

# Network of Agrobiodiversity Zones and Biocultural Heritage Territories of Peru

## Huaran Declaration

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**Addressed to:** The Contracting Parties, Observers and Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), 11th Meeting of the Governing Body (GB 11), Lima, Peru, November 2025.

### Guardians of global resilience

We, the representatives of the **Network of Agrobiodiversity Zones**, gathered at the Yachay Kuichi Pluriversity, Huaran, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Cusco, stand before this Governing Body not only as farmers, but as the contemporary custodians of the world's most complex and ancient genetic laboratories: our territories.

We represent 30 communities that manage critical ecosystems in the Andes, globally recognised as centres of origin. From the Potato Park and Chalakuy Park in Cusco, to the landscapes of Cuyo Cuyo in Puno and the camelid systems in Apurímac, we conserve in situ thousands of native varieties that modern science is only beginning to characterise.

Our reality is clear: while ex situ gene banks preserve seeds over time, our Biocultural Heritage Territories keep evolution in motion. In a context of global climate crisis, where agricultural stability is threatened, we do not offer an archive, we offer living adaptation.

While the world depends on the genetic diversity that we safeguard to adapt its commercial crops to climate change, our territories face existential threats: rampant mining expansion, legal erosion of our territorial rights, and a climate crisis that is altering rainfall and temperature cycles at an unprecedented rate.

In accordance with ILO Convention 169, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Article 9 of the ITPGRFA itself, we present the following demands and technical proposals to GB 11:

### Call to action and recommendations

#### **1. Legal recognition of biocultural heritage territories, such as agrobiodiversity zones, as an in situ conservation strategy (Ref. Art. 5 ITPGRFA)**

In situ conservation is not passive; it requires governance. **We urge** Parties to recognise Biocultural Heritage Territories, such as Agrobiodiversity Zones (ZABD) in Peru, as the most effective tools for implementing Article 5 of the Treaty. Evidence shows that the genetic diversity of key crops (for example, potato, quinoa, maize) and wild relatives is higher in territories managed under customary systems than in conventional protected areas without active human presence. **We request** that national policies integrate these territories as strategic zones for national and global food security, free from extractive industries that compromise water and soil.

## **2. Effective implementation of farmers' rights (Art. 9 and GB 11 Agenda Item 13)**

Article 9 cannot remain a rhetorical aspiration. We demand a shift from theory to binding legal practice. The rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seeds must prevail over any intellectual property or industrial patent legislation. The criminalisation of the exchange of ancestral seeds is a direct attack on food sovereignty. **We call** for the strengthening of national legal protection mechanisms that shield traditional knowledge associated with plant genetic resources, preventing biopiracy, which is legitimised through patents on native materials.

## **3. Direct and unbureaucratic access to the Benefit-Sharing Fund (GB 11 Agenda Item 10)**

The current financing system is inefficient for those on the front lines of conservation. Climate and biodiversity funds rarely reach grassroots communities. **We call** for the establishment of a direct financing window for Indigenous Peoples within the Benefit Sharing Fund, eliminating unnecessary intermediaries. If we do the technical work of maintaining the genetic diversity that feeds the world (global ecosystem service), reciprocity demands that financial resources reach us directly to strengthen our governance, water infrastructure and transmission of knowledge to young people.

## **4. Digital sequencing (DSI) and repatriation of diversity (GB 11 Agenda Items 17.2 and 9)**

The digitisation of genetic information (DSI) must not become a back door to evading benefit sharing. Any benefit derived from the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI) from our crops **must include** a fair return to the communities of origin. Genetic information is inseparable from the physical seed and the cultural knowledge that created it. We demand the acceleration of seed repatriation programmes from international gene banks (such as CIP) to our communities in order to restore the diversity lost due to local climate crises, under an approach of 'repatriation for adaptation'.

## **5. Support for a Global Resilience Network through Agrobiodiversity Zones**

We propose the formalisation and financial support of an International Network of Agrobiodiversity Zones for in situ conservation in centres of origin and diversity. We need to connect our territories in different regions of the world to exchange climate adaptation strategies, resistant seeds and agroecological technologies. We are not asking for aid; we are offering a strategic alliance for human and planetary survival.

Diversity is not a metric of corporate efficiency; it is life insurance. By protecting our territories, we are not only defending the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Peru; we are also ensuring that, when monocultures fail in the face of pests or extreme weather, the world still has a place to turn to for genetic solutions. We provide the land, the seeds and the millennial wisdom. You provide the political will and the fair legal framework.

## **Network of Agrobiodiversity Zones and Biocultural Heritage Territories**

*Signed in Huaran, Sacred Valley of the Incas, Cusco, Peru.*