

UPOV

INTERNATIONALER
VERBAND
ZUM SCHUTZ VON
PFLANZENZÜCHTUNGEN

GENÈVE, SCHWEIZ

UNION INTERNATIONALE
POUR LA PROTECTION
DES OBTENTIONS
VÉGÉTALES

GENÈVE, SUISSE

UNIÓN INTERNACIONAL
PARA LA PROTECCIÓN
DE LAS OBTENCIONES
VEGETALES

GINEBRA, SUIZA

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR THE PROTECTION
OF NEW VARIETIES
OF PLANTS

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

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NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL OUTLINES FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR UPOV

The new Secretary-General of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), Mr. Francis Gurry (Australia), underlined the importance of plant variety protection in promoting sustainable agriculture, food production, successful horticulture and overall economic development. UPOV is an intergovernmental organization based in Geneva that provides and promotes an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society. Mr. Gurry was appointed to this position by the UPOV Council on October 30, 2008.

In a statement to the UPOV Council, following his appointment as Secretary-General, Mr. Gurry, expressed his full commitment to serving the best interests of UPOV. He further underlined the importance of UPOV's work saying "The protection of new varieties of plants is essential in encouraging breeders to pursue and enhance their search for improved varieties with higher yield, better resistance to pests and diseases, drought and other adverse conditions." He added, "Indeed, for the benefit of society as a whole, we need to assist breeders to respond to challenges such as climate change, desertification, food security, preservation of biodiversity and shortage of energy."

Mr. Gurry, who is also Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), said that "UPOV is a modern, service-oriented organization" and that "it is a priority to maintain and enhance UPOV's services to all its members." He observed that the steady growth of UPOV membership meant a greater number of countries benefited "from international harmonization, which strengthens the quality of their plant variety protection systems and reduces costs."

Mr. Gurry said that UPOV's future strategy would focus on providing information and assistance based on information materials which offer practical guidance on the UPOV system; training and distance learning; coordination of assistance provided by UPOV and its individual members; databases that contain relevant information in an easily-accessible form; and full use of modern means of communication in order to maximize the effect of available resources.

The Secretary-General said that UPOV would also continue to address the needs of "future members, particularly developing countries, who wish to enjoy the benefits of plant variety protection and of being members of UPOV." To this end, he said that the Organization would continue to "provide assistance in the development of legislation and to provide support for the effective implementation of the UPOV system by its members".

In a move to demonstrate his support of activities of particular interest to developing countries, Mr. Gurry renounced his salary as Secretary-General of UPOV and requested that this indemnity be used by UPOV to finance such activities.

Mr. Gurry underlined the growing international interest in plant variety protection and, in particular, the recognition of UPOV as the competent international authority on matters of plant variety protection. He said it was essential for UPOV to inform other international fora about its "principles and activities in order to secure mutual supportiveness of other international instruments with the UPOV Convention."

The UPOV Council is meeting on October 30, 2008. The agenda of the meeting is available at http://www.upov.int/en/documents/c/index_c42.htm

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