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PRESS RELEASE

Science and Technology are Key to Growing More Food

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CropLife Believes the IAASTD Report Falls Short of Goals by Overlooking the Potential of Modern Plant Science

Brussels, 15 April 2008 -- In maintaining its commitment to identifying solutions to alleviating hunger and poverty, CropLife International continues to refuse to endorse a report called the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) because of its failure to recognise the role modern plant sciences, including plant biotechnology and crop protection, can play in increasing agricultural crop productivity. The IAASTD Report [1] is the culmination of a three-year project that set out to evaluate the effectiveness of different technologies to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, health, and sustainability.

"Our industry remains committed to the original goals of the IAASTD project — to help alleviate hunger and poverty. When the IAASTD project was launched, we contributed funding and hoped that the report would provide a comprehensive and balanced review of all available agricultural technologies, including crop protection and plant biotechnology along with recognising the need for improving infrastructure and government policies to encourage agricultural productivity in developing countries," said Howard Minigh, president and CEO of CropLife International. "With all the benefits farmers have enjoyed in developed countries from plant sciences in the last several decades, it would seem only logical to consider transferring these proven technologies to resource-poor farmers. It's disappointing that a project with so much potential has fallen so short of its goals and will not be helpful to policy makers."

Other respected organisations, including the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Public Research and Regulation Initiative (PRRI) have independently reached similar conclusions and expressed dissatisfaction with the report.

The World Bank estimates that 33 countries around the world face potential social unrest because of the acute increase in food and energy prices. CropLife strongly agrees that by working with various stakeholders, the private sector can offer access to technology and science to boost crop yields sustainably.

Abating hunger is a key priority for the plant science industry, which understands that increasing agricultural productivity is an important component in addressing food insecurity. Modern plant sciences can increase crop quality and productivity in order to meet a growing world demand for food, fibre, and fuel. Increasing productivity on currently farmed land is the only way to effectively meet this challenge without ploughing under much more land. Modern technology, including crop protection products, hybrid seeds, and biotech crops have supported increased crop yields in

developing countries. This was reiterated in the World Development Report 2008 on Agriculture for Development,[2] which recognised that "science and technological innovation are critical for the agriculture-for-development agenda to succeed." The Report also acknowledged the potential plant biotechnology has on impacting many areas of agriculture, including crop and animal productivity, environmental sustainability, and consumer traits important to the poor.

Developing countries facing food insecurity stand to benefit the most from plant science technologies. Today, more than 11 million resource-poor farmers in developing countries are growing biotech crops. The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) believes the increased farmer income from biotech crops will contribute to the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty by 50 percent by 2015.

Both the President of the World Bank and the Director General of the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have recognised the need for a "Green Revolution" for Africa, including access to science and technology. The private sector is an essential partner to help make this happen. Technology providers have long worked with research teams and institutions in developing regions to identify solutions to regional agricultural challenges, such as drought, diseases, and local pests. Most recently, in March 2008, two CropLife member companies announced collaboration with the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) to provide technology to develop drought-tolerant corn. The project is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

"For the last 50 years, farmers worldwide have benefited greatly from the use of crop protection products, hybrid crops, and more recently plant biotechnology. We hope that policy makers recognise this and will not be misled by the IAASTD report," said Minigh. "Farmers across the globe should have the opportunity to access the best agricultural technologies available, and should have the choice to use the tools that best fit their farming practices."

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Notes to Editors: For additional background information on the potential of modern plant sciences, vist http://www.croplife.org/nextgeneration to view "The Next Generation 'Green Revolution."

[1] A copy of the full IAASTD report, being presented at the plenary meeting in Johannesburg, can be found online at http://www.agassessment.org/index.cfm?Page=Plenary&ItemID=2713.

[2] The World Development Report 2008 on Agriculture for Development was published in October 2007 and calls for greater investment in agriculture in developing countries. The full report can be found online at http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2008/0,,menuPK:2795178~pagePK:64167702~piPK:64167676~theSitePK:2795143,00.html