

**High Level Expert Seminar on Indigenous Food Systems
Building on traditional knowledge to achieve Zero Hunger
FAO, 7 November**

Ann Tutwiler

Opening remarks (3 mins)

Session 09:00-10:20

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- José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director General
- H.E. Royal /Ui/o/oo, Deputy Minister of Marginalized People Namibia
- Brian Keane, Expert on Behalf of UNPFII President
- Ann Tutwiler, Bioversity Director

Video Dr. M.S. Swaminathan (tbc)

- H.E. Patrick John Rata, Ambassador New Zealand
- H.E. Inge Nordang, Ambassador Norway
- H.E. Alexandra Bugailiskis, Ambassador Canada
- H.E. Mario Arvelo Caamaño, CFS Chairperson & Ambassador Dominican Republic

Theme

The opportunity that indigenous food systems represent in terms of sustainability within the context of 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs, especially SDG2¹ (SDG2.5²)

¹ End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

² 2.5 by 2020 maintain genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants, farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at national, regional and international levels, and ensure access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge as internationally agreed

Introduction

Agrobiodiversity is an essential component of a sustainable food system. It provides options to make our diets healthier and to make our food systems more resilient and sustainable.

Yet **agrobiodiversity, and the traditional knowledge about different species and varieties of crops cultivated over millennia, is being lost** – from our plates and from farmers' fields. A recent study by Bioversity International with FAO, found **93% of vegetable species are neglected** for research, conservation status, and documented knowledge.

This loss **adversely affects our ability to meet SDG2** – to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Indigenous communities and smallholder farmers are custodians of the world's agricultural biodiversity and its associated traditional knowledge, which they rely on to grow food on marginal agricultural lands. **This role needs to be recognized.**

Indigenous peoples are rarely represented in decisions that directly affect their land, decisions that can endanger the rich agricultural biodiversity on which they depend for food.

In **Nepal**, a Community-based Biodiversity Management approach has put the governance of land and biodiversity into the hands of the people who depend on it.

The communities, working with the support of the local Municipality, have brought together **different stakeholders, including cooperatives, development committees and women's groups**, to adopt sustainable practices that reverse soil erosion and increase productivity.

Activities include collective **reforestation, diversification, apiculture, agroforestry and organic crop production**. Lake restoration and land use diversification have supported the conservation of crop genetic diversity including landraces and crop wild relatives, whose habitats are now protected.

This kind of '**Community-based Biodiversity Management**' approach recognizes the intrinsic link between agricultural biodiversity, people, food and the environment. It **empowers communities** to restore and sustainably manage their own landscapes to meet their needs.

If we include indigenous peoples' voices in decision-making, we can help create the pathway to more inclusive agrobiodiversity-based solutions to nourish people and sustain the planet.