

**Views, Experiences and Best Practices as an example of possible options for the national implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty Submitted by Contracting Parties and Relevant Organizations**

*Note by the Secretary*

*This document presents the views, experiences and best practices on the implementation of Farmers' Rights, as set up in Article 9 of the International Treaty submitted by Zambia on 30 June 2018.*

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

## **Zambia's Submission: Views, Experiences and Best Practices Regarding Options for the Realization or Implementation of Farmers' Rights**

Zambia through the National Plant Genetic Resources Centre (NPGRC) or National Genebank and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) have in the past 20 or so years have implemented a number of programmes and activities related to on-farm management of plant genetic resources. The support for these activities has come from various sources, including government, Non-governmental organization, cooperating partners and the Benefit Sharing Fund (BSF) of the International Treaty for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). The activities undertaken include on-farm evaluation of farmers own varieties and genebank germplasm collections and restoration programmes/activities for crop genetic resources considered lost from some traditional farming communities of selected staple cereal and food legume crops, mainly covering Lusaka, Southern and Central provinces.

The farmer participatory evaluation of germplasm resulted in the selection or identification of preferred varieties, which have been considered for possible registration on the official national variety register.

The selection of the farmers' variety to be restored was based on participatory approach through focused group discussions in the farming communities. There are a number of varieties covering a number of crops (maize, groundnuts, cowpea and sorghum) that have successfully been restored.

Through interactions with farmers and the farming communities' valuable information on farmers' experiences related to traditional practices in the maintenance of their crop diversity, mainly existing as local varieties, has been provided by farmers.

Based on our experiences from the implementation of above programmes /activities related to on-farm management of crop genetic resources the following options for the realization of national farmers Rights at the national level are suggested:

- 1) Push for a holistic seed policy and legal framework that enables the inclusion of all types of seed, including farmers' varieties that may currently not be acceptable for inclusion on the official variety list for a number of reasons.
- 2) Support a multi-actor dialogue process that involves all stakeholders in a broader seed value chain that links crop diversity to seed in a more appropriate and direct manner than has so far happened. This will allow farmers, civil society and other relevant farmer organizations to participate in the decision making process regarding the organization of a national seed system.
- 3) Farmers are the major custodians of PGR and there is therefore a need to increase farmer knowledge and appreciation about farmers' rights amongst the farmers. Farmers should be empowered to take more responsibility about their destiny with

regard to crop diversity and seed system. The ITPGRFA Benefit Sharing Fund projects are extremely important in contributing to this farmer knowledge development and awareness. Generally, farmers only appreciate the value of PGR for themselves and their communities but are not aware about the global importance and the value of their contribution to the global community.

- 4) The issue of benefit sharing by the farmers should be brought down from the global perspective and make it more relevant at national and community levels. This will entail using the same principles adopted by the Treaty for multinational contributions from their profits arising out of use of PGR. Countries could develop local mechanisms for seed companies operating in the country to contribute a portion of their profit into a national fund that can be used to support work towards implementing Article 9 including support to public research directed at developing smallholder crops and varieties including OPVs utilizing PGR in the country.
- 5) Participatory variety selection seems to have a lot of scope for contributing to the realization of Farmers' Rights. Countries should therefore adopt, as a matter of policy, participatory variety selection and enhancement and participatory plant breeding. This will lead to increased knowledge and participation of farmers in managing and utilizing plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) thus deriving increased benefits.
- 6) Explore existing policy and legislation that could be used in the implementation of Farmers' Rights. In Zambia such there is such a law "***Protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources and Expressions of Folklore Act, of 2016***" upon which realization of Farmers' Rights can be anchored.