

SEMINAR ON STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS POLICIES INVOLVING PLANT BREEDING AND PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION

Geneva, October 20, 2021 (by electronic means)

Concluding Remarks, Mr. Marien Valstar, President of the UPOV Council

Dear Participants,

We have heard today the following key messages:

Canada: PBR creates level playing field where private, public and or Public Private Partnerships (PPS) can operate in the marketplace.

China: showed the successful development of PVP in China, including a roadmap to implement UPOV91.

The EU: showed the many challenges we face globally (SDG's) and the strategies that are being implemented to face these challenges, showing that plant breeding is a key element in reaching the goals.

Japan: highlighted improvements in its PVP and Seed Act and showed the initiative to establish e-PVP Asia, leading to more collaboration in the region.

Kenya: gave an overview of PVP in Kenya and showed the positive impact on food security, employment and farmers livelihood.

Mexico: gave insight into their plans to enhance agricultural productivity by promoting plant breeding and quality seeds, thereby including subsistence farmers in the process.

Norway: highlighted the importance of plant breeding for sustainable food systems, indicating that we need to consider farmers rights and plant breeders rights.

Peru: gave an overview of its national system, showing the result of a study that PVP contributed 6% to its Gross Domestic Product, and showed a program to encourage more development and research in Peru through PVP.

Sweden: indicated that plant breeding is a part of the solution to the global challenges we face, and asked how the UPOV community could assist in making plant breeding more accessible for 'small breeders'.

The USA: gave an overview of recent improvements in the Farm Bill, initiatives that foster urban agriculture and an initiative to invest more in agricultural research and development.

All contributors highlighted that plant breeding and improved varieties are an important part of the solution to key policy challenges. A solution that can help us to achieve important goals in food security, sustainable agriculture, economic development and improving livelihood of farmers, including smallholder farmers.

All contributors also gave insight in developments and initiatives in their countries or regions, indicating that a lot of work is done at national and regional levels to improve their systems and to promote plant breeding.

However, that does not mean that we now can rest. The speakers also indicated that there are improvements needed at the international level, including the need to ensure that improved varieties are reaching those farmers that have the most to gain from improved varieties.

Like all farmers, smallholder farmers worldwide need access to better varieties. There are different strategies to work towards that goal. I sincerely hope that our efforts to develop guidance concerning smallholder farmers in relation to private and non-commercial use will be helpful in clarifying that the UPOV system can bring benefits to smallholder farmers. Next week during we will discuss the way forward.

Another topic, that was mentioned frequently, was the impact of climate change and the need for agriculture to adapt and to mitigate climate change. It is clear that plant breeding and, therefore, UPOV has an important role to play here. We have had many presentations today that referred to this theme but there has been very limited time to learn about this in any depth. It seems to me that we need a further opportunity to explore this crucial topic and I would like to propose that consideration be given by UPOV to organizing a seminar next year, dedicated to this theme.