



Tropentag, September 18-21, 2016, Vienna, Austria

“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Agrobiodiversity: The Key to Food Security, Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience

FRIEDERIKE KRAEMER, ALBERTO CAMACHO

GIZ, Sustainable Agriculture, Germany

Abstract

In many tropical regions of the world people depend of what nature can provide: Food, medicine, fodder for their animals as well as construction and burning material. At the same time there is an increasing pressure on natural resources by a growing population and changing consumption patterns. Agrobiodiversity is the outcome of the interactions between genetic resources, the environment and the management systems and practices used by farmers and herders. It has developed over millennia, as a result of both natural selection and human interventions. The conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity is essential for the survival of humankind. Besides its supporting role in risk-management for smallholder farmers in developing countries by assuring their survival and livelihood, agrobiodiversity holds important keys for the future adaptation of agriculture to a changing environment. Greater genetic diversity contributes to reducing climatic and disease-related risks and increases resilience.

However, in the last few decades agrobiodiversity has decreased at an alarming rate and these losses are still increasing rapidly, especially in developing countries where agricultural biological diversity is often very rich. The extinction of traditionally cultivated crop species and varieties as well as local animal breeds has many causes. Essential approaches in slowing down the present rate of loss of agrobiodiversity are the active involvement of the rural population in *in situ* (on farm) conservation, considering the vital role of women, smallholders and pastoralists in the conservation process, traditional knowledge and local innovation.

Therefore GIZ with its partners is working with integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-level approaches, ranging from village interventions and capacity-building to providing policy advice and mainstreaming agrobiodiversity at local, national and international levels.

Keywords: Agrobiodiversity, developing countries, food security, genetic resources, German development cooperation, resilience, smallholder farmers, sustainable agriculture