



## First International Multi-stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

### Technical Consultation on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA

29–30 March 2021

#### Background

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The challenge of sustainably producing more food with fewer inputs may be met only if the broadest possible diversity of plant genetic resources for food and agricultural (PGRFA) can be efficiently conserved and easily accessed for sources of new traits. Currently, various drivers of genetic erosion, including changes in agricultural practices, the introduction of modern crop varieties, changes to land use, destruction or fragmentation of habitats, climate change and other factors, are increasingly threatening the continued existence, and hence availability, of these resources.

A significant amount of crop diversity can only be effectively preserved in protected areas and farmers' fields where evolution and adaptation continue to occur. This variation, derived from interactions between genotypes and the environment, provides a crucial source of environmental resilience as well as an important source of nutrients.

Crop wild relatives (CWR) represent a rich and largely unexplored reservoir of novel traits and genes that can be used to develop crop varieties, incorporating pest and disease resistance and adapted to climate change. Wild food plants can be direct and important sources of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, complementing those of staple crops. PGRFA found on-farm, including farmers' varieties/landraces, often the mainstay of family's livelihoods, and are adapted to specific ecological conditions and/or farming practices. Failure to ensure adequate conservation and management of this critically important diversity may result in its permanent loss.

#### Objective

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The symposium aims to foster synergies and highlight the current state of knowledge and the enabling environment for *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA. It will provide an open-ended forum for the exchange of information and experiences among experts, practitioners and other stakeholders. It will contribute to an increased understanding of the role and importance of *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives and wild food plants and on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces and help to identify needs of different stakeholders involved in *in situ* conservation and/or on-farm management of farmers' varieties/landraces.

#### Symposium

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The two-day Symposium is being co-organized by FAO, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Secretariat, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Secretariat and the Global Crop Diversity Trust. It will bring together technical experts and stakeholders working on PGRFA conservation and use to present and discuss evidence-based research on these topics. Overall, the symposium will strengthen and support on-going efforts with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of this crop diversity.

