



## **Updates on Plant Variety Protection**

*Issue #22, 29 April 2016*

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### **1. Editorial**

This Newsletter features some recent developments relevant to plant variety protection.

### **2. Right to Seeds For Peasants to be discussed at the Human Rights Council**

The third session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas created by the Human Rights Council will be meeting in Geneva from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to discuss the draft declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which includes the Right to Seeds (Article 22).

[Read more](#)

### **3. The new Seed Law of Venezuela**

On 28th February 2015, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela enacted a new seed law. The law was adopted by the National Assembly and is the result of several years of consultation within the country, with ample participation of peasant organizations and civil society organizations.

The new law includes a prohibition of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and any form of patents and plant breeders' rights, as well as detailed provisions on support for peasants' and farmers' seed systems.

[Read more](#)

### **4. Civil Society Letter to US Congress over concerns about TPP's impact on food security and sustainable development**

More than 50 civil development, faith-based and sustainable agriculture organisations have written a letter to Members of the US Congress urging them to reject the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP).

The letter states that the "TPP would expand many of the worst features of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

[Read more](#)

### **5. News: FSG tells Parliament to replace Plant Breeders' Bill with a "Sui Generis"**

News Ghana reports Food Sovereignty Ghana calling on its Parliament to completely withdraw the UPOV-compliant Plant Breeders' Bill and replace it with a "sui generis" plant variety protection (PVP) system suitable to Ghana's conditions.

[Read more](#)

### **6. News: Tracking down illicit seed sellers**

Allan Dawson from Manitoba Cooperator reports how private investigators in Canada are helping the seed trade enforce plant breeders' rights. New plant breeder rules under UPOV '91 in Canada give seed companies the option of tracking down those who infringe on those rights through the entire grain system.

[Read more](#)

## 7. Publication: Seed systems smallholder farmers use

Seed can be an important entry point for promoting productivity, nutrition and resilience among small-holder farmers. While investments have primarily focused on strengthening the formal sector, this article documents the degree to which the informal sector remains the core for seed acquisition, especially in Africa. Conclusions drawn from a uniquely comprehensive data set, 9660 observations across six countries and covering 40 crops, show that farmers access 90.2 % of their seed from informal systems with 50.9 % of that deriving from local markets. Further, 55 % of seed is paid for by cash, indicating that smallholders are already making important investments in this arena. Targeted interventions are proposed for rendering formal and informal seed sector more smallholder-responsive and for scaling up positive impacts.

McGuire, S., & Sperling, L., (2016) [Seed Systems Smallholder Farmers Use](#)

## 8. Publication: FAO Voluntary Guide for National Seed Policy Formulation

The availability of, and access to, quality seeds of a diverse range of adapted crop varieties (from the informal, as well as from the formal sector) is essential for achieving food and livelihood security and for eradicating hunger, especially in developing countries. This guide explains what seed policies are and how they differ from seed laws; describes the participatory process of seed policy formulation; the nature and layout of seed policy documents; key elements contained in seed policies; and addresses issues involved in their implementation. It is specifically intended for use by policymakers, national seed agencies, civil society, and public and private sector organizations, including national seed associations and farmers' organizations involved in the seed sector.

This [Voluntary guide for national seed policy formulation](#) is available in different languages.

## Upcoming Events

### Autumn 2016 Session of UPOV bodies

Monday, 24 October 2016, Seminar on propagating and harvested material in the context of the UPOV Convention (open to the public)

Monday (evening), 24 October 2016 [Meeting on the Development of a Prototype Electronic Form](#)

Tuesday, 25 October, [Administrative and Legal Committee](#)

Tuesday (evening), 25 October [Working Group on Variety Denominations](#)

Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> October, Symposium on possible interrelations between the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV Convention)

Thursday, 27 October, Consultative Committee (closed to observers)

Thursday, 27 October (evening), Working Group on a Possible International System of Cooperation

Friday, 28 October, [Council](#)

**Open-ended intergovernmental working group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, Human Rights Council**

Tuesday-Friday, 17–20 May 2016, Geneva [Third Session](#),

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**Feedback & Contact**

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