



## FAO Conference 40<sup>th</sup> Session

Rome, 3 - 8 July 2017

### FAO Conference Side Event Innovation in Plant Breeding for Food Security and Nutrition Friday 7 July, 15:00-16:30 hours, Sheikh Zayed Centre



Kingdom of the Netherlands

#### About the event

Our world is facing an unprecedented crisis through the combination of a changing climate, advancing urbanization and growing competition for rapidly diminishing natural resources - at a time where we have to prepare to feed 9 billion people in 2050. Plant breeding has made a tremendous contribution to global food security and nutrition in the past. The amazing wealth of diversity of our crops (and animals) presents an important opportunity to ensure that future generations can produce sufficient, nutritious food in a sustainable way. We need to work together to safeguard and unlock the potential of biodiversity to make our food systems more resilient and to manage transitions that lie ahead. The UN 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Accord, and the Sustainable Development Goals provide a strong framework for action.

In line with this, FAO organized a Biotechnology Symposium in 2016, bringing different actors around the table and offering a neutral platform for the exchange of views and experiences. This Symposium clearly illustrated current developments in plant breeding and that the latest innovative breeding techniques offer huge potential for achieving food security and quality. Different from conventional genetic modification, new methods require less facilities and time. They could be applied by a wider community of public and private breeders, and in a much wider range of crops, focusing specifically on the needs of many more farmers. Whilst such methods help unlocking the potential of plants and their biological diversity, the promotion of the sustainable use of plant genetic resources through effective and efficient plant breeding remains an important prerequisite. Continued innovation in plant breeding is an essential element of the broader topic of innovation in agriculture, which is the topic of an important FAO-seminar in 2018.

Making sure that innovation in plant breeding will contribute to resource use efficiency and food security requires a supportive policy environment in countries across the globe. The FAO Conference offers an excellent platform for bringing high level policy and decision makers together on this important topic.



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This event will also welcome the Food Forever initiative to safeguard the basis of the world's food supply. Food Forever is a global partnership comprised of a set of high-level Champions and partner organizations, raising awareness for the importance and urgency of conserving and using agricultural biodiversity. This new initiative advocates for concrete actions and ideas to support the implementation of the UN SDG target 2.5, for maintaining diversity of genetic resources.

*The side event will bring together views from public and private research; and policy makers from Africa and Asia to discuss opportunities and measures for innovative plant breeding to continue to contribute to the SDGs.*

### PROGRAMME

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#### Moderator

**Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen**

*Permanent Representative of the Netherlands*

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#### Speakers

**Dr Ren Wang**

*Assistant Director-General*

*Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, FAO*

**H.E. Dr Kaba Urgessa**

*State Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources of Ethiopia*

**Mr Michael Keller**

*Secretary General, International Seed Foundation*

**Ms Anke van den Hurk**

*Deputy Director, Plantum*

**Dr Carlos Seré**

*Senior Advisor, Bioversity International*

**Dr Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran**

*Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

**Ms Marie Haga**

*Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust*

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#### Discussion

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*A light lunch will be served at the start of the side event at the Sheikh Zayed Centre*