



# Collective Action on Forgotten Foods

*A Collective Action within Key Focus Area (KFA) 1: Empowering Farmers at the Center of Innovation*

The pervasive homogenization of global food production has had severe repercussions on people's lives in both the developing and developed world. Production systems are increasingly more vulnerable to climate change and other shocks, while consumers are left with fewer choices for nutritious and healthy diets.

"Forgotten Foods" are derived from a diversified set of Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) conserved and improved by farmers for centuries, but currently underutilized. They provide vital nutrition for local communities, contribute to global food security, generate environmental services and improve communities' livelihoods through additional income derived from their commercialization.

Though there are hundreds of such locally developed and cultivated crops around the world, formal research systems now focus on improving four main staple crops to feed the world. Nevertheless, many countries are still endowed with hundreds of nutritious and resilient food crops.

**"When crops that could contribute to better food, health and income are abandoned by communities, marginalized by agriculture, ignored by research and absent by consumers' diets, the entire world loses".  
(Biodiversity International)**



Focusing on Forgotten Foods and crops can help strengthen the local knowledge that supports them, as well as the coping strategies, resilience and livelihoods of the populations living in those areas. Beyond this, these actions can contribute to more adapted and adoptable support services, and to mitigating and adapting to climate impacts.

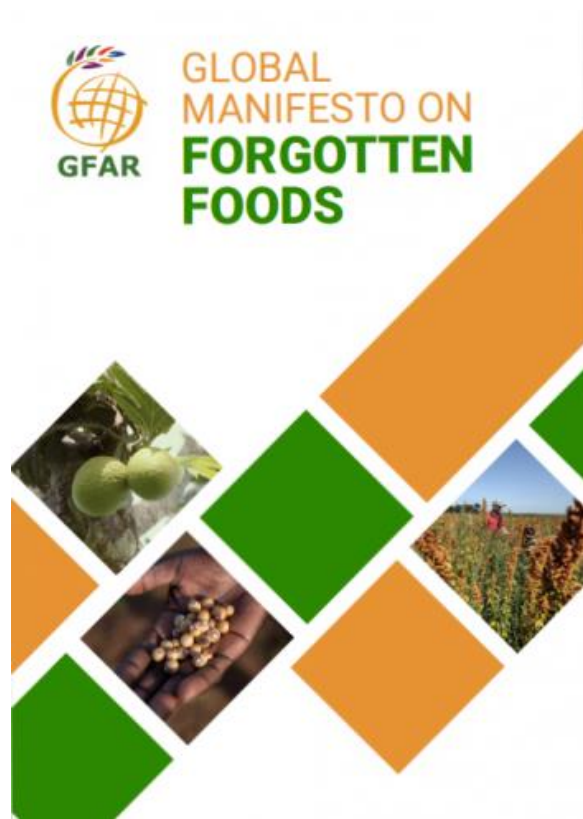
## Global Manifesto on Forgotten Foods

The "Manifesto for a new vision of research and innovation systems to support Forgotten Foods", aims at bringing together the vision and intentions of a vast group of diverse actors on the role and potential of Forgotten Foods. These actors are joining forces to reach a consensus on the transformations at local, national, regional and global levels needed for a paradigm shift to enhance bio-cultural diversity and leverage investment in these life-saving crops.

There is a double potential in the development of Forgotten Foods: material and non-material. We can improve the

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livelihoods of poor farmers relying on these crops, especially women, by enhancing their value on the market, or intervening at the level of other bottlenecks along the production to consumption chain. We can also, by unveiling the rich local knowledge behind Forgotten Foods, raise farmers' awareness of what they are and what they do. This can in turn lead to the discovery of the potential of their own communities, and unlock their creativity as agents of change.

### What we're doing together

To address the problematique of Forgotten Foods, and the related neglected crops, knowledge and people, GFAR has helped mobilize among its partners a vast coalition of concerned research and innovation stakeholders in Asia Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and Near East and North Africa by engaging Regional Research Networks. The dialogues have sought to involve farmers' organizations from the beginning, as well as NGOs and civil society organizations, ensuring their views balance the perspectives of other key research and innovation actors.

Taking stock of the game-changing actions required to provide effective services to the custodians of these varieties, left behind by technological revolution and mainstream research, will be a collective effort of diverse constituencies carried out with the custodians themselves. With the Manifesto, different Regional declarations have been brought together to outline a new model of bottom-up research governance, to be translated into a Plan of Action which will be proposed to donors.

You are invited to join Partners in GFAR including Crops for the Future, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and the Regional Fora AARINENA, APAARI and FARA, in this vital Collective Action.

For more information, contact [GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org](mailto:GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org)