



International Year of Millets 2023



Milletts are among the first plants to be domesticated and are considered “nutri-cereals” due to their high nutritional content. They have served as a traditional staple for hundreds of millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia for 7,000 years and are now cultivated across the world. However, their cultivation is declining in many countries, and their potential to address climate change and food security is **not being fully realized**. This is despite the fact that millets can grow on relatively poor soils and under adverse and arid conditions, with comparatively fewer inputs than other cereals.

The need to promote the diversity and nutritional and ecological benefit of millets to consumers, producers, other value chain actors, and decision makers is timely, and can improve agri-food sector linkages.

As such, a proposal for an International Year of Millets 2023 was brought forward by the **Government of India** and endorsed by Members of **FAO Governing Bodies**, as well as by the **75th Session of the UN General Assembly**.

The International Year is aimed at:

1. Elevate awareness of the contribution of millets for food and nutrition security
2. Inspire stakeholders on improving sustainable production and quality of millets, including promotion of targeted consumer demand creation activities
3. Draw focus for enhanced investment in research and development and extension services to achieve the other two aims.

United Nations

ICRISAT supported this outcome by organizing a series of meetings with the FAO to write the first case highlighting how millets are ‘good for you, the planet and the farmer’. Further, ICRISAT worked with governments in its host countries in Africa to gather support letters, while the CGIAR worked with countries in Europe and northern Africa.



ICRISAT and IYM 2023

The International Steering Committee IYM 2023 is chaired by Dr Neena Malhotra, Ambassador of India to the Republic of Italy, San Marino & UN Organizations in Rome and by Vice Chair, Director General, ICRISAT, Dr Jacqueline d'Arros Hughes. ICRISAT is also a member of the India National Committee IYM 2023.

The focus crops are the dryland small grains: **Sorghum, Pearl millet, Finger millet, Foxtail millet, Little millet, Kodo millet, Proso millet, Barnyard millet, Browntop millet, Guinea millet, Black fonio, White fonio, Raishan, Job's tears and Teff.**

ICRISAT moderated the technical segment of the opening ceremony of the International Year of Millets (IYM2023) at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome on 6 December 2022.

While sorghum, pearl millet and finger millet are ICRISAT's focus crops, our gene bank is also one of the largest repositories for small millet germplasm.

Millet Germplasm

As of 2022, ICRISAT conserves a total of **79,259** millet accessions originating from various countries and strives to support smallholder farmers with improved varieties of sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet and other minor millets.

Our **biofortified, early-maturity, disease-resistant and high-yielding millet varieties** are released to benefit dryland farmers and consumers.



42,788
accessions of **Sorghum**



24,663
accessions of **Pearl millet**



7,519
accessions of **Finger millet**



1,542
accessions of **Foxtail millet**



849
accessions of **Proso millet**



473
accessions of **Little millet**



665
accessions of **Kodo millet**



749
accessions of **Barnyard millet**

