Press Release

Plant Science Industry welcomes International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources

Brussels, 30 June 2004 --- CropLife International welcomes the entry into force of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources as a positive step to facilitating agricultural research in order to achieve sustainable agriculture.

Developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and currently ratified by 54 countries, the Treaty allows multilateral access to genetic resources for 64 of the most important food and forage crops. It also provides a framework for the Global Crop Diversity Trust, an endowment that will provide a permanent source of funding for crop diversity collections around the world.

Continued research on crop genetic diversity allows for improvements in agricultural performance and food security. Geoffrey Hawtin, Interim Executive Secretary for the Global Crop Diversity Trust* stated at the CropLife International 2004 Annual Conference**: “Safeguarding genetic diversity is the foundation of current and future food and nutritional security, it is a key resource underpinning sustainable agricultural development and environmental protection, it is crucial to the ability of agriculture to adapt to environmental and other changes, and it is a major contributor to alleviating poverty…Public-private partnerships may also be effective in addressing the urgent global need to safeguard genetic diversity.”

Christian Verschueren, Director General of CropLife International stated: “The plant science industry is committed to continuous efforts to improve agricultural productivity and achieve food security, and we support the principles of the Treaty to conserve, exchange and sustainably use the world’s valuable plant genetic resources. We have demonstrated this commitment through the financial support for the Global Crop Diversity Trust by some companies represented by CropLife International. We will continue to work towards more public-private partnerships in this domain.”

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Note to Editors:
CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of regional and national associations in 88 countries, and is 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, their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production, and their responsible use through stewardship activities.

*More information on the Global Crop Diversity Trust can be found at: www.startwithaseed.org

**Geoffrey Hawtin’s presentation and more information about CropLife International’s 2004 Annual Conference can be accessed at: www.croplife.org

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