

Speech of Ms Pudi Soren at the GB9 Meeting in Delhi



Johar/Greetings to all.

My name is Pudi Soren. I live in Pahadpur village, Chakai Block in Jamui district of Bihar.

I am very grateful to the Government of India for bringing the meeting of the International Treaty to India, which has made it possible for me to meet personally the people behind the Benefit-sharing Fund project that is supporting my family and the community where I live. I am also grateful to the Secretariat of the International Treaty for inviting me to participate at the opening of the Governing Body Session, which made it possible for me to visit Delhi for the first time. I am very happy that under the benefit-sharing Fund project, my video was made and photographs were taken when I made “mandua cookies/Pithhi,” so that we could share our feelings with all of you.

I am 27 years old. I have studied till 8th standard. We have a small piece of land but we could not cultivate earlier as we did not have resources. So I had to work on the brick kiln. However,

since last three years, Upendar dada/PAIRVI gave us seeds of Mandua, Lotani and Arhar and encouraged us to do farming. Now I am proud to be a farmer. I do stitching also when I get some time. When we were children we saw mandua and Lotani too. But for many many years people have stopped its cultivation. But now, thanks to the support from the Benefit-sharing fund project and the reintroduction of oils and pulses no longer cultivated in my village, we have rediscovered and are cultivating both, mandua and Lotani. I make Mandua cookies for my children and use oil of Lotani for cooking our meals. Mandua is very nutritious and Lotani too, is better than mustard oil we get in the market. Earlier, we had to buy oil, wheat and pulses from the market spending Rs. 500-600 every month. This expense has been halved since we started growing Mandua and Lotani. I use the money saved for education of my two children. The area cultivated with pulses, oilseeds and Mandua is now growing in our village. People have started growing Mandua after 15-20 years. We farmers get seeds from our community seed bank. Now we are growing our own seeds, and return it to the seed bank when we have the harvest. Some more people have become interested in growing pulses and mandua after seeing us.

What I grow sustains my family, but in future I want to take it to market to earn some money. But there are few problems that we face as marginal farmers. Rainfall is reducing. Thankfully Mandua and Lotani can be grown with less water. When there is no rainfall like this year, irrigation becomes expensive. We grow oilseeds but have to go to the city to get the oil extracted; if there is an oil mill in the village it will be very good. Vegetables too have become expensive and we keep asking for a vegetable nursery so that we can grow our own vegetables too. I hope that projects like the one I am participating with the Benefit-sharing Fund of the Treaty will continue to support farmers in my village and farmers around the world.

Thanks and Johar!