



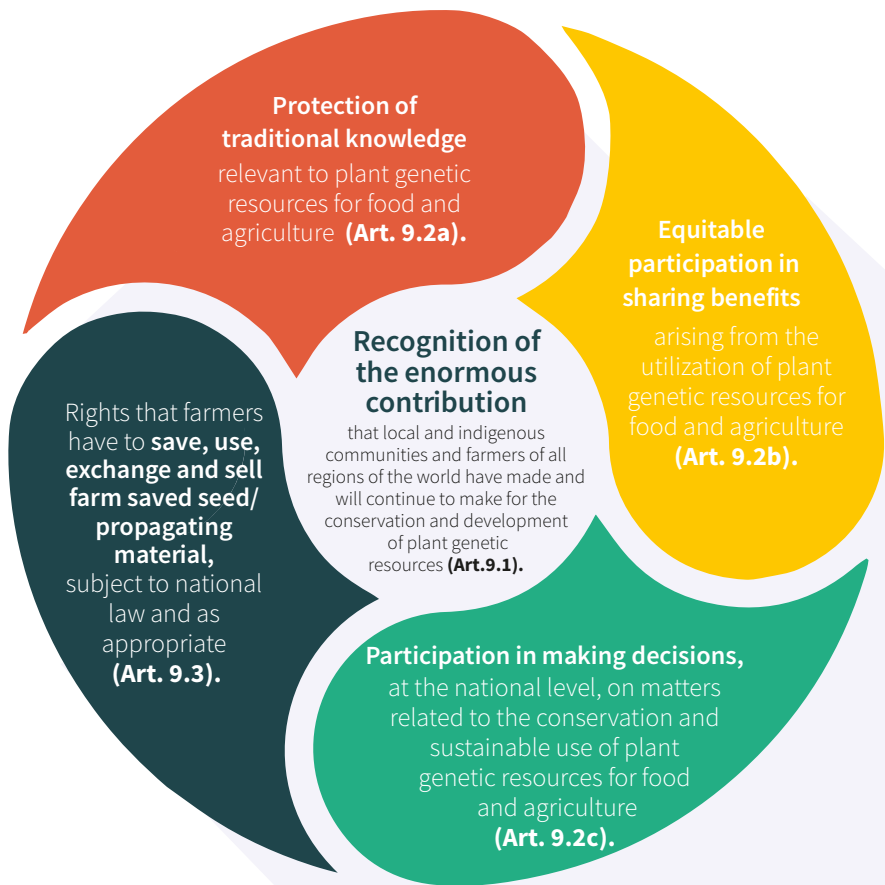
Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture



**Farmers' Rights** under  
the International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture



## Farmers' Rights under the International Treaty

The International Treaty is the first legally-binding international instrument that explicitly acknowledges the enormous contribution of farmers and indigenous communities to developing and managing crops and other plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) – the basis of our food supply. For millennia, farmers and indigenous communities have taken care of the seed

and plants that feed us all. And they continue contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of these resources now and in the future.

In recognition of this contribution, Article 9 of the International Treaty is devoted to Farmers' Rights. The Preamble of the International Treaty states that “the past, present and future contributions of farmers in all regions of the world, particularly those in centres of origin and diversity, in conserving, improving and making available these resources, is the basis of Farmers' Rights.”





# How does the International Treaty support Farmers' Rights?

The International Treaty calls on its Contracting Parties and all nations to protect and promote the rights of smallholder farmers, particularly in terms of protecting their rights to their seeds, and their involvement in relevant national decision-making.

In accordance with Article 9 of the International Treaty, the responsibility to protect, promote and realize Farmers' Rights rests with national governments through a number of suggested measures, and by providing farmers with a basis from which to advocate for their rights.

## **Who can promote the implementation and realization of Farmers' Rights?**

Everyone can promote the implementation and realization of Farmers' Rights in their professional and institutional capacity, including Contracting Parties of the International Treaty, local and indigenous communities and farmers, research and academic institutions, civil society organizations, the public and private sector, funding institutions, and interested stakeholders.

# Examples of practices, measures and experiences for the realization of Farmers' Rights

## The **Inventory of national measures, best practices, and lessons learned from the realization of Farmers' Rights**,

as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty, presents a catalogue of measures and practices. It was developed by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers' Rights, based on its mandate from the Governing Body at its Seventh Session. The examples are organized into 11 categories:

- 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.
- 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.
- 5) In situ and on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA, such as social and cultural measures, community biodiversity management and conservation sites.
- 6) Facilitation of farmers' access to a diversity of PGRFA and protection of traditional knowledge.
- 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, subregional, regional and international levels.
- 9) Training, capacity development and public awareness creation.
- 10) Legal measures for the implementation of Farmers' Rights, such as legislative measures related to PGRFA.
- 11) Other measures and practices.

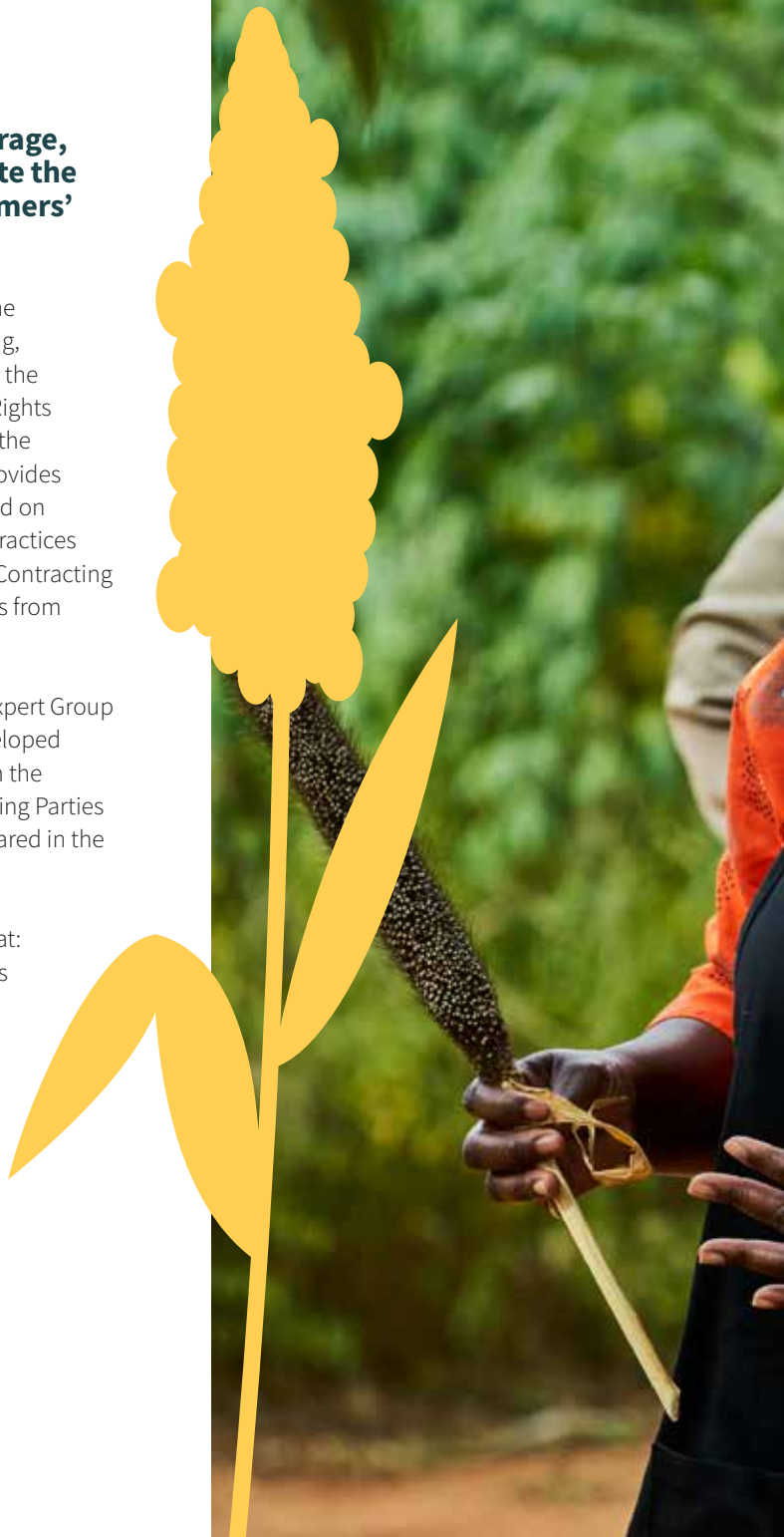
For an updated list of measures and practices related to implementing Farmers' Rights, and to learn more about this, visit: <https://bit.ly/FR-inventory>

## **Options to encourage, guide and promote the realization of Farmers' Rights**

Next to the Inventory, the “Options for encouraging, guiding, and promoting the realization of Farmers’ Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty” provides numerous options based on actual measures, best practices and experiences of the Contracting Parties and stakeholders from across the globe.

The Ad hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers’ Rights developed the Options, drawing on the experiences of Contracting Parties and stakeholders, as shared in the Inventory.

Visit the Options paper at:  
<https://bit.ly/FR-Options>





A woman in the foreground is wearing a vibrant, patterned headwrap in shades of yellow, orange, and black. She is also wearing a black apron over an orange top. She is looking upwards and to the left, with her mouth open as if speaking. In the background, a man with a shaved head is partially visible, looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor agricultural setting.

# Farmers as guardians and innovators of crop diversity

Plant genetic diversity is indispensable for sustainable agriculture. It enables us to adapt to changing environmental conditions, for example caused by climate change, and helps us ensure global food security. Smallholder farmers and indigenous communities, particularly those in centres of origin and diversity, have been guardians of the world's plant genetic resources for millennia, and they continue to play a crucial role in maintaining the biodiversity of our food crops.

**Realizing Farmers' Rights enables farmers to continue to maintain, develop and manage crop genetic resources, and recognizes and rewards them for their indispensable contribution to the global pool of genetic resources.**

Since farmers are custodians and developers of crop genetic diversity in the field, their rights in this regard are critical if they are to be able to maintain this pivotal role for food security. The innovations of farmers are the foundation of modern plant breeding, since agriculture was founded on the artificial selection of desirable traits, which resulted in domestication. The variety of foods available to humanity today is due, in large part, to farmers' continuous efforts in this regard.



# Learn more and get involved

For most recent developments on the implementation of Farmers' Rights in the context of the International Treaty, visit: [www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/farmers-rights/en/](http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/farmers-rights/en/)

For an overview of resources, including the Options paper, Inventory, background papers, events, educational modules and interactive courses on Farmers' Rights, visit: <https://bit.ly/FR-resources>

## **Invitation to submit measures, experiences, practices and lessons learned on implementing Farmers' Rights**

Contracting Parties, farmers' organizations, stakeholders and relevant organizations are invited to submit practices and experiences on implementing Article 9 of the International Treaty by using the template for submission. The template is available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.

To submit measures and practices, or for any queries, please contact the Secretariat ([PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org](mailto:PGRFA-Treaty@fao.org)).



**For more  
information  
and access to  
resources, scan:**



**Contact**

International Treaty on Plant Genetic  
Resources for Food and Agriculture

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

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