

# Preface



*“In a true sense we have with us a treasure of valuable agrobiodiversity that we have not explored scientifically yet.”*

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

The Delhi Declaration on Agrobiodiversity Management, adopted at the first International Agrobiodiversity Congress, held in November 2016, calls for “an agrobiodiversity index to help monitor conservation and use of agrobiodiversity.”

The book is the first step in the process of creating such an index, which can measure agricultural biodiversity across different dimensions. The concept grew from the observation – based on a scientific paper on levels of crop diversity produced compared to levels of crop diversity imported – that juxtaposing data from very different fields connected with agricultural biodiversity can yield novel and practical insights. There is a need to measure and understand biodiversity in rapid, cost-efficient ways, going beyond just numbers, to connect also with policy decisions by countries and companies on best practices to foster diversity. Expected benefits are being able to identify and steer opportunities for change towards sustainable food systems, and being able to better measure and manage progress towards global targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Private companies and finance

institutions are also interested in its applicability to measure the sustainability of investments, green bonds and company purchasing policies, while farmer organizations and consumer associations can use it to influence programmes and policies

There is no shortage of data. Indeed there is a huge, and growing, number of datasets on agricultural biodiversity, collected at different scales across different dimensions. The question is how to choose which to use in the Agrobiodiversity Index in order to draw insights for action. In this book, we summarize evidence on the contribution of agricultural biodiversity to four interconnected dimensions:

- Diverse, healthy diets
- Multiple benefits in sustainable farming systems
- Seed systems delivering crop diversity for sustainable food systems
- Conserving agricultural biodiversity for use in sustainable food systems

Within each dimension, agricultural biodiversity scientists reviewed the scientific literature to identify evidence for the most salient aspects of each dimension with respect to agricultural biodiversity. These aspects provide a starting point for identifying indicators for the Agrobiodiversity Index, which will be tested and validated in the months to come. The book provides an overview of evidence which scholars and practitioners alike will find useful in our joint quest to use agricultural biodiversity in food systems that are sustainable.

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