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“Reconcile land system changes  
with planetary health”

## Seeds of change: Reimagining governance for sustainable agrobiodiversity and food sovereignty in Bolivia

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### Abstract

In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, there are public and fundamental laws and policies for biodiversity, indigenous and local knowledge protection, and food security with sovereignty. Despite these regulations, a gap is observed between political discourse and their effective implementation, where agrobiodiversity and food sovereignty loss are increasing. This research explores the governance processes from these regulations analyzing, the mechanisms that integrate decision-making, the disconnect between these mechanisms, and their impacts on agrobiodiversity and food security with sovereignty in the municipality of Totora, Cochabamba. This includes a qualitative analysis of current laws and other regulatory instruments, as well as interviews and workshops with local actors and decision-makers (the state, municipal authorities, social organisations, and institutions). Results show that national regulations are insufficient for the agrobiodiversity protection, putting food sovereignty at risk. Farmers report a decline in traditional varieties and increasing dependence on commercial monocultures. This dependence is exacerbated by climate change, which forces farmers to prioritise commercial varieties that provide greater income in a shorter period of time. This highlights the fact that, despite a robust regulatory framework at the national level, there are no effective and coherent implementation mechanisms at local level. Local policies focus primarily on practices and actions that have little impact on promoting small-scale family farming and agrobiodiversity conservation. They focus on mitigating short-term socioeconomic and environmental impacts, putting the region's food sovereignty at risk. Therefore, there is a clear need for a change in governance ways and processes. Farmers, and especially women, who are the custodians of agrobiodiversity and guarantors of their families' food security, need greater influence in decision-making to ensure food sovereignty in their communities. At the same time, they are calling for greater consideration of their ancestral knowledge, which, combined with other knowledge systems, would address these current problems. A process is needed to build bridges of communication and mutual learning between farmers and stakeholders to fulfil the gap between policy and action, including valorisation of native varieties and more coherent governance strategies, prioritising sustainability and comprehensive environmental management that ensure food security with sovereignty and promote agrobiodiversity conservation.

**Keywords:** Agrobiodiversity loss, food sovereignty, governance, indigenous and local knowledge

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