agriculture, land reform & rural development
Department:
Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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The Republic of South Africa ratifies the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) is pleased to announce that South Africa (SA) has ratified the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

South Africa has joined the ITPGRFA by depositing its instrument of accession with the Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) on 23 December 2024, making it the 154th Contracting Party to this International Treaty. The official announcement was subsequently made by the ITPGRFA Secretariat on 16 January 2025.

The Treaty's objectives are conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of these benefits arising from their use, in agreement with the Convention on Biological Diversity for sustainable agriculture and food security. These are aligned with the recently approved White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity.

The Treaty aims at recognising farmers' enormous contribution to the enhancement of a diversity of crops that feed the world; establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials; and ensuring that recipients share benefits they derive from using these genetic materials.

In joining the ITPGRFA, South Africa is reaffirming its commitment to global efforts to conserve and sustainably use plant genetic resources essential for food security and agricultural biodiversity. South Africa's accession to the International Treaty brings new opportunities for collaboration within the Treaty's framework, including participation in its Multilateral System which facilitates access to a global pool of genetic resources.

The Treaty's national implementation will require close collaboration between the National Genebank, relevant national departments, Provincial Departments of Agriculture, community seed banks, farmers, civil society organisations, industry and research and academic institutions.

More information on the Treaty can be accessed on the following website/s:

- https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/

For more information on SA membership to ITPGRFA , please contact:

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