



# Webinar Report



## THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION PROPOSED REGULATION ON PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIALS ON AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEMS



# WEBINAR

Topic :  
**IMPLICATIONS OF EU PROPOSED REGULATION ON PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIALS ON AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEM.**

THUR, 4TH, APRIL, 2024  
11:00 AM TO 1:00 PM (NAIROBI)

LANGUAGE  
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- FRENCH

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<https://pelumassociation.org>

### SPEAKERS



**GIREGON OLUPOT (PHD)**  
SENIOR LECTURER  
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



**KARIN ULMER**  
CONSULTANT  
SEED PROJECT BY BFDW&HEKS



**FULYA BATUR**  
CONSULTANT  
SEED PROJECT BY BFDW&HEKS



**GREET LAMBRECHT**  
ORGANIC FARMER & SEED SAVER



**CHARITON NAMUWOZA**  
AFRONET PRESIDENT

### MODERATORS



**MUKETOI WAMUNYIMA**  
COUNTRY COORDINATOR  
PELUM ZAMBIA



**JULIET KATUSIIME (PHD)**  
SENIOR PROGRAMME OFFICER  
PELUM RS

## WEBINAR REPORT

### 1: Introduction

This report provides an overview of the proceedings from the webinar on the implications of the European Union proposed regulation on Plant Reproductive Materials (PRM, 2023) on Africa's food system. The Webinar organised on April 4th, 2024 by PELUM Association in partnership with Broederlijk Delen (BD) and AfroNet aimed at raising awareness on the implications of the Proposed EU regulation on Plant Reproductive Materials (2023) on Africa's food system. The webinar was attended by over 170 stable attendants from across the world.

The webinar featured five distinguished discussants: Giregon Olupot (PhD) from Makerere University, Uganda; Ms. Karin Ulmer and Fulya Batur (PhD), who are Consultants on a *Seeds for Agroecology*

*Project* by Bread for the World (BfW) & HEKS/EPER, Ms. Greet Lambrecht, an Organic farmer and seed saver in Belgium; and Mr. Chariton Namuwoza, the President of African Organic Network (AfrONET). Moderation duties were handled by Mr. Muketoi Wamunyima, the Country Coordinator at PELUM Zambia, and Juliet Katusiime (PhD), a Senior Programme Officer at the PELUM Association Regional Secretariat. The discussion traversed two hours, marked by lively interactions and the sharing of valuable knowledge.

## 2 Plenary

The moderators begun by offering a briefing about the intended objectives of the webinar that included; (a) raising awareness across the continent about the ongoing EU Parliament and related institutions regulations on seed and reproductive plant materials; (b) mobilising more attention and partnership for advocacy about the proposed PRM regulations and the likely effects.



The moderators also highlighted the various activities that have characterised our participation in in the EU PRM laws such the internal discussions, policy and protest statements, dialogue among others. The main drive being an appreciation

that Africa as a continent has a strong relationship with the EU when it comes to trade, food policy and governance and the need to stand in solidarity with the concerned European farmers. It was also informed by the interest to stand in solidarity with likeminded networks like IFOAM, and partners who were advancing organic and scale farmer and cross border interests for equity and sustainable practices.

### 2.1 Plenary Proceedings

#### 2.1.1: The European perspectives on the proposed PRM regulations

The first presentation by Ms. Karin Ulmer aimed to connect us to the law, sharing about how the proposed law fits into the European situation, considering the past, present, and future implications. Her presentation also shared the perspective on the law beyond the European Union.

Ms. Karin's presentation benefited the participants owing to her experience and passion engaging with the EU policies, especially those related to trade, food and gender in the EU, and the current consultancy work linking with the African policies related. She begun by sharing the journey taken so far by Bread for the World (BfW) and HEKS/EPERS who have been jointly working to improve seed markets for agroecology, including the drafting of a scoping paper in 2020, the webinars with organizations in the EU and the global south on seeds, the provided policy briefings for EU seed marketing reforms, and actively engaging in the EU reform process (meeting with EU parliamentarians and commissions).

She indicated that the activities have mostly aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture and ensure access to quality seeds aligned with agroecological principles. Importantly, she notes that the advocacy is guided with a focus on ensuring Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). The goal of PCD as an approach is to ensure that policies in trade, agriculture, environment,

and finance are coherent and supportive of development efforts, both domestically and internationally. This approach helps to maximize the positive impact of policies on sustainable development, poverty reduction, and the achievement of international development goals. EU should be bound by this principle to the rules that govern the marketing of seeds in the EU.

**How does PCD translate in the EU seeds reform?**

- (a) **Ensures the protection of farmers' rights to seeds and demands because;**
  - Seeds are crucial for agriculture and must be accessible to farmers and peasants.
  - The EU seed marketing reform should support diverse seed systems tailored to farmers' needs.
- (b) **Addresses biodiversity loss because:**
  - EU seed legislation should align with biodiversity targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
  - Ensure EU seed market regulations support biodiversity conservation efforts.
- (c) **Fosters resilient food systems following the need to:**
  - Align with the European Green Deal, a provided framework for sustainable seed markets.
  - Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) also provides avenues by which affected communities in third countries can voice their concerns and aspirations to build on synergies and enable global communities to contribute to resilient seed systems.
  - Address regulatory challenges faced by farmer seed systems, especially in Africa, where 70% of seeds are sourced from farmer managed seed systems

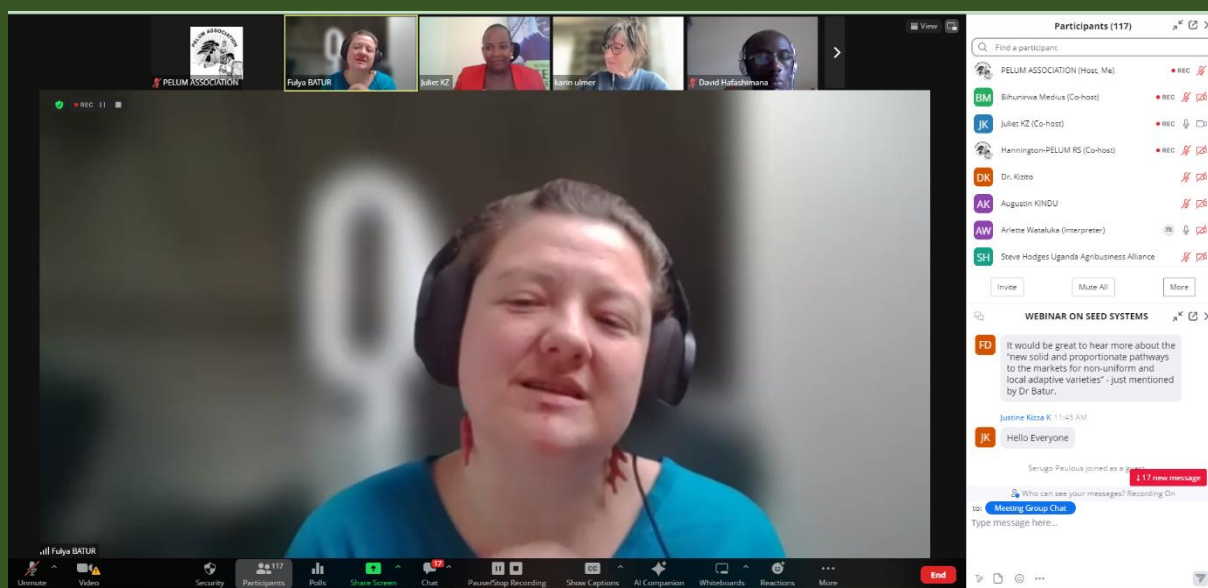
Karin also shared about the additional steps being taken to influence for a friendly PRM regulation such as **collaborating** with PELUM association and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) in writing to European Members of Parliament, European Council of Ministers and Agricultural Committee, and to creating solidarity videos with farmers in Europe and campaign for the right to share seed prevent biodiversity loss through conservation and promote sharing of farmer managed seed.



## 2.1.2 Unpacking the proposed PRM law

In the second presentation, we sought to make the participants learn about the how the EU Parliament and legal processes work briefly, provide an overview of the proposed PRM legislation, unpack the critical issues to appreciate or contest and also share the status quo in the process. We indeed, benefited from the presentation by Dr. Fulya Batur, a lawyer with interests in the farmer seed systems, particularly the small-scale farmers. Her work and expertise ranges from legal research to advocacy on seed systems, farmer rights, intellectual property, and sustainability. She has experience in the EU and has worked with some African-based Initiatives on similar matters.

During her presentation she indicated that the EU countries are represented in the European Parliament through their Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). MEPs are elected by the citizens of the EU member states in accordance with the electoral systems of each country. MEPs represent the interests of their constituents and participate in the legislative process of the European Parliament by attending plenary sessions, joining parliamentary committees, and voting on proposed legislation. They also engage in debates, propose amendments, and advocate for policies that reflect the priorities of their respective countries and the EU as a whole.



Further, she indicated that the EU parliament has recently been in the legislative process of passing laws, with majorly two of them relate with the discussion in this Webinar; that is the New Genomic Techniques (NGT) law and the Plant Reproductive Materials law, although particular focus is on the PRM one.

The PRM law in particular as proposed by the European Commission dates back to 2008 following an evaluation and other studies of the PRM Marketing Directives and subsequent recommendations to revise the legislation and include in all other directives related to make a

Single legislation (Draft Copy: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52023PC0414>)

According to her personal assessment, she noted that the proposed Reforms on PRM are considerably progressive. However, there are gaps that can easily be exploited by large corporations' interests at the expense of conservationists, organic, and small-scale farming communities both within the EU and Africa for instance, and the increase of red tape. For instance, the proposed regulation restricts the free transfer of plant genetic resources for conservation, introducing bureaucratic hurdles that hinder farmers and seed organizations from preserving and selling endangered diversity if passed in the current form. These arbitrary restrictions on farmers, limiting their ability to exchange and sell their own seeds include double registration requirements where you have to register twice to sell the seed; registration of professional operators and plant varieties (DUS- VCU) and seed lot certification. These are some of the requirements that may hinder small producers from making these seeds available. You have to show that the seed conforms to plant breeders' rights of uniformity, distinct, stable and uniform for it to be certified which is not possible for most open pollinated varieties farmed by organic farmers in Europe.

She closed by indicating that we ought to positively engage with the forthcoming plenary and voting on the laws in April, and critically scrutinise the agriculture committees' reviews of the proposal. Dr. Fulya equally shared about the forthcoming elections for EU parliamentarians in the EU. Brussels June 2024 and rallied EU participants to vote in favour of the farmers interests, sustainability and other farmer friendly goals.

The image is a screenshot of a Zoom meeting. The main window displays a presentation slide titled "WHAT'S NEXT?". The slide is divided into two columns of bullet points. The left column is under the heading "EP PLENARY VOTE" and lists: "Counter industry attempts to minimize derogations & delete articles on conservation (incl. farmers' exchange).", "Potential improvements to text:", "Full participation of peasants and farmers in decision and policy making on seeds (beyond consultation).", and "Fully recognise contribution and rights of farmers in dynamic management of agrobiodiversity in situ.". The right column is under the heading "EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS" and lists: "Need strong signal to European Council of Ministers:", "Rights accruing to farm-managed seed systems are different and distinct to those of protected varieties.", "Counter digital sequence to circulate freely while physical exchange of seeds are criminalized.", and "Resilient food systems and territorial markets for Agroecology.". To the right of the text is a circular graphic with the text "CONSTRUCTING MARKETS FOR AGROECOLOGY" and "An analysis of diverse systems for developing countries for sustainability". The Zoom interface shows several participants in a grid at the top. On the right side, there is a "Participants (162)" list with names and icons. At the bottom, there is a Zoom control bar with icons for mute, video, chat, and other functions.

### 2.1.3 Plenary discussions on presentations 2.1.1 and 2.1.2

One of the participants, Dr. David Hafashima remarked that the proposed regulations ought to be cognisant and not to undermine the international treaties on sharing seeds such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the NAGOYA protocol, which is a supplementary agreement on the convention on Biological Diversity of 1992 and focusing on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization to the Convention. He also requested PELUM to share more about the various engagements with the EU organisations and the EU Parliament so that other people can join and contribute a bigger voice from Africa.

Via the webinar chat section, Frances Davies said that “It would be great to hear more about the new solid and proportionate pathways to the markets for non-uniform and local adaptive varieties mentioned by Dr Batur Fulya”. In response, Fulya indicated the pathways she referred to are "conservation varieties", which would apply in all crop species and be registered without the DUS tests. She also argued that seeds and plant reproductive material from both pathways do not need to be produced as certified seed, but can be marketed as 'standard' (new rules are adopted in Annex II and III of the Regulation Proposal). They are both part of the main law, but presented as an exception to the general rule of DUS variety registration. So, they are not established in a separate framework, but as alternative pathways to market access, with their own rules ('officially recognized description' instead of UPOV-criteria based 'official description').

Frances Davies acknowledged the response as quoted “This is helpful thanks. Zambia is in the process of revising both seed law and PVP law (potentially to join UPOV), whilst we are also trying to develop a pilot system to register farmer varieties in order to have them recognised and sold in market, Useful to understand how exceptions are happening elsewhere - also against UPOV”. To which Fulya, responded “Indeed, we can compile the relevant provisions of the new EU seed marketing law for you if it is helpful when adapted to the Zambian context but other materials published can in the meantime provide the needed insights such as the report on the current laws in seed harmonisation in Africa (Link to English and French copies: <https://www.desiralift.org/seed-laws-harmonisation-in-africa/> ”. Another participant Lutz Depenbusch contributed to the discussion indicating that Misereor published a study on the legal recognition of seed systems and practical examples by Mohamed Coulibaly and Karin Peschard copies in the link

[https://www.misereor.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload\\_misereororg/publication/en/seed\\_for\\_diversity/EN\\_Studie\\_Saatgut.pdf](https://www.misereor.org/fileadmin/user_upload_misereororg/publication/en/seed_for_diversity/EN_Studie_Saatgut.pdf) and

[https://www.misereor.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload\\_misereororg/publication/fr/securite\\_alimentaire/FR\\_Studie\\_Saatgut.pdf](https://www.misereor.org/fileadmin/user_upload_misereororg/publication/fr/securite_alimentaire/FR_Studie_Saatgut.pdf) (étude Vers la reconnaissance juridique des systèmes semenciers paysans en Afrique

Summarily, the first set of presentations reemphasized the changes being propose to PRM by the Commission through the European Parliament. The presenters aimed at making sure that the 'trigger point' of conservation would be the nature and objective of the activities, and not the nature of persons/operators involved, the farmer friendliness of the laws and the cross-border interests.

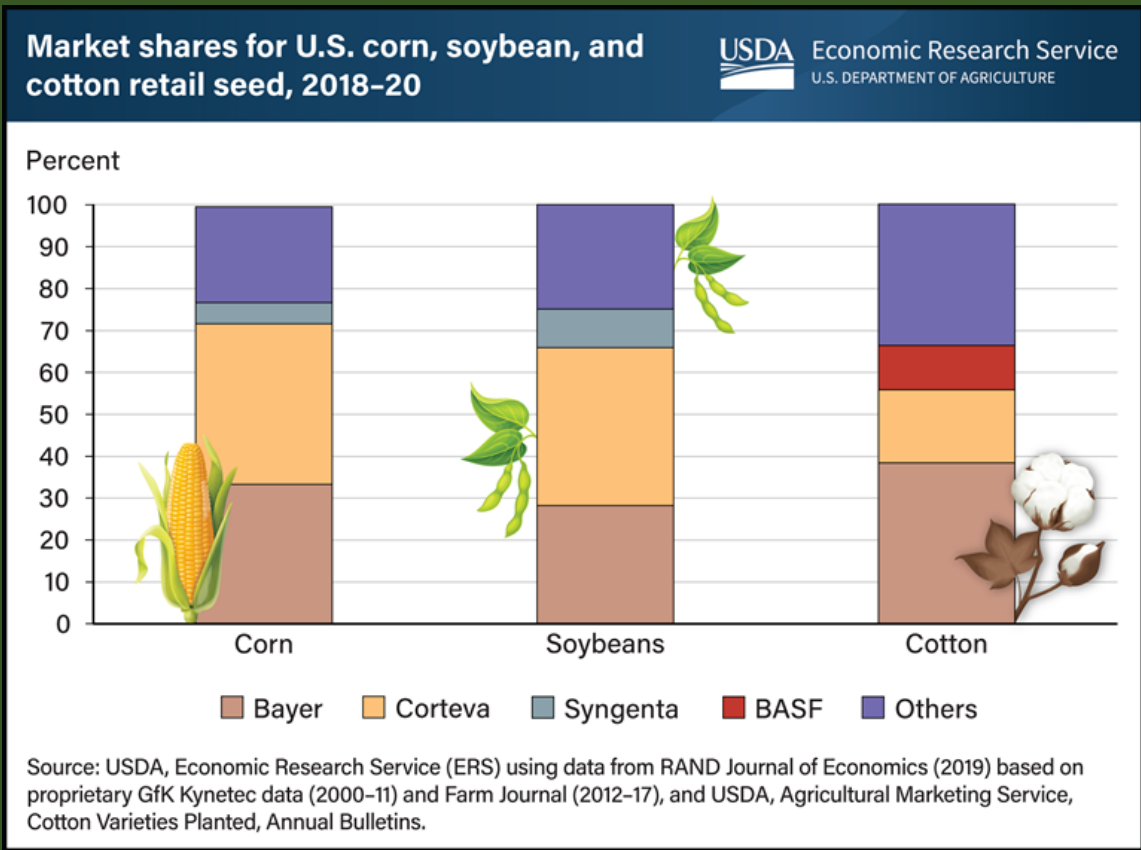
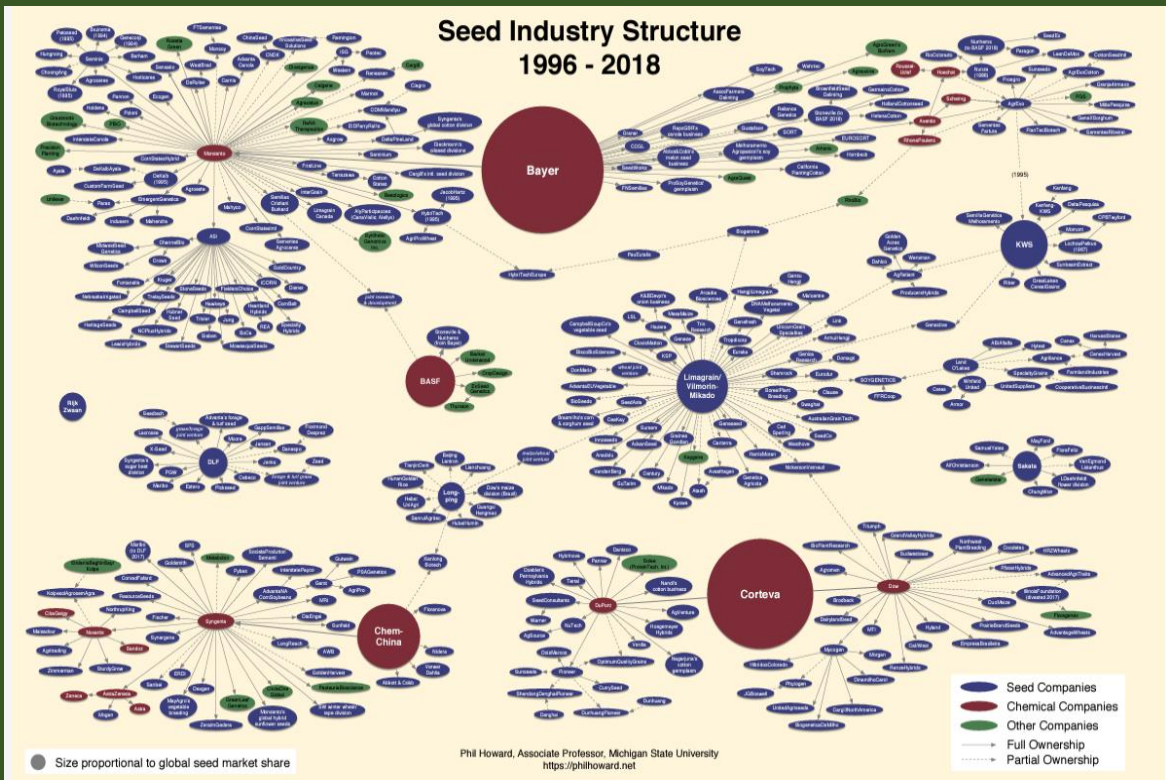
#### **2.1.4 Implications of the proposed EU PRM Regulations**

The second set of presentations focused on understanding the implications of the proposed law on the Africa food system.

As such, the 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation topic focused on the implications of the proposed EU regulations on the production and marketing of PRM on the Africa's science community, Africa's food systems & institutional dynamics. The lead presenter and discussant were Dr. Olupot Giregon, a Senior Lecturer at Makerere University School of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Dr. Olupot is equally passionate about agroecology, food and soil health, ecosystems restoration, and the subjects, the debates about Genetically Modified Organisations (GMOs) and the corporate food and seed systems. Indeed, his presentation raised concerns regarding the likelihood of pushing for seed harmonisation laws across the continents when dealing with the EU, the possibility of companies to monopolise and control the seed sector and thus, controlling what is being planted in the whole world. He recounted cases where the Rockefeller family envisaged a world where seed is 100% patented and genetically engineered, and companies like Monsanto predicting what every person's plate would be like with the company controlling the it.

The seed sector in the world and more specifically in Africa is increasingly amalgamating into a few companies who keep on buying smaller seed companies over time. As a result, a combination of own majority of the of the worlds seed market shares. As Corporate influence displaces other societal groups, we see an increase in corporates capture of the market, legal and scientific systems.





A depiction of the seed company dynamics, market share (Graphic sources: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=107516> and <https://www.cornucopia.org/seed-industry-structure-dr-phil-howard/>)

The effects of the corporates overpowering of the food and seed system include a limited objectivity in food and agricultural sciences and practices. As such Olupot cited a case about GMO's, which despite contractory scientific evidence on their effects and character in various settings, are increasingly gaining new terminologies, softer regulations (deregulation) driven by the corporate entities strategic agenda.

Therefore, according to Dr. Olupot, the proposed EU PRM Regulations lacks stringent measures regarding GMO's, and the so called "New Genomic Techniques", and loosens the standards when it comes to the cross-border policies as stipulated in rule 12 and 37 when it comes to their exports as cases. Such, loopholes are hard to guard against in Africa and its mostly traditional seed and food system and the less regulated food techniques to human and environmental health. He warned that such laws can result in the promotion of herbicides and GMOs pronounced safe for human and animal consumption but whose effects include increasing cancer cases increased kidney diseases and low fertility cases, antibiotic resistance, pest resistance causing super pests as some previous experiments on rats and other filed trial results indicate.

When it comes to farmer practices, Dr. Olupot conveyed that the prosed law and others subsequent, need to recognise farmers are the best scientists and breeders who have been breeding over centuries using methods that are compatible with their local PRM, food and seed systems. Farmer led practices have resulted into high quality open pollinated varieties whose yields are stable and have capacity to improve over time. A situation that has been changing as farming gained interest from non-farmers, and individuals driven by purely scientific discovery, profits and power. As a result, varieties of food crops have been reducing significantly over a recent few years because of the push by mostly the seed companies to promote only a few crops that fit into their commercial criteria. If this continues we might lose our farmer managed seed systems that promote and preserve the local seeds since they are part of the culture and people in our community.



*Maize drying on local barns a practice locally done to dry and preserve seed*

When it comes to institutional dynamics, the proposed legislation will demand that exports to the EU match up with the EU standards. Thus, a likelihood that Africa institutions, courses and research will require to align with the proposed PRM regulation to continue trade relations and other interests. He noted that many African Institutions like African Union are funded by multinational companies who own and controls GMOs, agrochemicals and seeds and they are forced to align with corporate interests. A similar trend is penetrating educational institutions such as Universities and institutions courses and research is designed to serves to serve cooperates while any scientists thinking contrary get gagged.

As such, the presentation raised concerns about the possibility of a stronger corporate capture of the food and seed system. A system that is likely to alienate small scale farmers by;

- Criminalizing of farmers' seed and farming practices.
- Perpetual enslavement of farmers to dependency.
- Intensified persecution and harassment of farmers for infringement on patent rights, violation of technology use agreements among others.
- Erosion of genetic diversity due to monoculture and use of patented seeds only.
- Heightened poverty due to high cost of seed, lost market opportunities.
- Heightened food insecurity and pervasive malnutrition when access to farmers run short of planting materials or consumers run out of affordable, nutritious produces.
- Land grabbing and loss of family/peasant farm lands orchestrated largescale purchases by those friendly to corporates and wealthier.
- An upset to organic farming and agro-ecology due to the likely incompatibility and unhealthy competition.
- Proposed EU Regulations on Plant Reproductive Material (PRM) seen as a covert effort by multinational corporations (MNCs) to control farmers' germplasm.

Therefore;

- We need to strengthen existing laws to safeguard farmers' rights to seeds, their knowledge, and farming practices.
- Advocate for strict regulation or containment of the spread of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and new genetic technologies (NGTs) under Plant Health and Biosafety laws.
- Publicly support urged to protect endangered scientists from influence by MNCs and industry scientists.
- Emphasize prioritizing bilateral and trade relations with Africa over corporate interests to avoid potential consequences.

### **2.1.5 European farmer's experience and perspectives on the implications**

The fourth presentation by Ms. Greet Lambrecht shared the experiences and perspectives of an EU farmer and seed savers. Her presentation shared her own farm - **Akelei** experiences and other like-minded farmers perceived and likely implications of the proposed PRM regulations in the current form. Greet, is an organic farmer and seed saver for over 30 years in Belgium. She is the founder of the organic seed initiative **Vitale Rassen**. She has equally been active in the local discussions and street demonstrations in Brussels. The participants enjoyed her

presentation of first-hand small-scale farming experience on the farm, her and her husband started focusing on biodynamic farming for over 40 years. On the 6.5-hectare farm, exists more than 70 different crops varieties, with over 30 varieties saved for their own use, and for the farmers at **Vitale Rassen**. The farm also applies techniques such as crop rotation and nutrient recycling from the cattle and other livestock to make composts for their crops on the farm.



Ms. Greet shared that in the beginning they would sell to wholesalers and during horticultural auctions but nowadays prefer short chain sales because of the connection they make with their customers, and an effort to avoid selling at low prices even with long chain.

Her remarks on the new EU PRM or also commonly known as the seed law included on Article 52 (variety registration) questioning the sustainability of the undertaking given the biological complexity that surrounds varieties. She is also concerned about NGTs and their claimed benefits instead of opting for good farm management systems. “It is very important that farmers have a say on this rather than the profit driven agro industries. Farmers have the best interest of their farms and understand farming well” she stressed.

Ms. Greet also questioned the sustainability in Article 52 of the new EU seed law which indicates the non-circularity in plant breeding. She noted that with hybrids we tend to focus on the genes, yet plants are more than genes and genotypes but are continuously in interaction with their environment and part of the ecosystem. Open pollinated varieties are open to the pollination by insects and open to the influences of the universe and that gives farmers a priceless power of local adapted varieties which are tolerant to diseases and that are resilient because of their genetic diversity. As such, methods like New Genomic Technics shouldn't be support and they are likely to disrupt and risk to contamination of their well conserved varieties.

In response to this upcoming legislation and related threats, Ms. Greet is additionally mobilising and strengthening **their vision as Vitale Rassen**. Vitale Rasen is a network of 10 organic farmers, the central point is located on Akelei. Currently selling 300 varieties of seeds in their

webshop: 150 varieties of vegetables and herbs and 150 types of flowers. Their vision is to have good quality seeds for their community of home gardeners and professional farmers because their diverse open pollinated seeds are of high quality, better and more important than those that will follow the DUS (Distinguishable, Uniformity and Stability) criteria.



At **Vitale Rassen**, they are also using their experiences to sensitize other farmers, development policy and legal practitioners in Brussels and all over the world about the following likelihoods they have got to guard against if the law passes as is;

- Risk of privatization of varieties and characteristics (genes and gene sequences) through patents.
- Privatization of F1-hybrid parent lines by seed companies, removing them from gene banks and common goods.
- Disregard for previous appointments made in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants of 2019 and limiting farmers' freedom to use, share, and sell their selections.
- Concerns about genetic pollution of seeds with NGTs, yet accountability for contamination is lacking.
- Shift of seed companies' focus from traditional plant breeding to NGTs, and other easy to assess, certify easing options.
- Incompatibility of sustainability aspects in EU seed law proposal with agro-ecological approach of organic and bio-dynamic farming.
- EU seed law's symptomatic approach to sustainability, favouring NGTs over traditional, circular, and open-pollinated varieties.

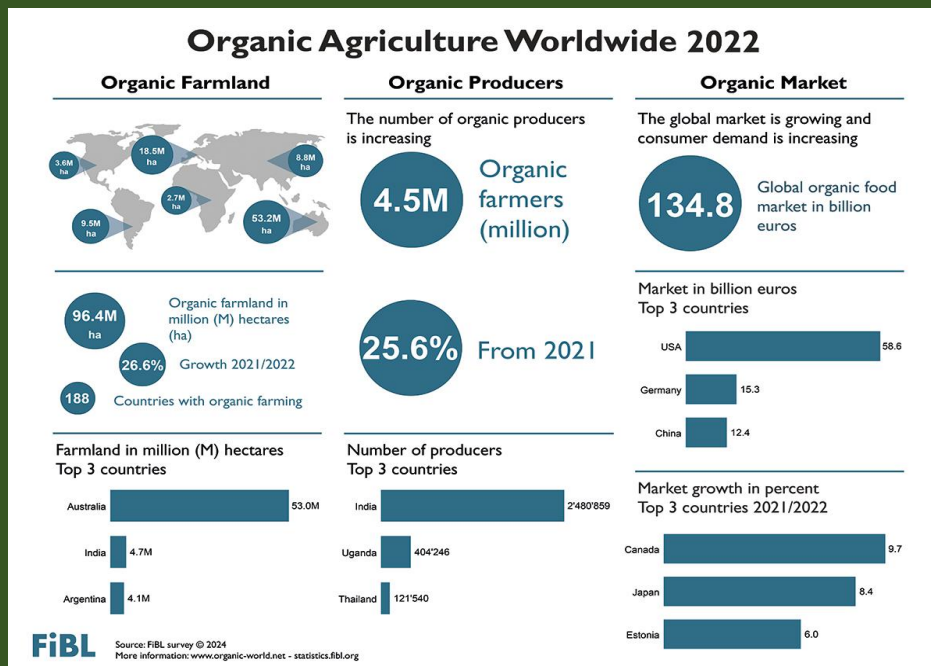
## 2.1.6 African farmers experiences and perspective on the implications

In the fifth presentation, we learned about the perspectives of various farmers in Africa, especially the small-scale farmers. The presentation and discussion, which was offered by Mr. Chariton Namuwoza, the Executive Director at NOGAM, current president of African Organic Network-AfrONet and Agribusiness entrepreneur who also shared the implications of the proposed law on the continent as it interacts with the farmers and EU trade relations.

Mr. Namuwoza interacts with farmers an especially the organic farmers through AfroNet which is a continental body, founded in 2012, that aims to lead, unite, network, and promote the growth of Africa's organic sector. With 27-member countries. The network focuses on policy dialogue, capacity building, information dissemination, and organic value chain development and trade, collaborating closely with organizations such as IFOAM International and various national, regional, and international networks.



His presentation highlighted that Africa possesses over half of the world's arable land, totalling to an estimated 600 million hectares, with 33 million smallholder farms playing a significant role in providing approximately 70% of the continent's food supply. He also indicated that the food system in Africa is characterized by diversity and driven by farmers who engage in seed saving, exchange, and sales, contributing to the continent's status as the most biodiverse in terms of agriculture. As a result, the continent is building closer ties with the EU in ensuring organic products growth. Results so far include the European Union being the major export destination for Africa's organic products followed by the US with a wide range of food products and other benefits in terms of trade and investment among the two continents.



*An impression of the Organic Agriculture Situation that Africa relates mostly with the EU Market.*

As such, if the proposed Plant Reproductive Materials regulations if passed in its current form, it is likely to trigger calls for harmonization of seed policies and laws in Africa to ensure trade continuity, failure resulting in reduced trade – volume, value and diversity. A replica situation, in solidarity with the concerns raised by the EU farmers will affect the African food system. Some of the likely effects therefore include;

- Farmers will be disrupted from saving, exchanging and freely selling their seeds while multinationals would be empowered.
- Loss of incomes and livelihoods for many farmers as the farming activity gets more regulated and expensive.
- Loss of agricultural biodiversity as the system orients towards DUS standards and more commercial interests. Thus, a likelihood of increased exposure to climate change effects and land degradation
- Organic agriculture /Sustainable Agriculture in Africa has so far demonstrated enormous social, economic and environmental benefits and is a sure avenue for African farmers and entrepreneurs to make money;
- Dent the EU-Africa trading relationship and reverse the positive trends in OA in Africa following the high demands for aligning with EU criterion.
- Need to protect the rights of farmers to seed and balance food sovereignty and seed needs.
- Call for further consultations of key stakeholders – farmers and other organic actors in the EU.

- Ensure strict regulation of new genomic techniques and GMOs.

### 2.1.7 Plenary Discussion of presentation 2.1.4 to 2.1.6

During the discussion, many participants appreciated the presenters and organisers of the webinar, with some wondering how they can join this advocacy journey, the next steps among other pertinent questions.

For instance, Ms. Betty Aguti from Caritas wondered “What is the next best step? Other than the EU level how can we make sure the regional and local levels are involved and working together? How do we consolidate and amplify this voice in Africa and beyond? How can we do that? Apart from online discussions how can we meet and have a discussion on this? What other different actions are we going to take this time?”. She complimented the questions sharing about her more than 13 years involvement in the discussion on seeds and GMOs and how the journey continues to have both successes and setbacks.

Betty’s set of questions were followed by Mr. Aijuka Joshua of PELUM Uganda who also emphasized the need to further this important discussion to other people around the continent.



He asked “How do we create avenues where we not only engaging with like-minded individuals but also effectively communicate our agenda to those who need to

be periodically informed about safeguarding farmer rights? How can we reach out to those who hold different perspectives, particularly lawmakers, and persuade them to align with our views?”

Other participants from Malawi noted that this discussion should be taken to farmers as well. There should be other discussions to do more actions such as marching and demonstrating to achieve all our goals and pass the message. How are we planning to do that? She asked.

In response to some of the questions, Mr. Hannington Owegi the Secretary General of the PELUM Association indicated that the PELUM Association in partnership with her partners are currently planning numerous actions concerning the seed issues. These actions include not only online meetings but also efforts to organize a meeting in Tanzania in September 2024, with a





focus on engaging the East Africa Parliament and many other interventions that will be communicated.

He also appreciated the participants for attending actively and the presenters for the highly informative presentations.

In the webinar chats, complimentary discussions were ongoing with

**Bram Jacobs 11:33 wrote;**

‘From Fulya and Karin, we saw that the proposal has been amended and improved quite a bit, with positive clauses. However, from the presentation of Greet, we see that there is a lot of concern around the administrative burden. Even with positive amendments, can the administrative load become the primary hurdle for seed initiatives?’

**Christine Kiconco 11:46 wrote;**

This proposed regulation as it now will empower the multinationals giving them almost total control of food systems leaving most of small-scale farmers and developing countries much more vulnerable. I think it will make us more poor

**Greet Lambrecht 11:46 wrote;**

The administration burden is an item for the whole community and also for us. We see young people going on with their young seed initiative, but it costs a lot of energy we would like to put in in the practical, basic work.

**Patricia. Verbauwhede 11:50 wrote;**

Karin and Fulya: what could be the main points we still have to raise towards the next phase of the legislative process?

**Fulya BATUR 11:50 wrote;**

A lot of amendments were tabled before the European Parliament to ease out the administrative burden linked to seed marketing. Some made it through (but not all). Furthermore, the heavy administrative burden coming from the Plant Health Regulation 2016/2031 will continue to apply.

**Anonymous participant wrote;**

Thanks for this feedback! Is this included then just as an exception / annex to the main regulations, or supported through a separate regulatory framework?

**Fulya BATUR 11:54 wrote;**

In the immediate future (before the end of April), the most important thing will be to fight the push that will come from the seed industry to kill off the good developments made in the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, especially regarding farmers' seeds exchange and sale.

In the medium term, it would be beneficial to generally raise awareness on the importance on farmer seed systems, and the need for e for legislation that does not restrict human rights to seeds, but rather respect and support them

**Pessa Kussaga (PELUM Tanzania) 12:03 wrote;**

Currently most of the farmers seeds have been contaminated due to no demarcation between the farmer seeds and improved seed. as seed stakeholders we need to concentrate to stabilize the production of farmers seeds by purifying and characteristics.

**2.1.8 Closure**

The webinar was closed following a recap of the webinar objective’s, topics, presentations and highlight of key issues learned and raised. The PELUM Association moderators Juliet and Muketoi, expressed gratitude to all presenters, participants, funders, team members behind the scene for their meaningful engagement, insightful presentations, valuable time and resources.



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