



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



The International Treaty
**ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

International Day for Biological Diversity 2020

Message from Kent Nnadozie, Secretary, FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The Importance of Saving & Sharing

22 May 2020

During this troubling time, when the entire world is under attack by the Novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19), it is now more important than ever for us to reflect, both on our common vulnerability and on our inter-connectedness with one another and with nature.

We rely on each other for sustenance – for our lives and for our livelihoods.

We rely on each other for food and for material support.

And we rely on nature for all of the above.

This virus that is affecting the entire human race in every part of the world is not only threatening our health, but also our food security and our everyday lives. On the flip side, it is also providing us an opportunity to reflect on and to reset our relationship with nature.

As COVID-19 spreads all over the whole world, more and more of us are sheltering at home and working remotely. This is trying for us humans, because we are, by nature, social beings who need to interact with one another. This pandemic should, therefore remind us of how much we take for granted, not just in our daily lives but also in our environment.

The period of enforced home-stay thus provides us an opportunity to reflect and reconnect. Reflect on what enriches our daily lives. Reconnect with ourselves. Reconnect with our loved ones, and reconnect with nature.

Until this pandemic, most of us took it for granted that there are trees and flowers outside our windows, and birds in the air, and fish in the sea, and blue sky above us, and soil beneath our feet. We take it for granted that plants will continue to grow and provide us our daily bread.

The truth is Mother Nature has provided us with virtually everything we need to live and flourish.

Nature nurtures us. But do we nurture nature?

What do we do to ensure that nature remains as bountiful and wondrous as it has been all our lives and will continue to be so for our children and their children?

The fact is nature offers us so very much. Nature provides us a much-needed respite from the work of life, and a much-needed reminder of how extraordinary our world really is. The fact is we tend to take nature for granted. And the truth is that many of the solutions we humans need are, in fact, in nature.

This is true for our physical health as well as for our mental well-being. The song of birds, the scent of flowers, the greenery of trees, the waves of the oceans, the majesty of mountains, and the rugged vastness of the desert are just some of the reminders of the joy and comfort that nature gives us.

And then, there is our food. Nature provides us food and nourishment. It provides us the seeds that blossom into plants, which grow into vegetables and fruits and grains and legumes, which farmers harvest for us all to eat.

I believe that rapid recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as long-term global stability rests on several pillars, including food security and sustainable agriculture. And it all starts with the seed. Farmers and local communities all over the world depend on access to quality seed for sustainable agriculture, and in order to grow healthy crops that feed us all.

Many of our solutions are in nature. Therefore, as we build back after this pandemic, we must do so in harmony with nature. We must do our part to take care of nature, just as it takes care of us.

Please join the International Treaty in taking care of the seeds that take care of the world. Save and share the seeds of the plants that feed us all.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kent Nnadozie', written over a horizontal line.

Kent Nnadozie
Secretary

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations