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Media Release

More training and education for developing country farmers is key to improved health & safety

Training and education, along with science-based and properly enforced regulation remains key to further improving occupational safety for farmers using crop protection products in developing countries. Governments, regulatory authorities, NGOs and industry all have to cooperate to further improve occupational safety for farmers in developing countries. CropLife International will be stating this at the upcoming Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS)*, Bangkok, November 1-7.

"We are committed to continuing and extending our work on education and training, in partnership with other stakeholders, to minimise possible risks. We have a track record of working together on complex issues to provide solutions; we have training programmes on Safe Use** and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and in August we announced a doubling of our commitment to help clean up obsolete pesticide stocks throughout Africa***. Our industry also has extensive container recycling programmes. We will continue to further improve these programmes," said Christian Verschueren, CropLife International Director General.

In addition to education and training, the R&D-driven plant science industry has invested considerably in improving farmer safety through new chemistries, easy-to-use formulations, the inclusion of agents to prevent accidental ingestion, and novel packaging.

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The industry is also committed to further developing sound risk assessment, risk management and risk reduction measures in developing countries and economies in transition for the use of acutely toxic pesticides and ensuring that such solutions are practical and sustainable. "We look forward to discussing these options with the IFCS and its delegates in November," said Christian Verschueren.

In line with this approach, the leading companies in CropLife International are committed to constantly monitor the use of their products in the market and to take appropriate actions if non-intentional incidents affecting human health occur. These can range from changing label warnings and use statements to use restrictions and even product withdrawal, depending on the circumstances of each individual case.

However, CropLife International warns against excessively restrictive measures that would be disproportionate to the issue. "We recognise that the safe management of pesticides represents a significant challenge in these countries; however, the most reliable data from a range of developing countries indicate that serious, non-intentional, occupational injuries due to crop protection products are extremely rare. Overall, we should strike an appropriate balance in the measures that we, or governments are taking. We should also not forget that without crop protection products sustainable and economically viable farming would be impossible," explained Christian Verschueren.

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Notes to Editors:

[About CropLife International](#)

CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of regional and national associations in 87 countries, led by companies such as BASF, Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, Dupont, FMC, Monsanto, Sumitomo and Syngenta. CropLife International promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products and their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production.

[*About the IFCS Forum](#)

At the Intergovernmental Chemical Safety Forum III (IFCS) meeting in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil in 2000, pesticide poisoning was identified as a priority for action. Forum III requested a body of the IFCS, the Forum Standing Committee (FSC), to provide "initial input on the extent of the

problem of acutely toxic pesticides, and provide guidance for sound risk management and reduction, including options for phasing out (banning) where appropriate, and report to Forum IV." The report was to focus on the situation in developing countries or, Economies In Transition (EITS). The FSC has produced a paper, "Acutely Toxic Pesticides, Initial Input on Extent of Problem and Guidance for Risk Management."

****About CropLife International's stewardship programmes/Safe Use**

To date programmes supported by CropLife International (the Safe Use Initiative) have trained more than 2.5 million farmers and members of their communities in over 80 countries in the safe and effective use of crop protection products.

*****African Stockpiles Programme**

In August 2003 The plant science industry made a commitment of up to \$30 million to the African Stockpiles Programme to help clean up obsolete pesticide stocks throughout Africa.

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