

Delhi Declaration on agrobiodiversity management

The first International Agrobiodiversity Congress held in New Delhi, India, from 6 to 9 November, 2016 was attended by over 900 participants from 60 countries. Delegates discussed various aspects of conservation, management, access and use of agrobiodiversity in 16 technical sessions, four satellite sessions, a gene-bank roundtable, a public forum, a farmers' forum and poster sessions. Based on detailed deliberations, the delegates unanimously adopted the following declaration in the concluding session on 9 November 2016.

1. We call upon nations to accord top priority to the shared vision of agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity addressing poverty alleviation, food, nutritional and health security, gender equity and global partnership.
2. We recognize the importance of traditional agrobiodiversity knowledge available with farm men and women, pastoralists, tribal and rural communities and its central role in the conservation and use for a food secure and climate resilient world. We, therefore, call upon countries to develop the necessary legal, institutional and funding mechanisms to catalyse their active participation.
3. We urge researchers and policymakers to initiate, strengthen and promote complementary strategies to conserve agrobiodiversity through use, including greater emphasis on using crop wild relatives. We call upon them to ensure a continuum between *ex situ*, *in situ*, on-farm, community-based and other conservation methods with much greater and equal emphasis on each.
4. We propose that researchers employ modern technologies including, but not limited to, genomics, biotechnology, space, computational, and nanotechnologies for genetic resources characterization, evaluation and trait discovery. The aim must be to achieve efficiency, equity, economy and environmental security through diversified agricultural production systems and landscapes.
5. We re-emphasize the necessity of global exchange of plant, animal, aquatic, microbial and insect genetic resources to diversify agriculture as well as our food basket and to meet the ever-growing food and nutritional needs of all countries. To ensure this, nations need to be catalysed to adopt both multi-lateral (as envisaged in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) and bilateral (as per the Nagoya Protocol) instruments to facilitate the exchange of genetic resources, while ensuring equitable access and benefit sharing opportunities.
6. Countries are also expected to harmonize their existing biosecurity systems, including phytosanitary and quarantine, and enhance their capacities to facilitate safe trans-boundary movement of germplasm.
7. We also expect that the governments and civil societies lay much greater emphasis on public awareness and capacity enhancement programmes on agrobiodiversity conservation in order to accelerate its effective and efficient use.
8. We recommend the development and implementation of an Agrobiodiversity Index to help monitor on-going genetic resource conservation and management efforts, with particular emphasis on agrobiodiversity hot spots.
9. It is also urged that public and private sectors and civil societies henceforth actively invest in and incentivize the utilization of agrobiodiversity to mitigate malnutrition, increase the resilience and productivity of farms and farming households and enhance ecosystem services. Such efforts should lead to equitable benefits and opportunities, with particular emphasis on women and youth.
10. We urge countries to reprioritize their research and extension with increased investments to support the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity. Furthermore, we strongly recommend creation of an International Agrobiodiversity Fund as a mechanism to assist countries and communities in scientific *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and enhanced use of agrobiodiversity.
11. We urge the United Nations to consider declaring a 'Year of Agrobiodiversity' in order to draw worldwide attention and catalyse urgent actions for effective management of genetic resources by the global community.
12. Finally, we recommend that the International Agrobiodiversity Congress be held every four years, with Bioversity International playing the facilitator's role, to maintain the momentum gained in 2016 and continue emphasizing the need to implement the 'Delhi Declaration on Agrobiodiversity Management' and monitor the progress so made by the different stakeholders and countries.