



## CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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### **Farmers now guaranteed access to biodiversity and sharing of benefits as major crop gene banks are brought under international treaty.**

*Head of Convention on Biological Diversity welcomes agreement.*

*Montreal 23 October 2006* – An agreement to bring the genebank collections of international agricultural research centres into the framework of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources will help ensure that the world's farmers have the resources to improve the sustainability of agricultural production even as they adapt to climate change and other challenges, says the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as he welcomed the agreements signed on World Food Day.

"The seeds and planting material held in these collections is a vital resource for improving agricultural production, making it is sustainable, and helping us adapt to climate change and other new challenges" said Ahmed Djoghlaf.

Collectively, the international agricultural research centres hold the world's most comprehensive and representative collections of plant genetic resources of the food and agricultural species.

"Farmers of the world and their communities will now also be able to profit from the commercialization of seeds and plant varieties that they nurture," said Mr. Djoghlaf. "This will conserve biodiversity, help to support rural livelihoods and therefore combat poverty."

The International Treaty guarantees that farmers and plant breeders worldwide will have access to the plant genetic resources of the world's major food crops, such as rice, wheat, maize, sorghum and millets. It also includes an innovative multilateral system to share benefits that arise from the commercialization of new varieties among the farmers and communities that maintain and develop the genetic resources.

The Treaty entered into force in 2004 and has been welcomed by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

**Information for Journalists:** The Convention on Biological Diversity is one of the most broadly subscribed international environmental treaties in the world. Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro Brazil in 1992, it currently has 188 Parties—187 States and the European Community— who have committed themselves to its three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

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