



Ann Tutwiler

Director General, Bioversity International

Welcome to New Delhi and to the International Agrobiodiversity Congress!

I'm proud and pleased that my organization has joined hands with the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources (ISPGR) in organizing this Congress. We could not have done it without the support from various national and international organizations.

Agricultural biodiversity – or agrobiodiversity – is the foundation of sustainable agricultural development and is an essential natural resource to ensure current and future food and nutrition security. Increasing the sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in production and consumption systems plays an important role in solving today's challenges: reducing global malnutrition, adapting to climate change, increasing productivity, reducing risk and increasing shrinking food security. As the Director General of Bioversity International – which envisions that agricultural biodiversity nourishes people and sustains the planet – I am happy that agrobiodiversity is increasingly attracting attention of international and national communities, as endorsed by this International Agrobiodiversity Congress.

The International Agrobiodiversity Congress (IAC 2016) will gather more than 850 delegates from over 40 countries across the world who will present the results and stories of progress of agrobiodiversity research they are involved in. The Congress will provoke discussion and knowledge-sharing on issues for the effective and efficient management of genebanks; science-led innovations in the field of genetic resources; livelihood, food and nutrition security through crop diversification; issues relating to quarantine, biosafety and biosecurity; and Intellectual Property Rights and Access and Benefit Sharing in the context of exchange of germplasm; and many other related themes.

An important objective of IAC 2016 is to initiate and encourage a dialogue among relevant stakeholders – including farmers – to better understand everyone's role in agrobiodiversity management and the conservation of genetic resources. At Bioversity International, we believe that agricultural biodiversity, and information on how to use it, must be readily available across various sectors – including governments, intergovernmental bodies, plant breeders, the agri-food sector, farm households and rural communities. In this way, priority agricultural biodiversity can be monitored and safeguarded, seed systems can operate effectively, production systems can adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and consumers can have more diverse and nutritious diets. It is time for agrobiodiversity to be in the spotlight and the International Agrobiodiversity Congress is the perfect venue.

I would like to offer my congratulations to the organizers of the International Agrobiodiversity Congress and wish all participants of the Congress fruitful deliberations and a successful meeting.

Ann Tutwiler

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