



Resumed High-Level Segment - COP27

Wednesday, 16 November 2022, 10:00 - 13:00

Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is severely threatening global food supplies. Crop failures and poor yields as a result of climate change are contributing to poor nutrition and health, loss of livelihoods, forced migration and other injustices. This burden is disproportionately shouldered by the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Safeguarding crop diversity and making it available to plant breeders, scientists and farmers is essential to the climate-resilience and sustainability of food systems.

Safeguarding crop diversity is essential to lowering the environmental footprint of agriculture and meeting the nutrition, health and livelihood needs of our growing and changing population.

Safeguarding crop diversity for all of humanity is a moral and economic imperative, and time is running out. With every passing year we lose more biodiversity, and once it is gone, it is gone forever, putting us at a disadvantage in our efforts to feed ourselves and protect our planet.

Making global food systems work for everyone requires a global partnership. The Crop Trust has developed with our partners who share our passion a comprehensive plan to safeguard the diversity of the world's most important crops and make it more readily available to those who need it to feed the world.

Central to this plan is a guarantee for the funding of the essential operations of a global network of key seedbanks.

The plan also calls for working in new ways with policymakers, journalists, business leaders and other influencers to create the political will and private sector engagement required to guarantee our food.

Over the last 20 years, a core group of visionary donors have contributed more than 240 million US dollars to safeguarding the diversity of our most important crops – essential to meeting nutrition, health and livelihood demands now and in perpetuity. This has been an important first step.

Now, a major push is required to strengthen the financial base that would allow the Crop Trust to fully deliver on its mandate to defend one of the most important global public goods.

Adequately funding the global system of seedbanks is an urgent imperative. Plant breeders, scientists and farmers all over the world are relying on us to safeguard the crop diversity that is essential to their work – and all our lives.

We need more diverse food systems, food systems that contain diverse wheat, rice and maize crops, but that go beyond these staples and encompass a wide diversity of millets, pulses, vegetables, and fruits. Crop diversity matters. It matters at the best of times. And it matters all the more in the face of climate change. I urge the global community to join the Crop Trust in this noble work.