



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

José Graziano da Silva
Director General

I have to pleasure to note that the 1st International Agrobiodiversity Congress (IAC 2016) is being organized in New Delhi, India from 6 to 9 November 2016. I appreciate your recognition of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a key International agency overseeing all policies and activities related to food and agriculture.

I appreciate your valuable initiative in establishing a platform that will address climate change and the Sustainable Goals (SDGs). As part of the post-2015 agenda, FAO continues to work actively with Member States and other stakeholders towards achieving the SDGs. To ensure their success, FAO has identified five Strategic Objectives with a view to eradicate hunger and to create sustainable food systems. Seeking to resolve agrobiodiversity issues is an essential step to ending hunger and extreme poverty.

Work on agricultural biodiversity is embedded within FAO's Strategic Objective 2 to "Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable." A component to achieve this objective is the establishment of a facilitating mechanism that addresses Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity.

I am pleased that the Congress has a wide agenda at hand, which will provide sufficient opportunity to the delegates for a meaningful participation. FAO has long recognized the importance of biodiversity, and supports a range of fora and activities for its conservation and use. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture established by the FAO Conference in 1983 provides the only intergovernmental forum that specifically deals with all components of biodiversity for food and agriculture, including animal, plant, forest, aquatic, invertebrate and microbial genetic resources. The Commission negotiated the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food Agriculture (ITPGRFA) providing a legally binding international framework for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Globally important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) is another important FAO initiative promoting agrobiodiversity. It has successfully conserved locally specific or globally significant varieties of food crops.

The current strategic framework ensures that FAO's technical expertise and knowledge is available to design the right policies, programmes and frameworks to promote food security and nutrition. Biodiversity - its conservation and use - is integrated in FAO's plan of work, from working with resource-poor family farmers at local level, to facilitating dialogue and action at global levels. Agrobiodiversity plays an important role in doing this

I congratulate the organizers of the IAC 2016 and wish the Congress every success.

Date : 12 July 2016

José Graziano da Silva

MESSAGE