Responding to the challenges of a changing world: The role of new plant varieties and high quality seed in agriculture

FAO, Rome, September 8-10, 2009

www.worldseedconference.org
A changing world carries many challenges for agriculture. At the global level, increasing population, climate change, parallel demands for food and energy production and evolving human needs require a response in agricultural production, often at the same time as land and inputs become increasingly scarce and expensive. Agriculture needs to provide food security and economic development in the context of these global challenges by responding at the local, national and regional level. Success in responding to these challenges relies on dynamic and sustainable agriculture. This conference is intended to raise awareness of the importance of new plant varieties and high quality seed in this context and considers how governments can develop an enabling environment to encourage plant breeding and the production and distribution of high quality seed.

**Aim**

The conference will comprise a two-day “Expert Forum”, followed by a one-day “Policy Forum”.

**Expert Forum**

The aim of the Expert Forum is to provide information and facilitate discussion on means of encouraging the development of new plant varieties and the production and distribution of high quality seed in order to meet the demands of a changing world. In particular, the Expert Forum will explore the:

- importance of new plant varieties in responding to evolving needs;
- role of multilateral cooperation in facilitating access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and ensuring fair and equitable benefit sharing;
- role of new technologies and methodologies in plant breeding;
- need for intellectual property protection to encourage the development of new plant varieties;
- scope for public/private partnerships;
- role of international certification in facilitating trade and market development;
- importance of high quality seed and seed treatment;
- benefits of effective systems of seed production and distribution;
- need for standardisation of methodologies in seed testing; and
- mechanisms for reducing technical barriers to trade and facilitating trade in seed.

These aspects will be considered in relation to a changing world, including a changing environment, market developments and evolving human needs, and their role in achieving future food security and economic development, especially in developing countries.

**Policy Forum**

The Policy Forum will review the conclusions of the Expert Forum on means to provide an enabling environment that encourages the development of new varieties and facilitates the production and distribution of high quality seed.

**Audience**

This event is aimed at policy makers, government officials, plant breeders, seed specialists, researchers, farmers’ organizations and consumer organizations.

**Structure**

The Conference will be held over three days, as follows:
- September 8, 9: Expert Forum
- September 10: Policy Forum

The Expert Forum will be in English only. The Policy Forum will have simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, and Spanish.

**To register**

Registration is required (cost € 125). In order to participate, please register on-line at worldseedconference.org. Registration will be open from March 30, 2009.

**Conference presentations and proceedings**

Copies of all presentations will be published on the Conference website. The proceedings will be published after the Conference.
08.00 – 17.00 Registration

09.00 Welcome by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

09.10 Opening address by Mr. Bernard Le Buane, Chairman of the Organising Committee

Session 1. The role of plant breeding in meeting the multiple challenges of a fast-changing world
Chairperson: Mr. Orlando de Ponti, President of the International Seed Federation (ISF)

09.30 The evolution and contribution of plant breeding to global agriculture
Mr. Marcel Bruins, Secretary General, ISF

09.55 Anticipated demands and challenges to plant breeding and related technologies into the future
Mr. Marcel Busuma Kanungwe, Director, Pannar Seed Ltd. (Zambia)

10.20 Effective use of modern biotechnology and molecular breeding and associated methods as breeding tools
Mrs. Usha Barwale Zehr, Director of Research, Mahyco (India)

10.45 The opportunities presented by modern biotechnology to enhance plant breeding — what’s in the pipeline?
Mr. William S. Niebur, DuPont Vice President, Crop Genetics Research & Development, Pioneer Hi Bred International, Inc., A DuPont Company (United States of America)

11.10 Building capacity for plant breeding in developing countries
Mr. Elcio Guimaraes, Senior Officer (Cereals and Crop Breeding), Crop and Grassland Service (AGPC), FAO

11.35 Discussion

11.50 Summary by Chairperson

12.00 Lunch

Session 2. The importance of plant genetic resources for plant breeding: access and benefit sharing
Chairperson: High-level representative from Contracting Parties of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) (tbc)

13.00 The use of plant genetic resources in plant breeding
Ms. Anke van den Hurk, Senior adviser biotechnology, biodiversity and organic seeds, Plantum NL (Netherlands)

13.25 Facilitating access and ensuring benefit sharing globally: the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on PGRFA
Chair of the Governing Body of the ITPGRFA

13.50 Exchanging material in the daily business: the operations of the Multilateral System and the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA)
Mr. Shakeel Bhatti, Secretary of the ITPGRFA

14.15 Working with the Multilateral System — experiences of a seed company
Ms. Franziska Zimmermann, Public Affairs Manager, Syngenta Switzerland

14.40 Implementing the International Treaty at the national level: what is the impact on the seed sector?
Representative of the public sector from Contracting Parties of the ITPGRFA (tbc)

15.05 Discussion

15.20 Summary by Chairperson

15.30 Coffee break

Session 3. Plant variety protection
Chairperson: Mr. Doug Waterhouse (Australia), President of the Council of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV)

16.00 Benefits of plant variety protection
Mr. Rolf Jördens, Vice Secretary General, UPOV

16.25 Key requirements for an effective system of plant variety protection
Mr. Peter Button, Technical Director, UPOV

16.50 Experiences in Kenya
Mr. Evans Sikinyi, Head, Seed Certification and Plant Variety Protection, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)

17.15 Experiences in the Republic of Korea
Mr. Chang Hyun Kim, Director General, Korea Seed & Variety Service (KSVS)

17.40 Discussion

17.55 Summary by Chairperson
Session 4. The importance of quality seed in agriculture

Chairperson: Mrs. Katalin Ertsey, President of the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and Director plant production and horticulture, National Institute for Agricultural Quality Control (OMMI) (Hungary)

09.00 What is seed quality and how to measure it?
Mrs. Alison Powell, Honorary Senior Lecturer, University of Aberdeen (United Kingdom)

09.25 The influence of seed quality on crop productivity
Mrs. Rita Zecchinelli, Head of ENSE Seed Testing Laboratory, Tavazzano (Italy)

09.50 The evolution of seed testing
Mr. Michael Muschick, Secretary General, ISTA

10.15 Building capacity in seed quality assurance in developing countries
Mr. Michael Larinde, Senior Agricultural Officer (Seed Production), Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP), Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, FAO

10.40 Raising seed quality: what is in the pipeline?
Mr. Joost van der Burg, Project staff, Chair Group Plant Production systems, Wageningen University and Research Centre (Netherlands)

11.05 Maintaining capacity in seed technology and seed testing
Mr. John Hampton, Director Bio Protection and Ecology Division, Professor of Seed Technology, Lincoln University (New Zealand)

11.30 Discussion

11.45 Summary by Chairperson

12.00 Lunch

Session 5. Facilitation of trade and market development

Chairperson: Mr. John C. Kedera, Managing Director, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) (Kenya)

13.00 Overview of the regulatory framework in seed trade
Mr. Joseph Cortes, Seed Science Center, Iowa State University (United States of America)

13.25 The role of international certification in facilitating trade and market developments
Mr. Michael Ryan, Head, OECD Codes and Schemes, Directorate for Trade and Agriculture, OECD

13.50 Phytosanitary measures and the international seed trade
Mr. Jeffery Jones, Senior Officer (Phytosanitary Capacity Building), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP), Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, FAO

14.15 Harmonization of seed testing for the facilitation of trade
Mr. Joël Léchappé, Director, National Seed Testing Station (SNES) (France)

14.40 Harmonization of the seed regulatory framework at the regional level
Mrs. Paivi Mannerkorpi, Acting Head of Section, Unit for Biotechnology and Plant Health, DG Health and Consumers, European Commission

15.05 Discussion

15.20 Summary by Chairperson

18.00 Conference gala dinner
09.00 Welcome by Mr. Bernard Le Buanec, Chairman of the Organising Committee
09.30 Welcome by Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO (tbc)
10.00 Welcome address by the Minister of Agriculture, Italy (tbc)
10.30 Key Note Speech by Mr. M. S. Swaminathan, UNESCO Chair in Ecotechnology, Member of Parliament of India and Father of the Indian Green Revolution
11.00 Conclusions of the Expert Forum
11.30 Providing an Enabling Environment (Panel discussion)
   Panel moderator
   Mr. Bernard Le Buanec
   Panel members
   Mr. Ken Ash, Director, Trade and Agriculture directorate, OECD
   Mr. Francis Gurry, Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Secretary General, UPOV (tbc)
   Mr. John C. Kedera, Managing Director, KEPHIS
   Mr. Michael Muschick, Secretary General, ISTA
   Mr. Shivaji Pandey, Director of Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP), FAO
   Ms. Esther Penunia, Secretary General, AFA-Asian Farmers’ Association for Rural Development
   Mr. Orlando de Ponti, President, ISF
   Mr. Doug Waterhouse (Australia), President of the Council, UPOV
   Representative of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) (tbc)
   Chairperson of Session 2 (tbc)
12.00 Lunch
13.30 Providing an Enabling Environment (continued)
15.00 Coffee break
15.30 Concluding remarks
16.00 Closing of the Conference