



## GERMAN PLANT BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

### Press Release

## Plant Breeders strengthen the International Treaty

Bonn, 27 October 2017. With a strong private industry commitment, plant breeders all over the world have expressed their support to the International Treaty (IT - International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture) in order to emphasize the importance of a viable access to plant genetic resources. In the run-up to the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Body of the IT, which is to take place from 30 October to 3 November in Kigali (Rwanda), the industry has spoken up for a membership fee scheme. No less than 18 German companies have signed a "Declaration of Commitment" to pay a substantial amount to the IT whenever they sign a new Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA).

"In the field of plant breeding, both access to and benefit sharing for plant genetic resources between donors and users should be placed under the exclusive control of the IT. An important signal that the application area of the IT should be enlarged is the fact that also companies of the vegetable and ornamental plant breeding sector have signed the declaration", states Dr. Carl-Stephan Schäfer, Secretary General of the German Plant Breeders' Association (BDP) as an explanation of this self-commitment.

The IT of the UN FAO, the world food organisation, provides an alternative to the Nagoya Protocol which is perfectly adapted to the situation in plant breeding and agriculture. It ensures diversity and benefit sharing while offering maximum legal safety for all stakeholders. At present, the IT does not comprise all plant species or usages of plants. If we wish that the extant genetic diversity continues to be sustainably used and enhanced by plant breeders, the scope of the IT should be widened. All plant genetic resources used for breeding purposes should be subject to this instrument.

*Bonn, 30 October 2017*

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#### The German Plant Breeders' Association (BDP)

The German Plant Breeders' Association (BDP) is seated in Bonn and Berlin and represents the professional interests of its approximately 130 member companies – plant breeders and seed traders of agricultural, horticultural and ornamental plants. With its R&D to turnover ratio of 15.1 per cent, plant breeding counts among the most innovative industries in Germany. It offers employment to some 5,800 people who work to lay the basis for successful farming and all subsequent branches in the value-adding chain.