

Scientific Analysis Briefing

IUCN Congress Motion 44: “Actions to strengthen food sovereignty and security of indigenous peoples and peasant communities”

In order to contribute scientifically to the international biodiversity governance agenda, the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) has launched several working groups on IUCN Motions to be discussed and voted on at the World Conservation Congress, and on cross-cutting issues relating to the COP 15 negotiations.

The following briefing focuses on the scientific analysis of IUCN Motion 45. The activities were coordinated by the “Biodiversity and IPLC”¹ Working Group of IRD's Biodiversity Knowledge Community, in conjunction with researchers from the French National Natural History Museum (MNHN).

A. Barnaud (IRD-DIADE)	A.-E. Laques (IRD-ESPACE-DEV)
N. Belaidi (CNRS/MNHN-ECO-ANTHROPO)	L. Maurice (IRD-GET)
S. Carrière (IRD-SENS)	Y. Pillon (IRD-LSTM)
E. Dounias (IRD-CEFE)	P. de Robert (IRD-PALOC)
S. Duvail (UMR-PALOC)	B. Romagny (IRD-LPED)
L. Emperaire (IRD-PALOC)	C. Sabinot (IRD-ESPACE-DEV)
D. Génin (UMR-SENS)	F. Thomas (IRD-SENS)
E. Katz (IRD-PALOC)	

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¹ IPLC: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Briefing

The document consists of four parts. The first aims to highlight the proposed advances and the limitations of an approach revolving around food sovereignty and security that does not take account of the cultural and socio-political foundations. The second part offers a critical reading of the text of the motion, with proposals for the wording of terms in square brackets. The third part develops an illustrated scientific argument that strongly supports the motion. Finally, the last part is bibliographical. The document was mainly written by limited number of participants but incorporates input from the entire group. The elements of reasoning common to Motions 44 and 45 have been duplicated.

1) Framework of the motion

Motion 44 emphasises the link between food security, food sovereignty and indigenous peoples. It proposes the recognition and implementation of the UN resolution on the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROPP) in the signatory countries. This declaration aims to strengthen the rights of peasants, especially vis-à-vis agribusiness, and to promote the food and seed sovereignty of IPLCs by recognising their role in the management and exploitation of their biocultural heritage.

IPBES recently recognised the importance of the conserved agrobiodiversity managed and used by IPLCs, as well as the importance of the knowledge underlying its existence (IPBES 2019). Today, a paradigm shift is occurring with regard to the role of agricultural activities, which are no longer solely seen as destroyers of biodiversity but also as sources of biodiversity, agrobiodiversity and new solutions, which are emerging through the recognition of the diversity of peasant farming practices whose fundamental principles are similar to the precepts of agroecology.

The role of farmers (in the broadest sense of the term) is "recognised" in Article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and by the Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992. The rights of indigenous peoples are recognised in the 2006 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Target 3 of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2.3) is: *"By 2030, [to] double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers"* (UN, 2015).

Highlights

- To (re)disseminate the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) to all Members.
- To invite Members to support the implementation of UNDROP and the rights it entails. UNDROP is a non-legally binding resolution, with universal scope, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.
- It links the issues of food security, food sovereignty of IPLCs and agrobiodiversity conservation.

This motion echoes Motion 45 and the reflections that link “territories of life” and food sovereignty, which is also promoted by the ICCA consortium (Pimbert & Borrini-Feyerabend 2019). It offers the additional benefit of placing the emphasis on a link with protected areas (request 1a.) and launches the debate on exemptions from strict rules governing protected areas in order to gain access to fishing, hunting and gathering areas. An additional beneficial aspect of the motion is the establishment of links between different agreements and instruments: Aichi Target 3, UNDROP, and Article 8j of the CBD, which would need to be conceptualised within a single standard. This need to establish links between different instruments is also reiterated in Motion 45.

Limitations

This motion is more of a diplomatic tool designed to promote recognition of UNDROP without imposing sanctions or obligations upon states, and which has the symbolic force of coercion without sanctions. Only those states that have adopted UNDROP are subject to a moral commitment to implement it, even though its scope is global.

These brief remarks illustrate the value of putting relatively focused Motions such as 44 and 45 into perspective with 48, which provides an analysis of the historical context in which conservation standards are developed. Indeed, this Motion 48 provides a framework of analysis for the reinterpretation of references used in environmental governance and the creation of new contexts for the expression of local ontologies.

2) Analysis of the text of Motion 44 and proposed wording

The original text of the motion is highlighted in grey; the proposed wording or agreement with what was originally in square brackets is highlighted in yellow.

AWARE that indigenous peoples, peasants, small farming communities, and other local, small-scale forms of organisation around the world have played and continue to play a key role in providing almost 80% of food for humanity, and [in light of their direct or indirect involvement in the conservation of][overseeing] 80% of the world's biodiversity;

RECOGNISING, in this respect, the necessity to incorporate these communities as key players in the work [that sets out to] [to] guarantee global food security and, at the same time, to recognise their [situations][issues] of food insecurity expressed, mainly, in malnutrition, health problems, and a growing impact on their environment, including agroecosystems, [as a result of] [due to the effects] of major changes in climate patterns and industrial agricultural [or other] activities;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that Aichi Biodiversity Target 3, which was supposed to be met in 2020, acknowledges the adverse effects of global agricultural and fishing subsidies on biodiversity and the environment, and that this threatens the ability of indigenous cultures and peasant communities to maintain their livelihoods and achieve food security;

FURTHER RECOGNISING the importance of Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger), [3 (good health and well-being)], 6 (clean water and sanitation), [8 (decent work)], 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), [11 (including target 4 which concerns heritage)] 12 (responsible consumption and production), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17

(partnerships for the Goals) to strengthen [the] food sovereignty and security of indigenous peoples and peasant communities;

RECOGNISING that agrobiodiversity is a component that differentiates practices of indigenous peoples, peasants, and small farming communities, as a priority for [biodiversity] conservation and the construction of sustainability, and that it provides them with resources to support their livelihoods;

OBSERVING that indigenous peoples and local communities are recognised as the central social subjects for conservation and sustainable development in Article 8, sub-paragraph j of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

WELCOMING [Noting] the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) by the UN General Assembly in December 2018;

NOTING that UNDROP calls on states to take measures aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of land and other natural resources, including through agroecology, and ensure the conditions [for] the regeneration of [productive] capacities and the [maintenance] of biological and other natural cycles;

NOTING that UNDROP recognises the right of peasants and other people working in rural areas to determine their own food and agriculture systems, recognised as food sovereignty by many states and [regional bodies] [regions];

RECALLING that Congress has formerly recognised the link between promoting food sovereignty and conserving biodiversity (Resolution 3.017 Promoting food sovereignty to conserve biodiversity and end hunger (Bangkok, 2004)), and has acknowledged the need for IUCN to integrate human rights issues into its work (Resolution 5.099 IUCN Policy on Conservation and Human Rights for Sustainable Development (Jeju, 2012)); and

FURTHER HIGHLIGHTING the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, Article 11) recognise the human right to adequate food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. ASKS the Director General to:

a. promote more discussions in the relevant Commissions on the relationship between food security, food sovereignty and indigenous peoples, [peasants and small farming communities, including, for example, on the links between protected areas, [peasants' rights to land and other natural resources], as set out in UNDROP, and biodiversity conservation] by these [rural communities, taking into account the role of traditional and local knowledge and the interaction with protected areas]; [and]

b. [disseminate UNDROP to all Members and invite Members to support its implementation and the rights it entails]; [remind Member States of the importance of disseminating and implementing UNDROP].

2. REQUESTS the relevant Commissions to study options to strengthen [the] food sovereignty and security of indigenous peoples, peasants, and small farming communities, including [by highlighting the importance and] the role of agrobiodiversity [maintained by local populations for their food sovereignty], [the need to mitigate] the adverse effects of fishing and agricultural subsidies on food security and biodiversity, [the urgent need to implement resources in order to] [ways-to] mitigate them and [the recognition of the importance] of traditional and local knowledge [among others].

3. CALLS ON Members, along with other international bodies, to promote the enactment of [a decree] [a recommendation? / declaration in order to] establish mechanisms for the recognition and protection of biocultural heritage in collective and rural territories, in order to ensure the protection and autonomous conservation of agrobiodiversity, including the application of UNDROP and the rights provided therein.

4. CALLS ON states and other stakeholders active in agrobiodiversity issues to:

a. [ensure that indigenous peoples can exercise their right to] [ensure] free, prior and informed consent in territories predominantly inhabited by indigenous peoples, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), in order to strengthen local governance, autonomy in agrobiodiversity issues, and the protection of traditional knowledge [respecting their *sui generis* regime] [while respecting the specificities of its contents and forms of production];

b. support the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities [in order to guarantee] [their priority and recognition of origin in the] fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of their knowledge and the agrobiodiversity resources in and [derived from] [from] their territories, as set out in UNDRIP and UNDROP;

c. recognise indigenous peoples' traditional and ancestral knowledge related to the integrated [and dynamic] management of biodiversity, [as well as] the sociocognitive construction and articulation, and the protection of biocultural heritage.

Explanatory Memorandum

The essential biodiversity that underpins global food production is disappearing. As reported by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization in 2019, biodiversity for food and agriculture is in perilous decline as a result of high-input agriculture practices, monoculture farming, and changes in land, water and other natural resource management. Industrial agriculture has also led to a host of other environmental problems, including deforestation, soil degradation, increased greenhouse gas emissions, extinction of species, and pollution of freshwater sources. Moreover, our industrial food system often impoverishes small-scale farmers, and displaces rural communities and indigenous peoples.

An alternative exists that supports economically-viable development and increased prosperity for small-scale farmers, while conserving biodiversity and preserving the integrity of local ecosystems. Peasant movements from around the globe are advancing a model oriented toward peasant-based agriculture that prioritizes local markets and uses agroecological production methods to facilitate the transition to more sustainable and inclusive food systems. This model underscores the rights of indigenous, rural, and traditionally-underrepresented peoples to define their own agricultural systems and policies, also known as the right to food sovereignty.

We now have a powerful legal tool to help ensure peasants' rights and elevate this model. In December 2018, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the landmark U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas ("UNDROP"). The result of nearly 20 years of mobilization by the social movement La Via Campesina and its allies, and six years of negotiation at the U.N. Human Rights Council, UNDROP is a response to the ongoing violations of the rights of peasants and other rural communities who help protect biodiversity and build sustainable food systems but are themselves disproportionately affected by extreme poverty and hunger.

UNDROP upholds peasant farming as an alternative to industrial agriculture. It also champions women's rights and affirms peasants' rights to land, seeds, and food sovereignty, as well as their right to maintain biological diversity through the use of traditional practices and knowledge. When their rights are recognized and protected, peasants inherently shore up the ecological infrastructure needed to conserve biodiversity, build sustainable food systems, and protect rural and urban communities against climate shocks. Notably, the IPCC 2019 Special Report on Climate Change and Land states with high confidence that agricultural practices that include indigenous and local knowledge can help overcome the combined challenges of climate change, food insecurity, and biodiversity conservation.

The need for transformative action, including in the realm of agriculture, is reflected in IUCN's views on the preparation, scope and content of the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Indeed, if we are to stem the significant biodiversity loss that is occurring alongside mass species extinction, we must reject destructive agricultural practices and embrace more sustainable food pathways. This, in turn, requires global recognition of the rights of peasants and respect for traditional agrarian knowledge.

<https://spda.org.pe/wpfb-file/ensayo-de-agrobiodiversidad-pdf/>

<http://www.actualidadambiental.pe/?p=26602>

<http://www.grade.org.pe/publicaciones/1116-seguridad-alimentaria-y-shocks-negativos-en-el-peru-rural/>

https://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_51243-1522-4-30.pdf?180105171452

<https://spda.org.pe/wpfb-file/las-areas-protegidas-kas-spda-version-web-pdf/>

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3) Scientific rationale for Motion 44

Smallholders represent 83% of farms and play a key role in global food and nutrition security (Khor, 2002). They produce 30-53% of calories and manage the largest share of agrobiodiversity (Ricciardi et al., 2018, 2021; Samberg et al., 2016). The text of Motion 44 addresses this issue and can be analysed from the perspective of three lines of reasoning addressed by the scientific activities. They concern:

- (i) the role of agrobiodiversity in food security and food sovereignty in IPLCs,
- (ii) the contribution of IPLCs to agrobiodiversity management;
- (iii) the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of agrobiodiversity and associated knowledge of IPLCs.

Arguments relating to these three issues can be found throughout the text.

Agrobiodiversity, a tool for developing a form of agriculture that addresses the issues of sustainability and social justice

Agriculture covers almost 40% of the world's land (Foley et al., 2005). While the development of intensive agricultural systems has significantly increased agricultural production, this has come at the cost of an unprecedented global decline in the extent and integrity of ecosystems and in the abundance and number of wild species, cultivated species and local varieties/breeds (Díaz et al., 2019), accompanied by the contamination of agricultural land with agrochemicals (64% of agricultural land is contaminated with agrochemicals (Tang et al. 2021). This contamination also extends to surface and ground water and has a significant impact on the climate. New, less aggressive practices are being introduced (i.e. the non-use of phytosanitary products to combat diseases affecting crops, Muneret et al., 2021). In response to these challenges, increasing attention is being paid to agroecological knowledge and practices, and to the principle of food sovereignty in order to build fairer and more sustainable food systems. The aim is to contribute to the conservation and restoration of biodiversity while promoting its sustainable use (Anderson et al. 2020). Evidence of the multiple benefits, impacts and functions of agroecology abound (HLPE – FAO 2019). Beyond these functional considerations, agroecology has a fundamentally socio-political dimension. It is based on IPLCs' aspirations for self-governance (chosen lifestyles) in order to promote sustainability and social justice (Anderson et al. 2020).

Because agrobiodiversity supports the production of many ecosystem services (water availability, soil fertility, pathogen management, productivity, etc.), flow regulation (i.e. biogeochemical cycles), and socio-cultural services (well-being of populations, local knowledge, etc.), it is one of the keys to a successful agroecological transition (Altieri & Toledo 2011). It cannot be interpreted as being limited to cultivated plants alone, as many wild resources are part of the diet in different cultural contexts (see, for example, the role of breeds, mushrooms, hunting, insect collection (Katz 2016), etc.), nor as a static ensemble, but rather as being in a state of continuous adjustment to its environment with many innovations.

However, it must be stressed that many traditional farming methods, such as those employed by IPLCs, are based on agroecological practices, and that reclassifying them under the name of agroecology erases their specificities. In addition to ecosystem services of global interest, agrobiodiversity ensures the complementarity of products, soil fertilisation, the staggering of crops,

and adaptation to diverse climatic, ecological and socio-demographic conditions, i.e. greater stability of production systems, as can be seen in the Vanuatuan or Madagascan agricultural systems (Radanielina et al. 2014; Blanco et al. 2016) or Amazonian systems since pre-Columbian times (Levis et al., 2020).

However, the intense inequality of the socio-economic and ecological changes facing IPLCs today are profoundly modifying the socio-evolutionary dynamics of agrobiodiversity and territorial ecology (i.e. biodiversity including related wild species), which raises major concerns about the loss of agrobiodiversity (Diaz et al. 2019). Similarly, many hotspots of agrobiodiversity and related wild species are endangered or lack official protection (Pironon et al. 2019), thereby jeopardising the adaptive dynamics.

Agrobiodiversity and IPLCs: a shared history

Understanding how agricultural biodiversity is produced and conserved is a major challenge at the local and global levels in a context of climate change and in a quest to find sustainable agricultural models. The agrobiodiversity on which today's food systems are based is the result of processes, such as domestication, initiated over 12,000 years ago between human societies, plants and the environment. IPLCs play an essential role in the creation and management of this biodiversity. Agrobiodiversity – particularly food plants – has been fashioned by agrarian societies through their histories, social relations, and practices such as naming, selection and seed circulation. Crops have accompanied agrarian societies in their migratory histories (Diamond & Bellwood, 2003), not only on a local level but also over long distances, as shown by the historical disseminations of plants (e.g. sorghum via the Bantu migration in sub-Saharan Africa (Westengen et al., 2014), the walnut tree via the ancient Persian Empire (Pollegioni et al., 2015), cocoa from the Amazon to Africa and Asia in 5300 years BP (Zarillo et al., 2018), the sweet potato via pre-Columbian migrations throughout Oceania (Roullier et al., 2013), and more recent disseminations such as African rice as an agricultural legacy of slaves in the Americas (Van Andel et al., 2019; Van Andel et al., 2016). In addition, cultural or ethnolinguistic diversity impacts the organisation of the generic diversity of crops (e.g. millet, Naino Jika et al., 2017; acha rice, Abrouk et al., 2020, sorghum, Labeyrie et al., 2014, and maize, Perales et al., 2005, Boege, 2008). An underlying hypothesis is that social ties promote the dissemination of seeds amongst farmers and that these networks are structured on different levels (i.e. between communities, ethnic groups, languages etc.), thus mirroring the social structure of human societies (Leclerc and Coppens 2011).

IPLCs have selected and adapted a wide variety of food plants to local socio-cultural and environmental conditions. Tens of thousands of varieties of rice, maize, cassava, beans, etc. have been and continue to be selected and conserved by traditional farmers (Delêtre 2019). The Duupa, an ethnic group of around 5,000 people living in the Poli mountains in northern Cameroon, grow more than 40 varieties of sorghum (Barnaud et al., 2007; Garine et al., 2014). This great varietal richness is based on a high degree of genetic diversity, equivalent to half that observed for an identical sample size in an international Core Collection (Sagnard et al., 2008). Amerindian farmers in north-western Amazonia grow more than a hundred varieties of cassava, a key food crop, with up to forty varieties grown by a single female farmer (Emperaire, 2017).

Wild resources also play a crucial role for many societies, especially in terms of their animal protein contribution. They also supplement diets in various contexts, including urban. These resources also help people to survive lean periods and crop failures. The question of access to territories containing these resources is fundamental. IPLCs, whose territories are dwindling under pressure from multiple

factors and actors (incursions of settlers, major companies, illegal logging, etc.) and other degradations such as contamination, no longer have sufficient arable or forest land to meet their needs. This situation is compounded when they are denied access to protected areas.

The value of agrobiodiversity is not only productive and economic, it is also closely connected to other forms of cultural and heritage-related expression such as songs (Rappoport 2014), material culture, rituals, food systems, attachment to places, and non-monetised forms of transaction (Rappoport 2021). The cultural value of the multiplicity of cultivated varieties or species resides more in the overall value attributed to the notion of diversity than the sum of the values individually attributed to the species and varieties present. In this way, agrobiological diversity is perceived as both a global entity to which a value is attributed (Carneiro da Cunha, 2017) and as an assembly of units, varieties or species, each of which conveys relationships between individuals, connections to places and episodes in life derived from individual or collective trajectories. Food sovereignty is expressed in these different ways.

Food security and food sovereignty are also embedded in the landscape in a continuum ranging from spontaneous to domesticated that can lead to a domestication of the landscape (as defined by Clement 2014). Beyond this aspect, the contributions of genetics show the importance of wild species for food security. The management of a patchwork of cultivated, fallow and natural areas creates opportunities for gene flows between cultivated and wild forms resulting from the knowledge and practices of IPLCs (Barnaud et al. 2009; Garine et al. 2018; Jarvis & Hodgkin 1999; Scarcelli et al. 2006). These gene flows between wild and cultivated forms have played and will continue to play a key role in the adaptation of crops to environmental conditions (Burgarella et al. 2019). Indeed, the genetic diversity of domesticated species is generally found to be lower than that of their wild relatives (Meyer & Purugganan, 2013). Millet, for example, has lost more than 30% of its diversity compared to its wild relative since it was domesticated 4,900 years ago in Africa (Burgarella et al., 2018).

Agrobiodiversity driven by IPLCs

Wild and cultivated agrobiodiversity is one of the keys to the resilience of IPLCs' agrosystems to current and future climate conditions (Pironon et al. 2019, Rhoné et al. 2020). Farmers carefully select the diversity of species or varieties that will be planted in each growing season. They introduce or abandon crops according to the climatic conditions, their preferences or their curiosity (Bellon et al. 2011; Labeyrie et al. 2021; Lalou et al. 2019). One of the key aspects of this dynamic which supports food security and sovereignty is access to this diversity through farmers' seed circulation networks. These networks governed by social rules also ensure social cohesion and the conservation of agrobiodiversity. While the importance of access to diversified, high-quality seeds for food security, agricultural development and agrobiodiversity conservation is widely recognised in the research and by stakeholders (policy makers, NGOs, committed personalities, etc.) (Coomes et al. 2015), the role of small farmers' seed systems has only recently been taken into account by researchers and policy makers (Pautasso et al. 2013). This lack of awareness is partly related to a mistaken perception of these networks. Small farmers' seed networks are perceived as i) inefficient for seed dissemination; ii) closed and conservative systems; iii) providing easy and equal access to seeds; iv) destined to decline and disappear (Coomes et al. 2015). Seed systems should therefore be preserved for their own sake because of the functions and services they provide for local and global food security and sovereignty and supported when national and international seed and food policies are being developed.

In addition to their recognised conservational characteristics, many of the past and present practices developed by IPLCs are also recognized for their innovative nature and potential to increase biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, and to open up and inspire new avenues for more sustainable forms of management. The benefits of this traditional agroecological engineering are acknowledged in new research on the effectiveness of these polyvarietal assemblages, which no longer rely on a single variety or a very limited number of varieties and guarantee the adaptability and resilience of production systems in response to climatic and ecological constraints (Barot et al. 2017; Labeyrie et al. 2021). At the global level, a study of 50 years of annual yields for 176 cultivated species in 91 countries has shown that greater crop diversity at the national level enables countries to stabilise their production (Renard & Tilman 2019). In this way, agrobiodiversity can be seen as a global strategy for combating hunger. At the level of a single plot of land, interspecific and intraspecific diversity also have a positive effect on the productivity and stability of fodder agrosystems (Prieto et al. 2015). These agrobiodiversity-based strategies are increasingly promoted by research findings (Altieri 1999; Isbell et al., 2015; Pironon et al., 2019; Renard & Tilman, 2019) and by international institutions such as the FAO (Bélanger et al., 2019).

Economic initiatives focusing on the commercial exploitation at different levels – from local to national – of products derived from traditional agrobiodiversity should also be encouraged. International associations such as Via Campesina and Slow Food, accompanied by many IPLC-led associations, support the marketing of agricultural products while ensuring that the social and ecological foundations of their production systems are not undermined. The participation of women in these activities is consistent with traditional forms of the division of labour. In the Amazon, the cultivation of the açaí-do Pará – a palm tree bearing highly prized fruit – is developing rapidly, and practices employed by the Yanomami people promote the development of edible mushrooms, etc. (Brondízio 2021, Leite 2021). (Brondízio 2021, Leite 2021).

Access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use

Agrobiodiversity is an essential factor in the food security and sovereignty of IPLCs and provides the genetic basis required for crop evolution in order to meet the challenges of global change (Zimmerer & de Haan, 2017). IPLCs have shaped agrobiodiversity over the centuries. Consequently, for IPLCs, the primary dimension of what states and conventions call “resources” is not reduced to a single agronomic or usage value; they are based on other meanings which give them a cultural value that must imperatively be considered (Emperaire 2021). The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Nagoya Protocol (NP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provide an international regulatory framework for the use of agrobiodiversity. They are based on the principle of fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that may arise from their use. However, the implementation of the principles of equity and justice is not based on any pre-established principle or criterion but is left to the contractual frameworks as defined by the texts, either multilaterally (ITPGRFA) or bilaterally (CBD): new frameworks and an ability to put ethical knowledge into practice must be developed on top of the international requirements (Jankowski et al. 2020). The implementation of regulatory frameworks remains difficult because the balance of power is uneven and the tools are designed in a very unilateral manner, or do not reflect the diversity of IPLCs’ value systems.

4) Conclusions

The IUCN has been drawing attention to the role of local peoples in biodiversity conservation since 2004. The document guidelines ensure their full participation in decision-making processes concerning their territories. These bottom-up forms of governance based on the self-organisation of IPLCs are the most likely to enable a transformation of food systems for sustainability and social justice (Anderson et al. 2019). The rights claimed by IPLCs relate to a recognition of the power of their social structures as autonomous decision-making bodies but also as essential actors in the production of knowledge and know-how (Toomey et al. 2016). The aim today is to include the different visions and values of the actors who represent the different components of food systems by promoting collaborative research. Lamine et al. (2019) recommend working on a territorial level because (i) that is the level at which direct interactions between ecological and social processes take place, and (ii) it enables the identification and involvement of the various stakeholders in the food systems in the research process. This co-construction process is now one of the keys to strengthening the sovereignty and food security of indigenous peoples and peasant communities, as well as the sustainability of socio-ecosystems. Indeed, a literature review suggests that 95% of the published agricultural research is not relevant to the needs of IPLCs in terms of reducing rural poverty and food insecurity (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02849-6>). Moreover, a study of the current global distribution of nine of the twelve major crops shows that agricultural strategies to cope with climate change are doomed to failure if they do not take full account of the social and cultural factors underlying crop distribution (Mahaut et al. 2021). These brief comments show that the interfaces between the claims of IPLCs and international or national law in the field of genetic resources are not limited to intellectual property rights, to which they are too often reduced.

Motion 44 sets out to strengthen the links between the local food systems, agrobiodiversity and governance of IPLCs. A review of the current status of these links, briefly summarised in the previous pages, shows the importance of these links, on the social level but also for the conservation of biological biodiversity. However the reasoning for the proposal needs to be based upon more than the scientific facts – it is also about social justice.

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