



CBD Informal SBSTTA24 Virtual Session 17-19 and 24-26 February, 2021

February 25, 2021

Agenda Item 7: Biodiversity and Agriculture

Statement of the CBD Women's Caucus

The Report on the State of Knowledge of Soil Biodiversity, and the FAO Report on the progress on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors did not adopt a systemic (or integrated) and gender-responsive approach in their analysis. We feel that this is a lost opportunity for bringing in and ensure the mainstreaming of gender concerns throughout the programmes of work of the Convention. Therefore, if decision-making processes as well as studies linked to agriculture and biodiversity, are not gender responsive, nor recognise the unique role of women in agriculture, not only do they risk overlooking women's specific needs and roles, but they will also fail to ensure the inclusion of valuable knowledge important for enabling sustainable soil biodiversity practices.

First of all, we need to acknowledge that the soil is a living organism made up of millions of diverse microorganisms. This biodiversity is the basis of a healthy and productive soil, which in the meantime is reflected in the production of healthy and nutritious food. Indigenous people, especially women, are aware of the living nature of the soil -as the way they name the soil as 'mother earth' can reflect it. They are also aware of the interdependency of the soil biodiversity with other living ecosystems such as forest, wetlands, and agroecological practices. Therefore it is key to include IPs' and women's knowledge and wisdom in the management and recovery of soil biodiversity damaged by industrial and mono-crop farming because of the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which kill the soil biodiversity.

As all of us know, Industrial and mono-crop farming sustains the present global food system and the concentration of economic power in the hands of agri-multinationals. The [report of IPBES on Biodiversity and ecosystem services](#), exposes the role of the global food system as the principal driver of accelerating biodiversity loss, and explains how food production is degrading or destroying living ecosystems, contributing to species extinction. Without reform of our food system, biodiversity loss will continue to accelerate, threatening our ability to provide healthy food to human populations.

A shift to more balanced diets has to be based on support for agroecological practices instead of support for industrial fake meat and dairy production. Currently, 78% of all agricultural land is used for meat and dairy production while it produces only 18% of global calorie supply and 37% of global protein supply - most of which is consumed by wealthy elites in society, with men consuming significantly higher amounts of meat than women.

Industrial and mono-crop farming practices pose a significant risk to biodiversity, healthy ecosystems and human health and wellbeing. Stemming from the intensification of agriculture, apolitization of agricultural technology, increase of perverse incentive for agriculture, and top-down gender neutral decision-making have led to global inequalities across society with regards to resource distribution, lack of security to rights of land tenure, and increase of pandemics, such as COVID.



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These issues disproportionately impact rural communities, small-scale farmers, Indigenous Peoples and Women, who are often cast as passive recipients to policy-change as opposed to key actors enabling sustainable use and management of healthy soil biodiversity.

Harmonizing biodiversity and agricultural production thus requires, first and foremost a redirection of perverse incentives and harmful investments that continue supporting monocrop farming and industrial livestock production and consumption and other forms of agro-industry, and associated infrastructure. [Dasgupta review](#) estimates that humanity spends between 4 and 6 trillion dollar per year in subsidies that harm biodiversity, a majority of which supports agro-industrial production.

Thanks chair