



## MEETING BETWEEN OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND FARMERS' AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS REGARDING THE EPA AND UPOV IN MADAGASCAR

The Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty had invited the organisations that co-signed the 'Alert to the Malagasy People' regarding the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union – published by farmers' and civil society organisations on 5 June 2026 (1) – to meet with him. The meeting took place on Wednesday 1 July 2026 in Antananarivo. Numerous directors and senior officials from the ministry attended the meeting. As for the organisations, some were physically present in the ministry's meeting room, such as the leaders of several farmers' organisations, whilst others participated remotely from other cities.

Minister Ramindo Gaëtan began his address by congratulating the organisations that had made a point of defending farmers' rights through this Alert. He then responded to the various questions raised and encouraged more frequent engagement, dialogue and collaboration between the organisations and ministry officials. In particular, he mentioned that, as citizens contribute to their salaries, people should not hesitate to come and see them or ring them if necessary.

The organisations sought clarification on various issues and received answers. As the Minister had indicated that he would then have to leave to attend a Cabinet meeting, the duration of the discussions was limited; this first meeting was intended to be a preliminary one. The organisations therefore deliberately refrained from engaging in an in-depth discussion on all the points and chose instead to focus on listening attentively.

### The urgent and crucial issues on the agenda for this meeting were the EPA (2) and UPOV (3)

Regarding the preparation of the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union (EPA), the organisations lamented that farmers had not been involved in the process. The Minister pointed out that one organisation was invited but did not respond.

On the subject of seeds, the Minister stated that Madagascar was not a member of UPOV, but had, however, ratified the ITPGRFA (4). Madagascar does not have a 'plant variety rights law' that protects seed 'inventors' (5) and has not yet begun drafting such legislation. Furthermore, Madagascar supports the complete freedom of Malagasy farmers to choose the seeds they wish to use.

The Minister responded favorably to the organizations' insistent request to see the EPA in the version signed on June 10, 2026, as it is essential to examine the details in order to understand without ambiguity:

- \* whether the signed agreement allows farmers to freely use and reproduce seeds,
- \* whether it contains recommendations regarding the adoption by Madagascar of a law on "plant varieties,"
- \* or whether it was the European Union's initial proposal during the negotiations—stipulating that "Each Party shall protect plant variety rights in accordance with the Convention of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), as revised in Geneva on March 19, 1991" (6) —that was signed.

The Malagasy population must indeed be informed of the full content of the EPA, as it covers numerous economic sectors and, above all, impacts the fundamental right of farmers—who make up the majority of Madagascar's population and ensure the Malagasy people's right to food—to use seeds freely.

**The key takeaway was the emphasis placed by ministry officials and these farmers' and civil society associations on the need for dialogue and collaboration at an early stage whenever important decisions regarding the development of farmers, agriculture, and food production need to be made.**

02 July 2026

### Signatories

- Centre de Recherches et d'Appui pour les Alternatives de Développement – CRAAD-OI
- CNAF – Comité National pour l'Agriculture Familiale
- Collectif pour la défense des terres malgaches – TANY
- FVTM – Fivondronan'ny Vehivavy Tantsaha eto Madagasikara
- PLATEFORME REGIONALE SOCIETE CIVILE ALAOTRA MANGORO
- RJDD – Réseau des Jeunes pour le Développement Durable
- Association FAFAMA MORAMANGA
- FARM – Femme en Action Rurale de Madagascar
- FEKRITAMA – Confédération des Agriculteurs Malgaches
- Observatoire de la Jeunesse
- Organisation Paysanne AKOTRY
- Tantsaha Mivoatsy

### References

(1) <https://terresmalgaches.info/collectif-tany-food-sovereignty-madagascar-economic-partnership-agreement/>

(2) EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) between the European Union and four Indian Ocean islands, including Madagascar, signed on June 10, 2026: [https://ue-madagascar.org/news\\_articles/62](https://ue-madagascar.org/news_articles/62)

(3) UPOV - *the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants* - is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to safeguarding companies and the results of seed research. It strengthens and protects intellectual property rights. Consequently, if farmers use, reproduce, or exchange seeds governed by UPOV with other farmers, they must purchase them or pay royalties to the party that claimed to have invented the seeds. Farmers who failed to comply with these rules have faced severe penalties.

(4) The ITPGRFA—or *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, governed by the FAO—was ratified by the Malagasy State in March 2006 to defend the rights of farmers, particularly regarding seeds.

(5) The "Plant Breeders' Rights Act" is a law that protects the rights of seed developers.

(6) <https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/09242a36-a438-40fd-a7af-fe32e36cbd0e/library/21e92e69-ca78-4221-a07e-95cff9b76ce5/details>:

Here is the excerpt from the text at this link, in English: *"Each Party shall protect plant varieties rights in accordance with the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) as lastly revised in Geneva on 19 March 1991"*.