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PRESS RELEASE

Water and improved technology are key to sustainable agriculture and food security

"It is vital that we all work together for sustainable agriculture," said Christian Verschueren, Director General of CropLife International on the occasion of the FAO World Food Day. "With a growing world population and increased pressure on the world's natural resources, it is now more important than ever that the private sector, the public sector and civil society work in partnership. Together we must ensure that the benefits of agricultural technologies are available to all those who require them in order to achieve food security and preserve our natural resources."

To be 'food secure' means to have regular access to enough high quality-food to live an active and healthy life. More than 800 million people in the world today are not 'food secure'. Unless properly managed, access to fresh water may become a key constraint to meeting future food security.

Globally, the world has enough water, however the water is poorly distributed. Industries and households are increasingly demanding water at the expense of agriculture. Agriculture uses approximately 70% of the total amount of water withdrawn to supply our current food needs. By 2030 the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that we will require 60% more food to feed the world's growing population.

If agricultural production is to be sustainable, water resources must be used more efficiently whilst still increasing agricultural productivity.

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By using a range of agricultural techniques and technologies such as modern irrigation techniques, Integrated Pest Management and biotechnology, farmers can produce higher yields of higher quality produce whilst getting the most out of precious water supplies.

The plant science industry is ready to address the challenge of increasing agricultural productivity. By providing a range of products from seeds, chemical crop protection products and biotechnology products, the industry strives to help farmers increase the quality and yields of their produce using the same amount of land. To reach the market all these products must be exhaustively tested in the laboratory and in the field, to ensure that they do not unacceptably impact on non-targeted species, soil, air or water.

Access to products is important, but is not enough. Farmers need to have access to knowledge and information to help them make the correct choices to improve their livelihoods. Although thoroughly tested, it is also important that plant science products are used correctly in the field. CropLife International has a range of information resources to help farmers and growers in the field use agricultural technologies in a manner compatible with sustainable agriculture.

One such information resource is agLe@rn*. The agLe@rn programme, presented and accepted as a public/private partnership initiative at the World Summit for Sustainable Development, is a web-based educational tool designed to improve the knowledge and skills related to sustainable agriculture amongst agricultural professionals. Various interactive, online courses cover a range of subjects such as:

- Digital literacy for agricultural professionals
- Integrated Pest Management
- Responsible use of agrochemicals

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The agLe@rn programme was developed in the Asia Pacific region in 2001 and is run by the Asia Pacific Regional Technology Centre (APRTC), a non-profit organisation, in partnership with the WorldView International Foundation**.

As well this web-based tool, CropLife International also publishes a range of printed guidance documents*** for agricultural workers on subjects such as:

- Guidelines for the safe and effective use of crop protection products
- Guidelines for the safe warehousing of crop protection products
- Guidelines for the safe formulation and packing of crop protection products
- Guidelines for emergency measures in cases of crop protection products poisoning
- Guidelines for the safe transport of crop protection products
- Guidelines on the implementation of the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides

CropLife International is also involved in a range of public/private partnerships worldwide focusing on the following key areas:

- Capacity building through the transfer of knowledge
- Technology development and transfer
- Poverty alleviation and food security through economic development
- Multi-stakeholder processes and partnerships to identify solutions
- Protecting and enhancing the environment

Full details of these public/private partnerships can be found on our website at www.croplife.org in the sustainable agriculture section. Case studies are also contained in the CropLife International publication "Creating Opportunities for Sustainable Agriculture"****.

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Notes to Editors:

*For more information on the agLe@rn programme visit: <http://www.aprtc.org>

**WorldView International Foundation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to using media technology to disseminate environmental information in developing countries.

***To obtain printed copies of any CropLife International Guideline document please email croplife@croplife.org with your request or fax CropLife at +32 2 542 1419. There is no charge for single copies to individuals from developing countries or NGOs.

****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 at email: croplife@croplife.org or can be viewed on-line at www.croplife.org

CropLife International's member companies strongly support the implementation of Integrated Pest Management and have a long-standing commitment to farmer and distributor training. Initiatives such as the Safe Use Projects, container management schemes and stewardship programmes are practical examples of how the plant science industry is investing in training and education.

CropLife International is the global federation representing the plant science industry. It supports a network of nearly 100 regional and national associations and their member companies worldwide, led by companies such as BASF, BayerCropScience, 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.

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