

43rd Session of the Conference

Introduction to Item 15.4: Proposal for an International Day of Potato

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is one of the world's five most important crops. It is cultivated in over 150 countries, across all continents, on over 20 million hectares and is regularly consumed by billions of people.

Potato plays an important role in food and nutritional security and serves as the source of a vast industry of various processed products. Potato is a rich source of carbohydrate, antioxidants and nutrients as part of a balanced diet.

Small-scale farmers depend on sustainable potato cultivation to generate income, protect the environment and create social equity.

Potato is genetically diverse; there are over 5 000 hybrids, varieties and landraces of potatoes, many of which are restricted to the Altiplano region in Latin America.

Potato is one of the key staple crops that would benefit from advocacy initiatives towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely: SDG 1 – no poverty, SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth, SDG 12 – responsible consumption and production, SDG 15 – life on land, and SDG 17 – partnerships for the goals, to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Recognizing the global importance of potato, the UN General Assembly declared 2008 as the International Year of the Potato to raise awareness of the need to promote research and development of sustainable production in low- and middle-income countries. Now the Government of Peru proposes an annual International Day of Potato (IDP), supported by the Kingdom of Belgium, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Ireland and Provinces of Canada, to generate global awareness.

The IDP will increase awareness of critically important issues related to sustainable production and stable value chains, including water and fertilizer availability. Annual celebrations could involve various initiatives such as the development of advocacy materials, technical publications and documentaries; conducting festivals, establishment of field demonstrations, webinars and other international, regional and national events and the promotion of regional or global networks.

Additionally, each year, the IDP will focus on key issues of potato, including outbreaks of dangerous pests and diseases, innovation and green technologies for potato production, storage, processing and marketing, nutritional values and the promotion of recipes of potato-derived cuisine.

The Conference is invited to:

- review the proposal by the Government of Peru to establish the observance by the UN of an International Day of Potato (IDP), and provide guidance as deemed appropriate; and
- endorse the draft Resolution, as contained in C 2023/LIM/10, and submit the proposal to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

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