

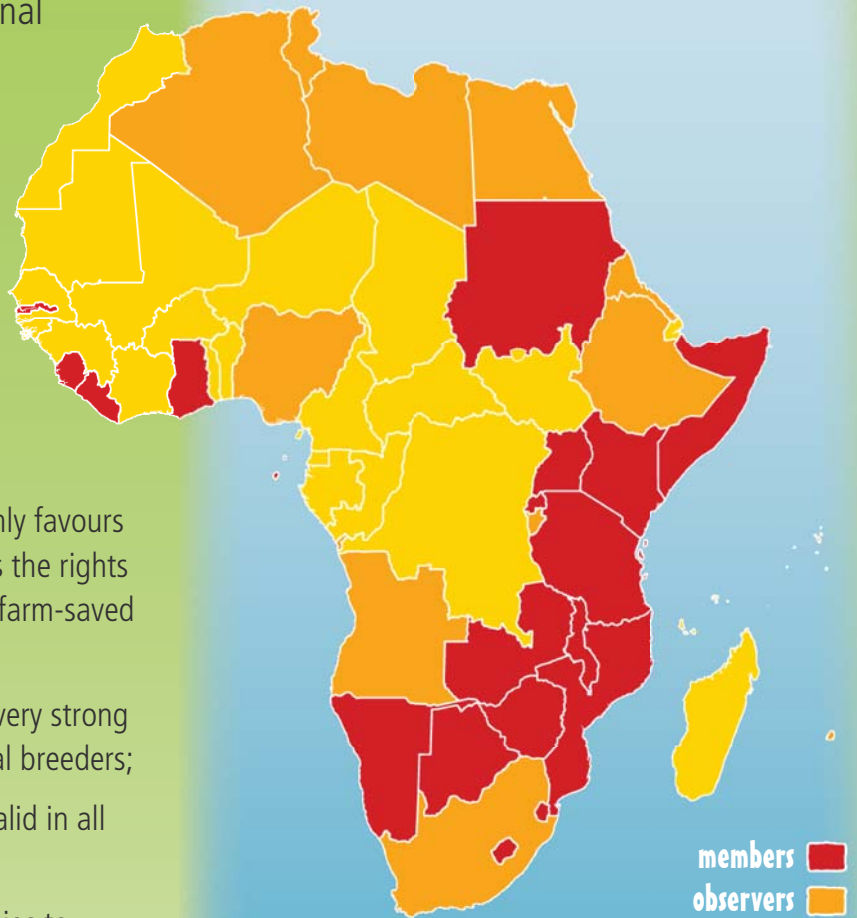
# ARIPO: HARMONISATION OF PLANT VARIETY PROTECTION IN AFRICA

For the past few years, the Secretariat and 19 member states of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO) have been developing a harmonised law called the **Protocol on Plant Variety Protection (PVP)**. This Protocol is based on UPOV 1991\* and was adopted in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 2015.

The ARIPO PVP Protocol:

- ◆ puts in place a regional PVP system that only favours commercial plant breeders and undermines the rights of farmers to freely use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed of a protected variety;
- ◆ gives powers to the ARIPO Office to grant very strong Plant Breeders' Rights (PBRs) to commercial breeders;
- ◆ makes PBRs granted by the ARIPO Office valid in all ARIPO member states;
- ◆ makes it very easy for foreign seed companies to take over Africa's seed systems and illegally use local varieties; and
- ◆ replaces national PBR laws and systems.

The Protocol takes away the powers of governments to protect farmers' rights in relation to use of protected varieties. It does not recognise the diversity of smallholder farmers' seed systems or the importance of local seed sovereignty. The process of developing the Protocol was not honest or transparent, and excluded farmers, while including the seed industry and various foreign entities.



In order to protect farmers' rights, we must ensure that members of ARIPO **DO NOT** ratify (endorse) the Protocol and become Contracting Parties to the Protocol. If this happens, the Protocol will become legally binding on farmers.

\* UPOV 1991 is an International Convention developed by European plant breeders for highly industrialised agriculture systems.

