

INTERNATIONALER VERBAND
ZUM SCHUTZ VON
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GENÈVE, SCHWEIZ



UNION INTERNATIONALE
POUR LA PROTECTION
DES OBTENTIONS VÉGÉTALES
GENÈVE, SUISSE

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF
NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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UPOV MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY WITH MILESTONE 50TH ACCESSION

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), an intergovernmental organization that promotes the development of new varieties of plants, marks its 40th anniversary this month with a growing number of States acceding to the UPOV Convention. The Republic of Korea will become the 50th Contracting Party to the UPOV Convention, which was adopted on December 2, 1961, after the deposit of its instrument of accession to the UPOV Convention (1991 Act), on December 7, 2001.

“The growing membership reflected in the milestone of 50 members testifies to the benefits of a plant variety protection system in line with the UPOV Convention,” said Dr. Rolf Jördens, Vice Secretary-General of UPOV. He added, “the Convention provides breeders’ rights in the interest of society as a whole.”

The number of UPOV members has increased rapidly in recent years, growing from 20 at the end of 1992, to 50 today. A further increase in membership is expected in the near future, as 19 States or organizations have initiated with the Council of UPOV the procedure for becoming members of the Union. In addition, 39 States have been in contact with the Secretariat with a view to developing legislation in line with the UPOV Convention.

The mission of UPOV is to provide and promote an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society. New varieties of plants are one of the most powerful tools to enhance food production in a sustainable way, to increase income in the agricultural sector and to contribute to overall development.

The need to provide an incentive for breeders in the same way as for inventors and authors led to the creation of this international treaty. Ten States participated in the Diplomatic Conference that led to the adoption of the UPOV Convention of 1961, in Paris, which entered into force on August 10, 1968. The latest revision of the

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Convention, the 1991 Act, was developed to respond to technological developments in plant breeding and also to build on the experience gained from the application of the Convention. The 1991 Act of the UPOV Convention entered into force on April 24, 1998; as of today, 19 States have acceded to or ratified the 1991 Act and several States and organizations have adopted legislation in line with the 1991 Act.

The founders of the UPOV Convention sought to strike a balance between the needs of breeders, farmers and other variety users in the interest of society as a whole. The Convention, as revised in 1991, provides a modern and effective response to new developments and maintains the balance between the exclusive right of the holder of the breeder's right and free access to plant genetic resources, in the form of protected varieties, for further breeding.

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