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PRESS RELEASE

CropLife Africa Middle East launched to represent plant science industry

Today saw the launch of a new regional trade association, CropLife Africa Middle East to represent the plant science industry. The new association, which developed from the CropLife International Africa/Middle East Working Group, was officially inaugurated in Amman, Jordan at a meeting of its founding members.

The membership of the new regional association is made up of over 25 national industry associations and 11 of the world's leading plant science industry companies*.

CropLife Africa Middle East will operate from offices in Amman and several regional hubs working together for sustainable agriculture with relevant authorities, food chain stakeholders, non-government organisations (NGOs), farmers and growers, related trade associations and civil society.

Mr Rudolph Guyer, General Manager, Middle East & North Africa for Syngenta and the new Chairman of CropLife Africa Middle East said, "We are proud and honoured to join the global association, CropLife International, as a full member with the same rights and duties as the other regional associations in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

"The formation of CropLife Africa Middle East clearly demonstrates the continued interest and commitment of our industry to the countries and people of this continent.

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"The chosen structure of the new association with a differentiated membership will ensure an adequate link into the global industry network and allow us to address flexibly and effectively issues and priorities at sub-regional and local levels."

CropLife Africa Middle East is a member of CropLife International, the global trade federation based in Brussels, Belgium. Christian Verschueren, Director General of CropLife International attended the launch and said, "I am delighted that the Africa and Middle East regional group has decided to set up an autonomous association and adopt the CropLife brand. CropLife International is looking forward to providing support for its regional and national associations in any way that it can.

"There is a renewed willingness in the plant science industry to reach out to our stakeholders, become more transparent and engage in meaningful dialogue, properly explaining the benefits of our technology. CropLife is more than just a name and logo, it involves a new attitude of openness, respect and dialogue."

CropLife Africa Middle East, in the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to be held in Johannesburg in August, will continue to develop working partnerships throughout the region to create opportunities for sustainable agriculture**.

"We have many working examples of partnership initiatives in both Africa and the Middle East where the industry has teamed up with local authorities, NGOs and farmers to demonstrate to communities both the benefits and risks involved with using our products," said Mr Guyer.

The new association will cover many issues in both a local and global context ranging from encouraging free trade, science-based regulatory harmonisation, intellectual property rights and the safe use of crop protection products and disposal of obsolete stocks.

The first industry sponsored Safe Use Project started as a pilot scheme in Kenya in 1991 and has spread throughout Africa training over 1 million farmers and agricultural workers. "Initiatives such as this should lead to better agricultural practices and in this case help lay the foundations for a more sustainable agricultural system," said Christian Verschueren.

Mr Guyer added, "Much of our region, especially in the Middle East, produces high quality produce often under a great deal of pressure from natural forces. The types of agricultural technology provided by our member companies are vital to securing a sustainable food supply in the region. We see it as our role to encourage a well balanced regulatory and business environment whilst ensuring adequate stewardship of the products from their manufacture, marketing, transport, storage, use and disposal."

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Notes to Editors:

* CropLife Africa & Middle East member associations are: UPAC (Cameroun), CropLife Egypt (Egypt), EACA (Ethiopia), AAG (Ghana), UNIPHYTO (Ivory Coast), AMATPA (Jordan), AAK (Kenya), ASSPLANTE (Lebanon), PHYTOMAD (Madagascar), PSAM (Malawi), ADPA (Mali), AMIPHY (Morocco), AVPAN (Namibia), AAN (Nigeria), SAC (Saudi Arabia), AVCASA (South Africa), SAGA (Sudan), AAT (Tanzania), ARPP (Tunisia), CPAU (Uganda), Emirates Crop Protection Working Group (UAE), YATAM (Yemen), ZAA (Zambia), ACIA (Zimbabwe).
CropLife Africa & Middle East company members are: Aventis CropScience, BASF, Bayer, Dow AgroSciences, Dupont, FMC, Makhteshim Agan, Monsanto, Sipcam, Sumitomo, and Syngenta.

**Copies of the CropLife International publication "Creating Opportunities for Sustainable Agriculture", which outlines various case studies from around the world can be obtained by contacting CropLife International.

CropLife Africa & Middle East promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products and their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production. CropLife Africa & Middle East is a member of CropLife International. CropLife International's member companies strongly support the implementation of Integrated Pest Management and farmer and distributor training. Initiatives such as the Safe Use Projects, container management schemes and individual company global stewardship programmes are practical examples of how the plant science industry is investing in training and education.

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