

Contested framings of 'agricultural research for development'

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Date	Treaty / Convention event
1961	International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants agreed and UPOV established
1972	UPOV Convention revised
1978	UPOV Convention revised again
1983	Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture established under the auspices of the FAO. It focused on PGR and produced a Voluntary International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources.
1989	1989 FAO Conference “adopts... a resolution on Farmers’ Rights” which tries to strike a balance between breeders and farmers – here identified as formal and informal innovators. A “series of agreed interpretations” of the Undertaking including that on Farmers’ rights were adopted, including on Plant Breeders’ Rights, the relationship between the Undertaking and UPOV, and the “sovereign rights of nations over their genetic resources”. The idea of ex situ collections coming under the auspices of the FAO is discussed for the first time.
1991	UPOV Convention revised again, this time to incorporate exclusions e.g. subsistence farmers
1993	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) comes into force. FAO International Undertaking revised in order to fit with CBD, and to deal with issues not covered by CBD such as farmers’ rights and access to ex situ collections. FAO Commission takes on negotiation of agreements on germplasm collection and transfer, and on gene-bank standards.
1994	Agreement with 12 CGIAR Centres (and later other bodies) to place their collections under the auspices of FAO as an interim measure while the IU is renegotiated. Under these agreements, the Centres agreed “to hold designated germplasm "in trust for the benefit of the international community", and "not to claim ownership, or seek intellectual property rights over the designated germplasm and related information".”
1994	TRIPS (Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) agreed under WTO Uruguay Round
1995	FAO Commission mandate extended at the FAO Conference to “cover all components of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture.”
2001	FAO Conference adopts the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). It “recognises Farmers’ Rights and establishes a Multilateral System to facilitate access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to share the benefits derived from their use in a fair and equitable way.”
2002	Bonn voluntary guidelines on access and benefit sharing agreed under the CBD
2003	Cartegena Protocol of the CBD, on Biosafety, comes into force
2004	ITPGRFA comes into force, including the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA) setting standards for the handling of materials held by gene-banks
2004	FAO and Bioversity establish Global Crop Diversity Trust
2006	ITPGRFA agreements replace the agreements made between CGIAR and FAO in 1994
2014	Nagoya Protocol to the CBD on access and benefit sharing, comes into force

CGIAR's role: contradictions

CGIAR's position as provider of 'scale-neutral' International Public Goods at the top of a research pipeline and its commitment to 'pro-poor' research outputs and partnership models of working

CGIAR's position as provider of IPGs to address market failure and its increasing interaction with private sector bodies to deliver its research outputs to the market

CGIAR's focus on poverty-reduction but its continued production of context- and scale-neutral technologies which are not specifically targeted at addressing the needs and interests of poor farmers.



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Emerging issues around seeds and knowledge:

- Increased privatisation of research
- Increased commercial value of technologies arising from research
- Privatisation and commodification of inputs to food production
- Value of plant genetic resources (PGR) - including PGR held in CGIAR-run gene-banks
- Requirement on public IAR institutions to engage with IP regulations to access research materials and protect public PGR collections
- Complex international regulatory frameworks for PGRs with contradictory perspectives on ownership, rights, access, control.



- [1] <http://www.upov.int/portal/index.html.en>
- [2] <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/history-evolution-treaty> - accessed 16.7.15
- [3] <http://www.planttreaty.org/content/history-evolution-treaty>
- [4] <http://www.fao.org/ag//CGRFA/iu.htm>
- [5] **ibid**
- [6] <http://www.upov.int/overview/en/exceptions.html>
- [7] <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-about/cgrfa-history/cgrfa-internet/en/>
- [8] <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-about/cgrfa-history/en/>
- [9] <http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-about/cgrfa-history/en/>

