

Abstract:

This paper lays out the international legal framework currently governing agro-biodiversity management which emphasizes private property rights and thus provides incentives for the private sector to participate in agriculture. We argue that the attendant commercialization of agriculture has failed to protect the rights of local farmers and generally not contributed to meeting the food needs of every human being. Moreover, it has contributed to the erosion of the genetic base necessary for the further development of agro-biodiversity. We contend that the legal framework can only foster the fulfillment of everyone's food needs if agro-biodiversity is recognized as a common heritage of humankind.