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A landmark agreement for the future of grapevine conservation

Securing viticulture's genetic legacy, OIV and international treaty's collaborative pledge

Monday, December 4, 2023



In a momentous stride towards the preservation of plant genetic resources in viticulture, the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) have recently signed a Letter of Intent. This pivotal event, hosted at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters, not only symbolizes a major commitment by these

organizations but also marks a significant step forward in global agricultural sustainability efforts.

The ceremony, coinciding with the Tenth Session of the Governing Body (GB-10) of the International Treaty, saw the International Treaty Secretary Kent Nnadozie and OIV President Luigi Moio come together to endorse this crucial agreement. This Letter of Intent is a testament to the dedication of both the FAO and the OIV in leading initiatives that will shape the future of viticulture and global agriculture at large.

OIV President Moio emphasized the importance of this agreement, stating that it transcends mere formalities and embodies a robust commitment to collaboratively pursuing a sustainable future for global agriculture. Likewise, International Treaty Secretary Nnadozie highlighted the strategic importance of this collaboration in conserving plant genetic resources, promoting biodiversity, and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal 15, which focuses on halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.

The core of this Letter of Intent lies in the mutual commitment of the OIV and the International Treaty to cooperate in political, scientific, and technical domains. This cooperation is specifically aimed at the conservation and enhancement of plant genetic resources in food and agriculture, with a particular focus on sustainable practices in the viticulture sector.

This collaboration is significant as it unites the efforts of these two organizations in preserving the biodiversity of grapevines and the broader Viti vinicultural sector. The agreement encompasses several key initiatives, including capacity building, knowledge exchange, adoption of international standards, and resource provision and funding. These initiatives are designed to support the collaborative activities of both organizations and align with broader global goals, such as those outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 15.

The signing ceremony was enriched with presentations delving into the rich history and diversity of grapevines. These presentations covered a range of topics, from the conservation of ancient grapevine germplasm to the development of new, disease-resistant varieties. Speakers included Jean-Claude Ruf, Scientific Director of the OIV;

Luigi Bavaresco, Secretary of the OIV Group of Experts; Alessandro Boscaini, the 8th generation of the Boscaini family and owner of MASI Agricola S.p.a.; and Roberta Beber, Agronomist of the Technical Group at MASI Agricola. The event concluded with a wine tasting featuring selections from the Italian Masi vineyard.

Moreover, in line with resolution 8/2011 of the International Plant Treaty, the parties involved have expressed a strong interest in developing and strengthening a long-term cooperation agreement. This resolution aims to seek practical means and activities to enhance cooperation in the conservation and protection of grapevine genetic resources.

The signing of this Letter of Intent between the OIV and the International Treaty represents a significant advance in the efforts to preserve viticulture's genetic heritage. It not only ensures the conservation of diverse grape varieties but also underlines the importance of sustainable practices in viticulture, contributing to the overall health and diversity of global agriculture.