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MEDIA RELEASE

Educational partnership initiative to be presented at Jo'burg Summit reaffirms industry commitment to sustainable agriculture

At the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg next week, CropLife International will be reaffirming the plant science industry's commitment to providing access to the latest agricultural information and technologies to farmers and their communities, allowing them to make educated choices to enhance their livelihoods.

Companies from the plant science industry are involved in many multi-stakeholder development projects worldwide* that promote sustainable agricultural technologies, help farmers improve agricultural productivity, contribute to food security and alleviate poverty in developing countries.

In addition to the outcomes to be agreed by governments at the Summit (referred to as Type 1 outcomes), partnership initiatives submitted by civil society members, including the public and private sector (referred to as Type 2 outcomes), will be an important element of WSSD. CropLife International is supporting such a partnership initiative entitled "Promoting Capacity Building for Sustainable Agriculture" and has submitted agLe@rn, the centerpiece of the initiative, as a Type 2 outcome of the Summit.

About agLe@rn

The agLe@rn programme 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:

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

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**. Due to agLe@rn's value for implementing sustainable agriculture, CropLife International decided to submit and to support this partnership initiative, while helping to extend its scope and geographical outreach, so that many farmers in need of information could benefit from it.

At the Summit, the founding partner organisations of agLe@rn will seek additional partners for the initiative to insure its success. It is expected that these new partners will contribute to the initiative by designing other courses relating to sustainable agriculture or by supporting the scholarship fund.

The agLe@rn programme is another example of CropLife International's commitment to the partnership approach of building capacity amongst farmers, farmer organisations, NGOs and governmental organisations.

"Sustainable agriculture is the basis for sustainable development in many developing countries. Agricultural technologies such as chemical crop protection and agricultural biotechnology play a vital role in ensuring that agriculture is sustainable. Access to these agricultural technologies along with training and education on how to use them can greatly improve yields, livelihoods and food security for poor, rural communities in the world," according to Annik Dollacker, Chair of the CropLife International Project Team for the WSSD.

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Christian Verschueren, Director General of CropLife International said; "This Summit is a real opportunity for us to seek new partners and improve understanding of our contribution to sustainable agriculture. As well as agLe@rn, our industry is involved in many partnership initiatives around the world ranging from safe use initiatives to waste management schemes. We are committed to sustainable agriculture and willing to work together with our stakeholders to help achieve it."

CropLife International will have a booth (number 350-351) at the Summit's Ubuntu Village exhibition outlining details of the plant science industry's contribution to sustainable agriculture and commitment to partnerships.

For more information on CropLife International's activities at WSSD, case studies of sustainable agriculture and its partnership initiatives, logon to our website: www.croplife.org

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Notes to Editors:

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

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

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.

For further information contact:

Stephen Weller, CropLife International Communication Manager

Tel: +32 2 542 0413

Email: stephen@croplife.org

Carolyn Gill, CropLife International Public Relations Officer

Tel: +32 2 541 1662

Email: Carolyn@croplife.org
