

CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT
EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY (GB8)
INTERNATIONAL SEED TREATY (IT PGRFA)

12 – Farmers’ Rights

Pitamabar Shrestha (LI-BIRD)

Thank you, Madame Chair,

My name is Pitambar, I am from Nepal and speaking on behalf of the Civil Society Organizations present in this Governing Body meeting of the International Treaty.

The decision by the Governing Body in its 7th Session to establish an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers’ Rights was an important step towards an increased focus on Farmers’ Rights and a recognition that more guidance on this issue is needed in order to ensure their implementation. Farmers’ Rights are a cornerstone of the International Treaty and plays a crucial role for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and for ensuring food security today and in the future.

The Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Farmers’ Rights has made important progress in the first biennium. The Inventory of National Measures, Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Realization of Farmers’ Rights provides important information on how Farmers’ Rights can be implemented. However, the development of options for guidance are an important next step which has to follow. To do so the AHTEG need to be reconvened for the next biennium in order to complete its task in line with the agreed mandate in the GB7.

In Kigali, we stressed the importance of having a broad participation of farmers in this group, as the discussion is about their rights. Farmers are the true experts of farmers’ rights, both on how they should be realized as well as the factors that restrict their rights. If the Governing Body decides to revisit the composition of the group as well as to sharpen its mandate, we reiterate the importance of having a broader participation, especially of farmers, including indigenous people, but also of civil society organizations that have strong experience on implementing farmers’ rights. If the Governing Body wishes to discuss the mandate, we support the IPC’s recommendation that the ATHEG also analyses the legal measures that restrict Farmers’ Rights.

Above all, the most important is to ensure that the AHTEG is reconvened and can conclude its work. We strongly encourage contracting parties to provide resources in order to ensure the continuation of the work of the group. This is crucial for the realization of Farmers’ Rights. We also express our commitment to contribute to the AHTEG’s work.

Thank you, Madame!