

**Message from Dr. Emile Frison, Director General  
International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI)  
on the Observance of the World Food Day**

It is a great pleasure for IPGRI that the theme of this year's World Food Day is "Biodiversity for Food Security". For all its 30 years, IPGRI has been dedicated to the use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity as the foundation of improved agriculture. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that without agricultural biodiversity, there would be no food security and very little food. It is the diversity of ecosystems and species, and especially the genetic diversity within plants and animals, that enabled farmers and breeders to develop the highly productive food systems we see around us. IPGRI is committed to making the most of agricultural biodiversity to enable people, especially poor people in rural areas, to improve their lives in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

The value of agricultural biodiversity, however, goes beyond food security in its simplest sense. While the accomplishments of the Green Revolution have helped to increase global food production per person by some 25%, despite a doubling of world population, some areas have seen less impact. People in marginal lands, for example, need a full package of biodiversity to enhance the resilience and stability of their harvests. Agricultural biodiversity is a key element in their strategy of minimizing the risk of a harvest failure. In more favoured areas, too, diversity will be needed, and must remain available, to permit further improvements.

Perhaps most importantly, food security requires more than an adequate quantity of food. It also requires food of good quality. While the world has made great strides in dealing with acute hunger, the hidden hunger of missing minerals, vitamins and nutrients remains a problem that still affects one in three people worldwide, especially children and young mothers. It is here that agricultural biodiversity can have perhaps its greatest input. A diverse diet is one of the most effective ways to promote better nutrition and thus better health and healthier people are more productive and more able to provide for themselves.

For all these reasons, IPGRI welcomes World Food Day's focus on biodiversity and renews its commitment to the optimal use of agricultural biodiversity to improve livelihoods.