



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
MILLETS
2023



@FAO

COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK AND TOOLKIT

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1. INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS (IYM 2023)

1.1 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS (IYM)

The United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session in March 2021 declared 2023 the International Year of Millets (IYM). The IYM 2023 is an opportunity to raise awareness of, and direct policy attention to the nutritional and health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation under adverse and changing climatic conditions. It is an occasion to promote the sustainable production of millets while also highlighting their potential to create sustainable market opportunities for producers and consumers.

IYM 2023 aims to contribute to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 15 (Life on land).



It will also contribute to FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31, particularly FAO BP1 (Innovation for sustainable agriculture production), BN1 (Healthy diets for all), BN2 (Nutrition for the most vulnerable), BN5 (Transparent markets and trade), BE1 (Climate change mitigating and adapted agrifood systems), and BL2 (Inclusive rural transformation).

It's time to remember millets and make a collective effort throughout the world to showcase their rich potential. Have a look at this guide to discover how to get involved and promote IYM 2023.

What are millets?

Millets are often called "Nutri-Cereals" due to their high nutritional content compared to commonly grown cereals like wheat, rice or corn. They contribute to human and animal health, including that of mothers and their young. Millets encompass a diverse group of cereals including pearl, proso, foxtail, barnyard, little, kodo, browntop, finger and Guinea millets as well as fonio, sorghum (or great millet) and teff. They were among the first plants to be domesticated and serve as a traditional staple crop for millions of farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Millets can grow on poor soils with little inputs, are resistant or tolerant to many crop diseases and pests and can survive adverse climatic conditions. The genetic diversity of millets offers opportunities for economic development through income generating activities in the food sector or in niche markets for specific professional applications (therapeutics, pharmaceuticals, specialty chemistry).

1.2 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS AROUND THE WORLD

The International Year of Millets is being launched at FAO headquarters at 12.30 CET on **6 December 2022**.

Follow the [IYM website](#) for a detailed programme and [register here](#). Many other events will take place throughout 2023 and will be posted in an events section of the website.

2. COMMUNICATING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS (IYM 2023)

2.1 SLOGAN

AR: **إرث غني لطاقة كاملة.**

ZH: **历史悠久, 潜力无穷**

EN: **Rich in heritage, full
of potential**

FR: **Riche en patrimoine,
plein de potentiel**

RU: **Богатая история и
высокий потенциал**

ES: **Rico en patrimonio,
lleno de potencial**

2.2 THEME

The global food system faces many complex challenges, including hunger, malnutrition and diet-related diseases, an ever-growing global population that needs sufficient and healthy food, the climate emergency and the depletion of natural resources. We need to unlock the great potential millets hold as an affordable nutritious food, a worthy component for global healthy diets, and a crop that can withstand climate change. IYM 2023 is an opportunity to highlight the benefits of millets for Better production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment and a Better Life. They can become a key crop within global food systems, with the potential to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, nutrition and the environment.

IYM 2023 aims to **raise awareness** of the multiple benefits of millets including their nutritional and health benefits and suitability for cultivation under adverse and changing climatic conditions. The Year aims to **strengthen science-policy interaction, empower stakeholders** to take action, and to build new partnerships **while strengthening** existing ones. IYM 2023 can also contribute to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

Everyone has a role to play – from governments and private sector companies to the general public and even youth. We need to work together to unleash the potential of millets for human well-being, food systems, poverty alleviation and the adaptation of agriculture to climate change.



2.3 QUICK FACTS

Milletts are...

- A diverse group of **small-grained dryland cereals**
- **Climate resilient**, tolerant of poor soils, drought and harsh growing conditions
- **Adaptable** to different production environments, without high fertilizer and pesticide needs
- **Integral to ancestral traditions**, cultures and indigenous knowledge
- **Nutritious** “nutri-cereals” that provide dietary fibre, antioxidants, protein and minerals, including iron
- Good for **human and animal health** (through food and feed)
- **Gluten free** with a **low glycaemic index** to address intolerances and diabetes
- **Diverse in taste** and the products and recipes they are based on
- **A source of income** for marginal production areas in rural, urban, regional and international trade
- **A way to create decent jobs** for women and youth through innovative processing and marketing opportunities
- **A way to transform local agrifood systems** for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind

2.4 KEY MESSAGES

1. The sustainable cultivation of millets can support climate-resilient agriculture

SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land)



- Millets are often referred to as climate-resilient crops because they can grow on arid lands with minimal inputs and maintenance, are tolerant or resistant to diseases and pests and are more resilient to climate shocks than other cereals.
- Including and/or expanding the production of millets in national agricultural systems can support the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

2. The sustainable production of millets can fight hunger and contribute to food security and nutrition

SDG 2 (End Hunger)



- In arid areas, millets are very often the only crops that can be harvested in the dry season and are a crucial part of the household food basket. Millets can help to overcome food scarcity in difficult periods, therefore contributing to the food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations.
- Millets can grow in very poor and fertile soils in dryland conditions and do not heavily deplete soil nutrients. By providing land cover in arid areas, they reduce further soil degradation and help support biodiversity and sustainable land restoration.

3. Millets can be an important part of a healthy diet

SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)



- Millets are good sources of minerals, dietary fibre, antioxidants and protein. With a low glycaemic index, they are a good option for people with high-blood sugar. Millets are also gluten-free and an excellent and cost-effective source of iron for iron-deficient diets.
- As whole grains, each variety of millets provide different amounts and types of fibre. Dietary fibre has a role in regulating bowel function, blood sugar and lipids, and satiation.

4. Greater consumption of millets can offer opportunities to smallholder farmers to improve their livelihoods

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)



- The production of millets and the demand for them has declined as other cereals such as wheat, maize or rice became a dietary preference. By promoting millets and regaining market opportunities, additional sources of revenue can be created for smallholders and in the food sector, boosting economic growth.
- Millets were among the first plants to be domesticated and for centuries, they have been an important food for hundreds of millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. They are deeply rooted in Indigenous Peoples' culture and traditions and therefore a strategic crop to guarantee food security in areas where they are culturally relevant.

5. Proper handling of millets is key to maintaining their high quality and nutritional benefits

SDG 2 (End Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)



- Timely harvesting ensures good grain quality followed by threshing to remove grains from the stalks. Controlled mechanised processes for the dehusking of millets, at any scale, are more efficient than manual dehusking, as they reduce losses from spillage and provide clean intact grains that are ready for market. Smallholders and supply chain holders benefit accordingly from better incomes and reduced drudgery.
- Innovative agro-processing, especially in the production of nutritious foods, could target both traditional and non-traditional markets such as youth, urban consumers, tourists etc. This value addition could lead to market expansion, and increased food and nutrition security and incomes for smallholder farmers.

6. Greater trade in millets can improve the diversity of the global food system

SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production)



- Millets, including sorghum, account for less than 3% of the global grains trade. With the need to improve the resilience of global trade and its ability to respond to sudden changes in the foodgrain market, millets are a valuable option to increase output diversity and mitigate risks related to production shocks.
- Market structure and transparency, in relation to volumes and prices of millets, are key elements to ensure stability and sustainability. It is important to ensure that millet traders benefit from the same tools as other grain traders, such as digitalization, which could boost the added value of millet along the grains value chain and consequently provide more revenue opportunities for producers.

2.5 TAKE ACTION

Use your International Year of Millets event or activity to call for action taking inspiration from the actions below! See **section 3** on how to feature your **'My actions' human-interest story** on digital platforms, at events and exhibitions worldwide.



Governments and policy makers need to prioritize the production and trade of millets as a way to fight hunger, build resilience to climate change, increase biodiversity and promote a diverse diet and take legislative actions to promote their cultivation and innovative methods for harvest and post-harvest processes. Governments and policy makers should also put millets on the menu in public places such as schools and hospitals.

The private sector should invest in the sustainable production of millets by facilitating access to credit or other financial support, millet-specific training, farming equipment and new technologies that improve the handling of millets and thus their quality. The food industry needs to also increase production and promotion of millets-based products.

We all need to learn about millets, including their nutritional benefits and create a growing demand for them by including them in our diets. Together, we can contribute to the sustainable transformation of agrifood systems.

Influencers and chefs should use millets in their recipes and menus and advocate for their consumption, while educating the public on new and appealing ways to prepare them in line with food-based dietary guidelines.

Children should be encouraged to learn more about millets, their history and benefits from a young age and have the opportunity to taste millets on school menus.

Farmers, particularly **smallholders** and **family farmers**, should learn about the benefits of millets and the most up to date methodologies for cultivating, harvesting and post-harvesting to ensure the highest quality.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives and civil society working directly with farmers need to share best practices for cultivating millets and provide farmers with practical support, training and ways to better connect to the market. Civil society and NGOs should form networks and action groups to promote the availability, accessibility and affordability of millets.

Researchers and academic institutions should dedicate resources to researching millets, their nutritional values, properties and characteristics, as well as appropriate mechanization and other methodologies that can make millet cultivation more sustainable.

2.6 VISUAL IDENTITY

Remember to use the IYM 2023 visual identity as much as possible in all your activities and events and on digital platforms to create a strong call for action.

To help you get started, we have prepared **two guides on how to use the IYM 2023 visual identity**:

- The **Guidelines for the use of the IYM 2023 visual identity and waiver of liability** provide detailed instructions on how to use the logo and who may use it.
- The **Visual identity guidelines for graphic designers** give precise instructions on branding, use of the visual identity for different materials, and tips for including the logos of partners working on joint activities and events.

Do you need the visual identity in other languages? We can work with you to create different language versions of the visual identity. Send a request to International-Year-Millet@fao.org. Our graphic design team can advise you on any issues you may have when using the visual identity, from logo arrangements to different format requirements (size or layout).

A detailed list of communication products to promote IYM 2023 is available in the Toolkit in **section 4**.



3. IYM FOOD HEROES – HUMAN INTEREST STORIES



We are calling on FAO Representations and partners to identify human-interest stories linked to the production and advocacy of millets. A selection of these stories will be published on the IYM and FAO websites; promoted on multilingual digital channels; used in events and exhibitions; and, pitched to global media.

We need your help to identify stories that show:

- someone who has **contributed to the promotion of millets** (a farmer, public or private sector employee, student, etc.);
- the **benefits of eating millets**;
- the importance of millets for our food systems, livelihoods, culture and environment;
- how the **production of** millets is important to help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment, or boost social and economic development.

Your story could be about a small-scale farmer, a teacher, influencer or someone who works in the public or private sector.

The story should include one-two quotes from the person featured, information on the **project or programme** in question, and at least **three high-resolution photos** (at least one portrait photo and one photo of the person in their working environment). Sample interview questions, a template for the story and photo caption instructions are provided in the template [here](#). The deadline to receive stories is **28 February 2023**.

4. COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

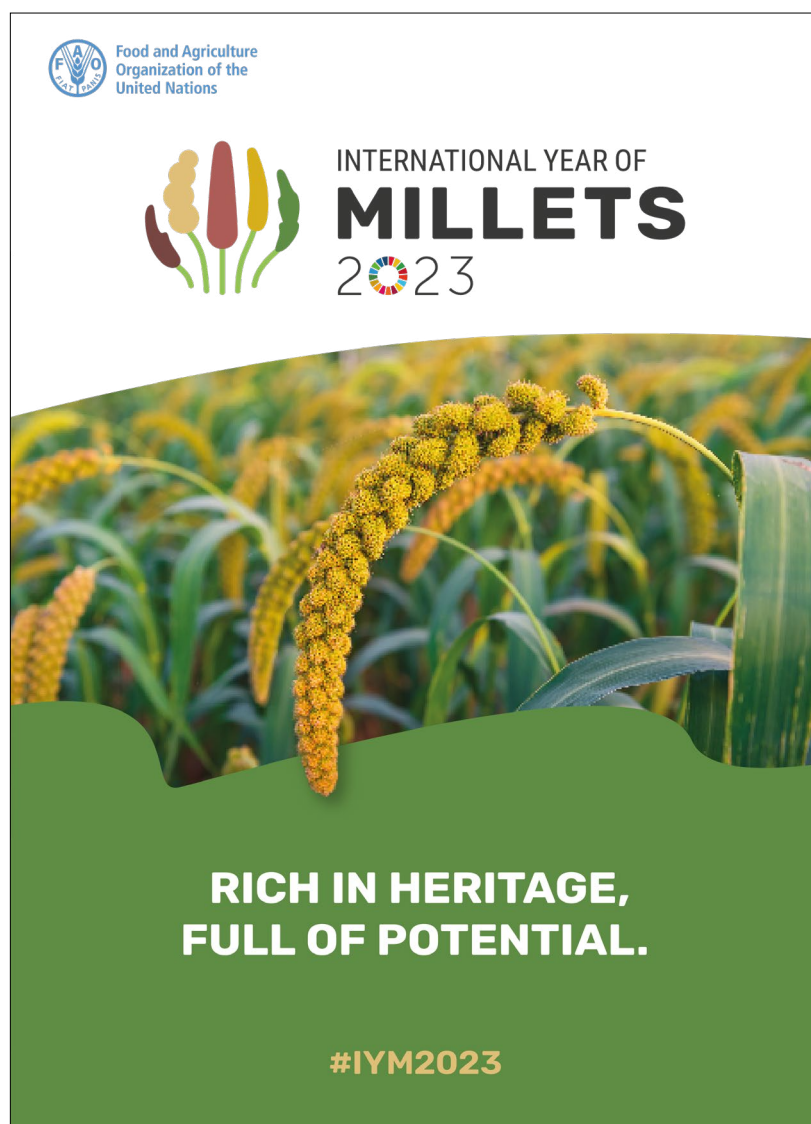
4.1 WHAT IS THE IYM ASSET BANK?

The [IYM Asset Bank](#) contains a wide range of digital and print-ready communication materials to help you, and your partners, promote IYM 2023. These materials are available in all FAO official languages and we can work with you to **customize them in your national language**.

If you have any difficulties accessing the files, contact us at International-Year-Millet@fao.org

4.2 POSTER

The standard measurement of the [IYM poster](#) is 700 x 500 cm with both horizontal and vertical formats as available. Other measurements can be provided upon request to the IYM Team if you write to International-Year-Millet@fao.org



4.3 MILLETS ILLUSTRATIONS

Additional graphics available for your events and outreach activities include 15 colourful illustrations of various types of millets. These should always be used together with the IYM 2023 visual identity.



Sorghum



Pearl millet



Foxtail millet



Little millet



Kodo millet



Proso millet



Barnyard millet



Browntop millet



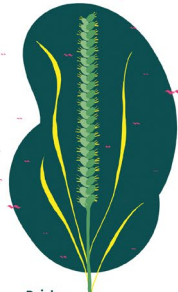
Guinea millet



Black fonio



White fonio



Raishan



Job's tears



Finger millet



Teff

4.4 WEBSITE AND WEB BANNERS

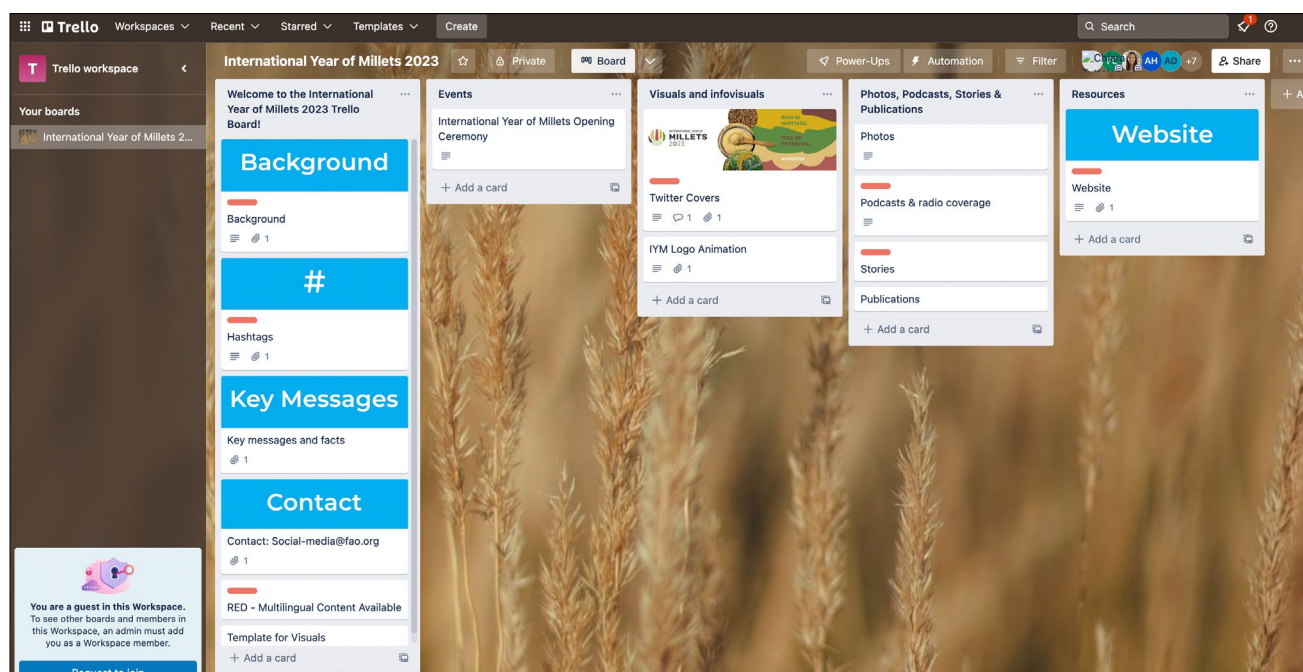
The [IYM 2023 website](#) provides useful information to help you promote the year, including a wide range of communications materials, which can be customized to your needs.

Be sure to **add all your IYM-related events** to the website's events section (stay tuned for the release) and keep track of what is happening near you. To add your event, fill in the form on the events section on the IYM website <http://www.fao.org/millet-2023> or contact International-Year-Millet@fao.org.

Download the [IYM web banners](#) in six languages from the Asset Bank and add these to your website, linking to the global website. Contact us at International-Year-Millet@fao.org if you need another size or language.

4.5 SOCIAL MEDIA TRELLO BOARD

The [IYM Trello board](#) contains a set of graphics that can be shared on social media to promote the Year. See section 5.4 for some suggestions on how to promote IYM on your social media channels.



4.6 VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS FOR MEETINGS OR EVENTS

Virtual backgrounds for IYM events are provided in the Asset Bank. If you need help with in person events, contact us at International-Year-Millet@fao.org for simple roll-up banners or backdrops.

4.7 PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Screen and share the 1-minute promotional video at your IYM 2023 event or activity related to the IYM 2023. Approach TV stations, online media, public transport partners and other large outdoor screen coordinators and ask if they can share it too as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. Remember that many TV stations require up to six months' notice in advance of the actual screening time. You can also ask the IYM team to provide the promo video in additional languages. Just write to us as soon as possible, with a brief description of the outreach potential in this extra language and we will ask for your support with the translation and final check.

4.8 GADGETS AND BRANDED MERCHANDISE

The IYM Asset Bank provides [graphics for the local printing or production](#) of:

- t-shirts;
- caps;
- mugs;
- water bottles;
- aprons;
- stickers; and
- bags.



4.9 IYM PRESENTATION

An IYM PowerPoint template is available for FAO staff who need to give an overview of the Year, from its objectives to how to get involved. You can download it [here](#).



5. HOW TO PARTICIPATE

5.1 PLAN YOUR EVENT OR OUTREACH ACTIVITY

If you wish to organize an event or outreach activity, we can provide you with a range of materials and tips to plan it. We have promotional materials in several languages – posters, event banner and website. Many items can be downloaded from the [IYM 2023 Asset Bank](#).

If you want to hold an event or start a local campaign, get some inspiration from the examples below. The IYM 2023 is an action-oriented campaign so remember to use your event or activity to call for action from governments, the private sector and all individuals, and encourage partners to make a commitment. Keep us updated about your calls to action!

Spread the word!

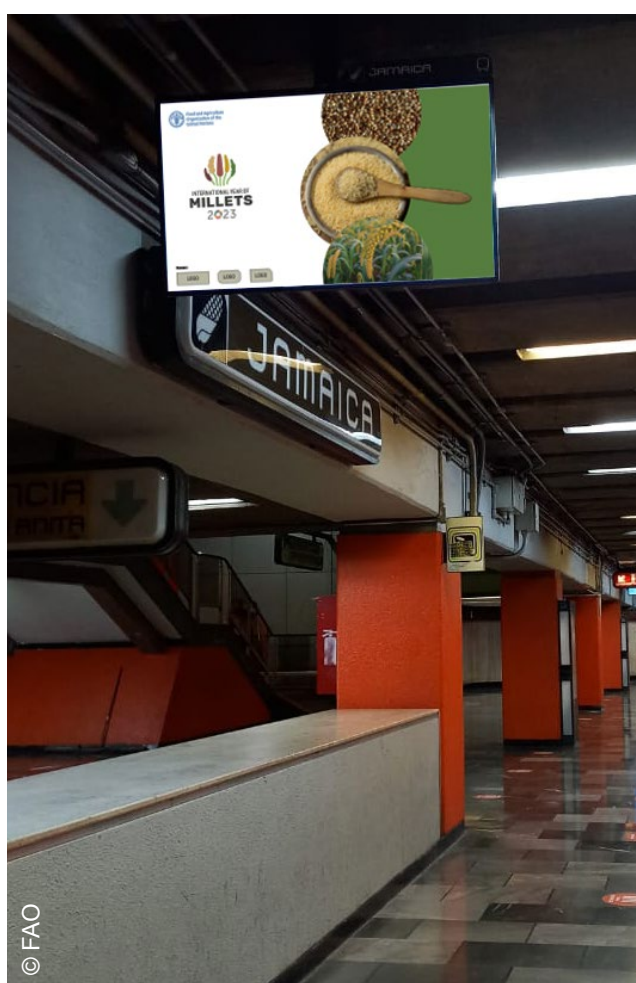
Inform, educate and engage audiences with real facts. Join the IYM campaign by sharing our free material on digital channels using the official hashtags #IYM2023 and #YearofMillets.

Plan an event – taste and experience millets!

Why not organise a recipe sharing group, food tasting or cooking demonstration, even online, to get people eating millets. Sports activities like marathons and marches are also a great way to bring people together, raise awareness. Get people thinking about millets through exhibitions, cultural performances, contests and concerts. There are so many different ways to organize your IYM event and engage with your community.

Brand your city or town

Approach municipalities, outdoor advertisers, or transportation companies to place IYM products, such as the poster or promotional video.





Get the media involved!

Approach journalists or advertising contacts in TV stations as early as possible to promote millets or place the IYM video. Share ideas with the IYM team on where you hope to place any promo material and we will produce it in the language you need.

Engage youth

The young generation need to be inspired to become agrifood change makers and they need to know about millets. Organise a presentation at a local school about millets and their many benefits and stay tuned for youth activities and content on the IYM website.

Lectures, panels and roundtables

Organise, sponsor or participate in a public lecture with political leaders, educators, scientists and farmers. Use your lecture to promote millets and propose actions and host a questions and answers session to inspire participants and encourage involvement.

Know your influencers!

Identify bloggers, actors, popular public figures, photographers, chefs or experts who champion similar issues to help amplify the benefits of millets at events and across digital platforms. Get in touch with us so we can guide you in your efforts.

Plan an IYM exhibition

Plan an exhibition featuring stories, projects, multi-stakeholder partnerships or millet recipes in your region.

Organize a field visit

A field visit can be organized with media or Goodwill Ambassadors to showcase the cultivation of millets and discuss how this is benefitting the local community and environment.

Let us know about your IYM 2023 event!

As you can see, there are a lot of ways to celebrate the IYM 2023. Remember to tell us about your events or efforts to promote the global campaign by uploading your event details on the IYM website. Photograph and/or record your event and send us your best photos so we can feature them in an IYM Flickr Album. All high-resolution photos should be accompanied by photo credits and information about the event so we can publish them. Remember to use the IYM visual as much as possible in your events and activities!

5.2 PARTNERSHIPS

The IYM's global impact would not be possible without a network of strategic partnerships, including not only FAO offices and other stakeholders, but also the private sector (transport, entertainment or advertising companies) and municipalities. These partnerships involve the exchange of visibility, co-marketing, and the sharing of communication resources, all with the aim of reaching out to a broader audience.

Examples of an exchange of visibility could be:

- co-marketing of an event, through FAO's and the partner's marketing channels;
- branding of an event or a specific company product with the IYM visual identity or exchange of logos or visual identities on key communication materials by both partners;
- featuring the partner's brand on the IYM website;
- promotion of the video, visual animation and other communication material; and
- making use of each other's social media channels (reposting messages, retweets, engaging influencers to further promote the messages etc.).

Partners providing pro bono outreach, such as placement of the promotional video on TV, or the IYM poster on billboards (printed or digital), will be featured on the website as IYM supporters. If you would like to nominate an IYM supporter, let us know about the activities they are planning by writing to us



5.3 TRADITIONAL MEDIA OUTREACH

In addition to promoting the IYM promotional video with national and regional media contacts, you can share information and materials on a regular basis and inform the media about **events and activities** that are set to be organized locally in 2023.

Pitching products and stories to media and influencers is key to building public interest in millets. It may be possible to invite **FAO Goodwill Ambassadors** (GWA) to join field visits or promote the importance of millets online or at events (GWA visits should always be coordinated with the Regional Communications Officer and FAO Goodwill Ambassador team at FAO HQ at: GoodwillAmbassadors@fao.org).

A range of activities can be organized with media, such as:

- **talk shows** and **discussion panels** with FAO experts;
- **press conferences** and **media briefings**;
- **radio/TV call-in shows**; and
- pitching **local spokespeople for interviews** on IYM.

A list of spokespeople is provided in **Annex 1**. Write to us if you would like to set up an interview.



5.4 DIGITAL OUTREACH

Social media is key to building awareness of millets and their many benefits for nutrition, health, the environment, smallholder farmers and the environment.



Help us to spread the word on digital channels! Before you start, take a look at **section 2.4** on key messages or facts that you can promote. Include the official hashtag when you tweet, post about, promote or share the theme or any of the IYM materials. For the complete list of hashtags in FAO official languages, please see here:

- #IYM2023

And:

- EN: #YearofMillet
- RU: #ГодПроса
- AR: #السنة_الدولية_للذُّن
- ZH: #国际小米年
- ES: #AñodelMijo
- FR: #AnnéeduMil

You can start now by using the graphics provided on the [IYM Trello board](#).

List of FAO's main social media accounts:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/UNFAO> (FAO Corporate account)

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/FAO> (Primary/Corporate account)

<https://twitter.com/FAOKnowledge> (Corporate account)

<https://twitter.com/FAOnews> (Corporate account/Media)

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/fao> (FAO corporate page)

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/fao/>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/c/UNFAO>

Weibo

https://weibo.com/unfao?refer_flag=1005055014

WeChat

Search "FAOChina" on WeChat

FAO Social Media Guidelines are available from:

<http://www.fao.org/2/socialmedia>

For specific queries related to FAO social media, send an email to Social-Media@fao.org.

6. USEFUL LINKS

- [IYM website](#)
- [IYM Asset Bank](#)
- [IYM visual identity guidelines for graphic designers](#)
- [IYM Trello board](#)
- [IYM Visual Identity Toolkit](#)
- [IYM photo library](#)

7. CONTACTS

The IYM team coordinates the celebration of the Year and related activities for global outreach and is available for regular consultation with country representations and stakeholder groups to help develop and optimize national and regional IYM campaigns.

Contact for general information: International-Year-Milletts@fao.org.

ANNEX 1 – IYM SPOKESPEOPLE

Spokeperson	Divisions	Languages
Jingyuan Xia	NSP	English, Chinese
Fenton Beed	NSP	English
Makiko Taguchi	NSP	English, Spanish (Japanese)
Divine Njie	ESF	English, French
Ana Islas	ESN	English, Spanish, French, Italian
Erin Collier	EST	English
Rosaida Dolce	NSL	English, Spanish
Selvaraju Ramasamy	OIN and Chief Scientist	English
Puyun Yang	OIN and Chief Scientist	English, Chinese



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
MILLETS
2023

For more information on the
International Year of Millets

International-Year-Milletts@fao.org

**Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations**

Rome, Italy



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