 200 words):

The project has promoted capacity development in the three countries, such as:

  - Training of farmers and local custodians to assess, monitor and manage the resiliency of their respective GIAHS sites, which among others, highlighting agroecological and biodiverse production as an important means to cope with climate change.
  - Documenting of GIAHS knowledge systems' and best practices in conserving and managing GIAHS sites particularly the biodiversity and genetic resources associated to it
  - Networking and social media application (AgLegacy app) to share and disseminate knowledge and other relevant information between and among farmers to strengthen management and conservation of GIAHS sites
- 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)



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The submitted measure has a long narrative, which was a result of over centuries, generations of farmers, fisher folks and herders have developed complex, diverse and locally adapted agricultural system<sup>2</sup>, managed with time-tested, ingenious combinations of techniques and practices. Building on generations of accumulated knowledge and experiences, these ingenious “agri-cultural” heritage systems reflect the diversity of cultures and civilizations but also the evolution of humanity. They have resulted not only in outstanding rural landscapes, maintenance of globally significant agricultural biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and valuable cultural inheritance but, above all, in the sustained provision of multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security for millions of poor and small scale farmers.

Such agricultural and agro-silvo-pastoral systems can be found, in particular, in highly populated regions or in areas where the population has, for various reasons, had to establish complex and innovative land-use/management practices, for example, due to geographic isolation, fragile ecosystems, political marginalization, limited natural resources, and/or extreme climatic conditions. These systems reflect often rich and sometimes unique agricultural biodiversity, within and between species but also at ecosystem and landscape level.

The dynamic human management and interactions with nature that allow the maintenance of biodiversity and essential ecosystem services are characterized by continuous technological and cultural innovation, transfers between generations and exchange with other farming communities and ecosystems. The wealth and breadth of accumulated knowledge systems and experience in the management and use of natural resources is a globally significant resource that needs to be preserved and allowed to evolve.

The dynamic conservation management of these agricultural heritage systems brings lessons learned and lighthouses of sustainable agriculture and rural development. In particular, reminding the important contribution of local and indigenous farming communities in the conservation, development and management of crop genetic resources for food and agriculture, which is at the preamble of the International Treaty, is one of the foundation when the GIAHS project was conceptualized.

This measure supports the implementation of Farmers’ Rights to promote the revitalization of traditional agriculture by continue conserving and sustaining the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, and valuing traditional knowledge systems. The project distils key factors, functions, lessons and practices that can be transferred and scale out to a larger number of agrarian landscapes and ecosystems facing similar threats and with untapped potential. New institutional practices such as adding values to crop products, reviving traditional, indigenous crops, and the use of social media in sharing and disseminating knowledge systems.

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

Art. 9.1

Art. 9.2a

Art. 9.2b

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<sup>2</sup> A broad concept of agriculture is applied, including cropping, animal husbandry, forestry, swidden agriculture, fisheries, hunting, gathering and combinations.



Art. 9.2c

Art. 9.3

**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 <sup>3</sup>	Also relevant <sup>4</sup>
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		
4	Catalogues, registries and other forms of documentation of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge	x	
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 <sup>5</sup> , seed networks and other measures improving farmers' choices of a wider diversity of PGRFA.		
7	Participatory approaches to research on PGRFA, including characterization and evaluation, participatory plant breeding and variety selection		
8	Farmers' participation in decision-making at local, national and sub-regional, regional and international levels		
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.		
11	Other measures / practices		

<sup>3</sup> Please select only one category that is most relevant, under which the measure will be listed.

<sup>4</sup> Please select one or several categories that may also be relevant (if applicable).

<sup>5</sup> Including seed houses.



- 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)
- Target group(s) and numbers of involved and affected farmers<sup>6</sup> : Farming communities and indigenous peoples in the Philippines; minority groups in China;
- Location(s) and geographical outreach: Gafsa, Tunisia; Ifugao Province, Philippines; Qingtian County plus several GIAHS sites in China
  
- Resources used for implementation of the measure/practice: External funding from bilateral institutions
- How has the measure/practice affected the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture?
  - By jointly assessing and documenting the factors and functionalities of socio ecological and resiliencies of traditional agriculture, and the holistic approach to biodiverse crop production along their own customary management systems
  - Awareness of farmers about the importance of their traditional knowledge and the diversity of crops which makes them more resilient to cope with adverse climatic conditions and/or pest and diseases infestation
  - Sharing, exchange of knowledge, and participation to decision-making that affects the integrity and sustainability of their traditional agriculture which directly impacting conservation and development crop genetic resources of social, health and economic importance
  - Farmers’ socially binding together and sharing information about their crops and cultivation management and other farm issues through the AgLegacy social media, helping them to use and benefit from the new gadgets and communication technology tools
  
- Please describe the achievements of the measure/ practice so far (including quantification) (max 200 words)
- Other national level instruments that are linked to the measure/practice
  - Compliance to other international agreements
  
- Are you aware of any other international agreements or programs that are relevant for this measure/practice?
  - Nagoya Protocol
  - FAO GIAHS Programme is now covering 57 sites in over 25 countries (<http://www.fao.org/giahs/giahsaroundtheworld/designated-sites/en/>)
  
- Other issues you wish to address, that have not yet been covered, to describe the measure/practice

## Lessons learned

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<sup>6</sup> Any classification, e.g. of the types of farmer addressed, may be country-specific.



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- Describe lessons learned which may be relevant for others who wish to do the same or similar measures/practices (max 250 words).
  - What challenges encountered along the way (if applicable) (max 200 words)
  - 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)
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- The project promotes various capacity building activities for the communities and the AgLegacy app, serves as among others, an ideal platform for promoting valuation and protection of traditional knowledge systems related to crop genetic resources
  - Empowering small scale farmers and indigenous communities particularly those engage in traditional agriculture offers lots of potentials to promote in situ, on farm conservation of crop genetic resources and other wild crops for food and agriculture. It also offers possibilities, to revitalize the dying wisdom of farming and cultivation of the disappearing crops, when farmers understood the values of the crops, and enable them to turn the challenges into opportunities to improve their livelihoods, not only the crops are being conserved, but also their children and other youth could opt to remain in the rural areas.
  - The social media AgLegacy also serves as the medium for farmers to participate in decision-making, and facilitated knowledge sharing and learning.
  - Recognition of the role of farmers in conserving and sustaining the crop genetic resources, and their traditional knowledge systems.
  - Recognition of their GIAHS, is a recognition of farmers themselves and gives back the pride and confidence of farmers.
  - Allow farmers to be involved and to take part in decision-making.
  - To promote and encourage farmers, it needs to be mainstreamed in the existing policies and programs at all levels possible, coupled with demonstration activities that farmers themselves and other stakeholders would see both with tangible and intangible benefits.

#### **Further information**

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

See Tunisia, Philippines and China country reports: <https://www.bioversityinternational.org/>