

IMPACTS OF THE HARMONISATION OF SEED LAWS ON FMSS AND SMALL-SCALE FARMERS

Harmonised seed laws value only those seeds that are developed for industrial or commercial agriculture within a particular region. They deny smallholders within a region the opportunity and support to operate within other types of agriculture, such as traditional agriculture or agro-ecology.



Harmonised seed laws do not make any provision for farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS) and the varieties produced by local farmers. This could have a major negative impact on farmers' local varieties and landraces on a regional scale, which have already begun to disappear.

Harmonisation will create bigger regional seed markets, destroy local seed companies and increase the spread of improved certified seed within a region. This means that smallholder farmers will be forced to purchase costly improved seed, season after season.

Harmonised seed laws do not allow smallholder farmers to trade or exchange farm-saved seed and local varieties across country borders and within regional blocs. Farmers may get into serious trouble if they transport exchanged seed across borders without the necessary permits. However, harmonised seed laws do not prohibit private companies from stealing traditional knowledge and seed from local farmers in order to develop improved varieties, which they can then sell back to the farmers at high costs.

