



# Setting the Scene for Farmers' Rights

A Collective Action within Key Focus Area (KFA) 1 of GFAR's Medium Term Plan 2018-2021

and common understanding of these rights among different stakeholders and policymakers, is a proposed Collective Action for GFAR's Medium Term Plan 2018-2021.

Plant genetic resources are the raw material for crop genetic improvement, food and nutrition security. Their conservation and management are essential and depend on the rights of farmers, especially those in the centers of origin and diversity, over their genetic resources and traditional knowledge. These rights are recognized in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) which gives governments the responsibility for implementing Farmers' Rights, and lists measures that could be taken to protect, promote and realize these rights.

The rights of farmers to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed and other propagating material; protecting traditional knowledge, innovations and practices; participating in decision-making and in the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources are all critical elements in empowering farmers to determine their own futures, and, for farmers in centers of origin and diversity, to keep conserving and improving these resources for generations to come.

While Farmers' Rights implementation is a responsibility of national governments, support is frequently sought by decision makers, farmers associations and other stakeholders to increase knowledge and public awareness on what Farmers' Rights are and how they can be implemented in practice at national and local levels. For success, communities must be aware and enabled to take up their legitimate rights as farmers; institutions should be supportive of the implementation of Farmers' Rights and policy frameworks be appropriate for the realization of these rights.



Building from previous GFAR activities, including the Joint Capacity Development Programme with the ITPGRFA and other organizations, developing Farmers' Rights capacities in rural communities, as well as increasing awareness

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### What we will do together

The general objectives of the GFAR Collective Action on Setting the Scene for Farmers' Rights are to i) empower farmers with knowledge of their rights over plant genetic resources and traditional knowledge, ii) build capacity and increase awareness between different stakeholders and iii) improve regional, national and local policy frameworks promoting and allowing the implementation of Farmers' Rights.

Specific objectives are to:

- foster common understanding and awareness of Farmers' Rights between different stakeholders, including farmers, researchers and decision-makers;
- assess the implementation of Farmers' Rights;
- identify gaps in implementation of these rights at local and national levels;
- share experiences and best practices and identify lessons learned;
- identify champions on Farmers' Rights at governmental levels and advocate holistic policy frameworks promoting these rights, alongside those of breeders;
- give special attention to Women Farmers' Rights, recognizing the vital role rural women play in agriculture and the lack of recognition of their rights.

### Actions Proposed

This GFAR initiative builds on practical experience gained in Guatemala, Malawi and Honduras, through partnerships with, CEPA, ASOCUCH, Dirección de Ciencia y Tecnología Agropecuaria de Honduras, FIPAH, farmers'

organizations, rural youth and women's associations, academia, and others, and with the support and partnership of ITPGRFA, UNDP-GEF and the Development Fund of Norway. In its second phase, the initiative will aim at scaling out the empowerment of smallholder farmers on Farmers' Rights to other countries and regions.

National and regional platforms will be established to discuss and assess the implementation of Farmers' Rights at local, national and regional levels; exchange information and best practices; enhance and promote community seed banks; locally owned databases established in situ on plant genetic resources and of traditional knowledge and other mechanisms implementing Farmers' Rights; help farmers advocate their concerns and demands relating to the implementation of Farmers' Rights and their importance to their future food security, better and more sustainable livelihoods.

A variety of communication media and tools, e.g. Webinars, radio spots, capacity building materials, local, national and regional workshops will be developed through collective action.

By empowering farmers and strengthening their capacity to participate in decision making processes, GFAR aims to contribute to the development of equitable policies through a bottom-up multi-stakeholder approach, and catalyze policy formulation and decision processes at international, regional and national levels for the awareness and understanding of farmer communities.

You are invited to join the Palestinian Farmers Union, FORAGRO, Tech4Agri, the World Rural Forum and the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) in GFAR's Collective Action *Setting the Scene for Farmers' Rights*.

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