Book - Unit 3 - Farmers´Rights

Unit 3 - Farmer`s Rights

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Book: Book - Unit 3 - Farmers´Rights
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1. Recognition and protection of Farmer’s Rights

For the first time in history the efforts and the enormous contribution of farmers – including local and indigenous communities – worldwide to the development and conservation of crop diversity has been recognized in an international legally binding instrument, through Article 9 of the International Treaty.

The International Treaty advises Contracting Parties to take measures to protect and promote Farmers’ Rights in accordance with national laws, and provides farmers a basis to advocate their rights.
2. Measures to protect and promote Farmer’s Rights

Before the adoption of the International Treaty, in the absence of an internationally agreed common ground, the concept of Farmers’ Rights has come to mean different things to different people and across world regions.

Article 9 clarifies the issue by providing the internationally agreed common ground that was lacking prior to the adoption of the International Treaty. It notably provides the following non-exhaustive list of measures for Contracting Parties to take at the national level for the protection and promotion of Farmers’ Rights:

- The protection of traditional knowledge relevant to PGRFA;
- The right to participate in the sharing of benefits arising from the use of PGRFA; and
- The right to participate in decision-making related to PGRFA.
3. Further protection throughout the Treaty

In addition to the Article 9 measures, Farmers’ Rights are backed by other provisions of the International Treaty, including the preamble and a number of the measures proposed for the promotion of the conservation and the sustainable use of PGRFA.

Certain provisions linked to the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and to the Benefit-sharing Fund are also supportive of Farmers’ Rights.
4. Joint Capacity Building Programme on Farmers’ Rights

The good spirit of collaboration between the Secretariat of the International Treaty and the Secretariat of Global Forum on Agriculture Research made possible the establishment of a partnership that includes since 2014 the **Joint Capacity Building Programme on Farmers’ Rights** to improve the implementation of Farmers’ Rights in developing countries at the local and national levels through increasing capacity building and public awareness.

The **objectives** of the Programme are:

1. Enhancing national consensus of what Farmers’ Rights under the International Treaty mean, building on the role of smallholder farmers as custodians of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and innovators of food crops relevant for food security;
2. Increasing awareness on Farmers’ Rights as crucial for food security among smallholder and family farmers, relevant sectors and decision makers;
3. Increasing awareness on the role that women farmers’ play in agriculture and food security;
4. Promoting the development of policies and legal measures implementing Farmers’ Rights, and the review and adjustment of national measures affecting Farmers’ Rights;
5. Promoting access by smallholder farmers to genetic material under the Multilateral System of the International Treaty;
6. Promote the co-existence and mutual reinforcement of Farmers’ Rights and breeders’ rights.
Key Activities

The following are some of the key activities of the Programme:

1. Convey regional and national workshops and consultations in selected countries to exchange views, experiences and best practices with the participation of farmers, breeders and decision makers;
2. Facilitate interregional dialogues and local visits, particularly with a South-South approach;
3. Development of a kit of capacity building resources on Farmers’ Rights for smallholder farmers, decision-makers and relevant stakeholders;
4. Promote information exchange and networking, particularly among women farmers’ organizations to increase their capacity to participate in decision-making relevant to the implementation of Farmers’ Rights;
5. Support national policy developments through expert and legal advice and the integration of Farmer’s Rights consideration into national and local regulations;
6. Support the protection and valuing of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices associated with PGRFA;
7. Promote a greater participation of smallholder farmers in benefits arising from the utilization of PGRFA (e.g. training on access to the resources in the global gene pool of the Treaty);
8. Monitor and assess the impact of the implementation of Farmers’ Rights measures on incomes, resilience and livelihoods of resource-poor farmers