In response to a request of the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), FAO, Rome organized the first Global Symposium on Farmers' Rights. The Symposium aimed to share experiences, innovative approaches, effective policies, and best practices and to learn from each other on implementing Farmers' Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty.

The Global Symposium was hosted by the Government of India through the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA), New Delhi in partnership with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR). It was held from 12 to 15 September 2023 at ICAR Convention Center, New Delhi.

The highlights of the Global Symposium included an inaugural ceremony with the Honorable President of India as chief guest and conferment of "Indian Genome Saviour and Community Awards". Honorable President of India expressed her appreciation for the International Treaty for organising the event on Farmers' Rights in India. She spoke with conviction that “…our farmers since the beginning of civilisation are the real engineers and scientists. They have harnessed the energies and bounties of nature for the benefit of humanity.” She underscored the importance of the International Treaty “The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture signed in 2001 was one of the most important international agreements among member countries to conserve, use, and manage
plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. For the first time it talked about guaranteeing food security through conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world’s plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.” Furthermore, the President of India expressed her hope “…that the Global Symposium, the very first of its kind in the world, provides a golden opportunity for the world fraternity to align their priorities and programmes according to the need of humanity and to make a common commitment for the fulfillment of Farmers’ Rights”. The President of India conferred awards to six Indian farmer communities and 20 Indian individual farmers. Besides, the new office of PPVFRA, Plant Authority Bhawan was inaugurated and an online system of filing application for plant variety registration named “Portal to Apply for Registration of Varieties” (PARV) was launched on this occasion by the Hon’ble Chief Guest.

Hon’ble Minister of Agriculture Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in his address, highlighted the efforts of India to protect Farmers Rights through the provisions of the PPVFR Act. Dr. T. Mohapatra Chairperson, PPVFRA welcomed the participants. Shri Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare briefed about the objective of the Global Symposium.

The technical sessions were structured into five thematic sessions promoting sharing of experiences and learning from each other on implementing Farmers’ Rights, with open discussions at the end of each session. The five thematic sessions were i) Options for Realizing Farmers’ Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty, ii) Legal and other measures supporting the realization of Farmers’ Rights, iii) International Processes and other issues of relevance to Farmers’ Rights, iv) State of Implementation of Article 9 of the International Treaty and v) Future work on Farmers’ Rights. In addition to the technical sessions, panel discussions and special events were organised to promote focused discussions on specific topics and gather ideas that may facilitate the implementation of practical approaches to realising Farmers’ Rights as well as to explore
possible elements for future work on Farmers’ Rights. The three special sessions were: i) South-South Cooperation on Farmers Rights, ii) Farmers Forum, and iii) Community Seed Bank and Value Chain.

About 700 participants from over 50 countries attended the event, comprising policymakers, farmers and farmers’ organizations, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, and inter-governmental organizations, as well as dignitaries, senior government officials, and a large number of farmers from India.

The Global Symposium provided an opportunity for the participants to see India’s crop diversity and to interact with Indian Plant Genome Saviour Awardees, farmer-scientists, farmer-producers and private seed sectors in India. An exhibition on the conservation and use of PGR by the farmers, institutions of ICAR, NGOs, industry etc. were organised in which 50 stalls were raised. The exhibition was also inaugurated by the Hon’ble President of India. On the last day of the symposium, visit to the field and phenomics facility of IARI and Gene Bank of NBPGR was organised that provided the opportunity to get a glimpse of India’s efforts to conserve and improve PGR for food and nutrition security.

The outputs of the Global Symposium include a comprehensive proceeding of the inaugural ceremony, presentations, and discussions at each session and event, and this summary report is an information document for the Tenth Session of the Governing Body. Based on deliberation, Delhi Framework on Farmers Rights was prepared and submitted to ITPGRFA by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, and Farmers Welfare, Government of India for presentation in the 10th GB of the ITPGRFA.

Click to Detailed Report on the Global Symposium on Farmers’ Rights 12th-15th Sept, 2023, New Delhi, India