



Oxfam Novib & McKnight present the Communities of Practice at the GB11

Report of the Side Event

26th November 2025
Lima, Peru

Photo: Mathieu Laprise/Oxfam

Summary

The 11th Governing Body (GB) Session of the [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture \(ITPGRFA, the Treaty\)](#) took place on the 24th – 29th November 2025, during which negotiations took place to discuss the draft text of the Treaty, including the key issues of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, access and benefit-sharing, and the mechanisms governing the equitable exchange of these resources. In the sidelines of the negotiations, twenty-five side events were held organised by a range of actors including civil society, academia, the private sector, and governmental actors. A special exhibition on diversity in Peru was displayed in the building of the conference, organized jointly by the National Institute for Agricultural Innovation (INIA) and the International Potato Center (CIP), and hosting a rich and diverse selection of crops and varieties and local produce.

Featuring a diverse range of stakeholders, the side events provided a crucial opportunity for different perspectives and experiences to be heard and for participatory dialogue to be held. Oxfam Novib and the McKnight Foundation jointly held a side event ‘Exploring Policies to Promote & Strengthen Farmer-Managed Seed Systems’ (FMSS) featuring the International Community of Practice (CoP) for FMSS and the Andes CoP, in collaboration with several CSOs and academic institutions. Researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and country delegates attended and posed critical questions regarding the current legal and policy frameworks of several countries that had been presented as case studies, with a panel and Q&A session that delved into the tensions between economic and market pressures in seed markets and policies that allow for diversity.

Oxfam Novib & McKnight: Exploring Policies to Promote & Strengthen Farmer-Managed Seed Systems

Wednesday, 26 November 2025

Executive summary: Farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS) are increasingly recognized as a vital source of agrobiodiversity, shedding light on the importance of conserving, sustainably using and developing genetically diverse and locally adapted varieties. However, a fundamental shift is needed in policy to strengthen the role of farmers as developers and custodians of agrobiodiversity within the community-based systems that they work in.

Organisers: The McKnight Foundation – Global Collaboration for Resilient Food Systems / Andes Community of Practice • OXFAM Novib • OXFAM in Peru • Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (UNALM) • Peruvian Society for Environmental Law • FOVIDA • GRISEN/Seed Group Peru • Community Technology Development Organisation (CTDO) • Rete Semi Rurali (RSR) • Seed & Knowledge Initiative (SKI)

In collaboration with the McKnight Foundation, the International CoP for FMSS and the Andes Community of Practice explored the different policy mechanisms and approaches to strengthen FMSS. Nyarie Chisango (CTDO) and Ana Lucía Nuñez (Oxfam in Peru) provided the origins, evolution, and ambitions of the two CoPs, and several case studies from across global regions were presented on different topics.

From the Philippines, Attorney Joya Doctor presented the country's path in developing a sui generis plant variety protection policy that recognises farmers' rights. Riccardo Bocci from the Italian network Rete Semi Rurali gave insight to the new European regulation for marketing organic heterogeneous material as well as on the operations and history of major community seed bank networks in Europe. From CTDO Zimbabwe, Simba Gwati presented CTDO's journey in the development of a legal framework and supportive regulatory environment for the registration of farmer varieties in Zimbabwe. On behalf of GRISEN (el Grupo Impulsor de Semillas Nativas), Rosalía Clemente and Eusebio Vásquez described the group's history in advocating for the Draft Law on the Traditional Native Seed System (el Proyecto de Ley del Sistema Tradicional de Semillas Nativas).



Atty. Joya Doctor presenting on a sui generis approach to plant variety protection.



Rosalía Clemente (L) and Eusebio Vásquez (R) of GRISEN.

A panel discussion followed, featuring Dr. Mary Teddy Asio, Assistant Commissioner for Seed Inspection & Certification at the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Beatrice Egulu, Policy Officer at the African Union Commission, and Israel Navarette, scientist at the International Potato Center (CIP). Questions were posed regarding the current policy landscape for seed systems, bilateral trade agreements, intellectual property rights, and the right to seed and food.

Nyarie Chisango (CTDO) presented the policy recommendations that were generated during the [Harare meeting \(26th November 2024\)](#), when the CoP was initially formed. Key recommendations included the institutionalisation of CSBs, strengthening of CSB networks, and the establishment of alternative certification and registration methods to facilitate farmers' system and the genetic diversity that they encompass.

Next Steps

The meeting in GB11 served as an important opportunity for actors working on FMSS to engage in the policy process of the Treaty, but crucially to strengthen existing networks, form new relationship, and to exchange ideas. In the coming year, efforts will be directed towards building on the momentum gained from the meeting in Lima, and to consolidating and coordinating global initiatives supporting farmers and communities in their role as guardians and stewards of agrobiodiversity.
