

April 2011

Ruaraidh Sackville Hamilton

If you go out to talk to farmers, the poorest farmers, any farmers is: 'please can I have a better variety'? They don't always necessarily mean a more high yielding variety, they often mean a higher quality variety or something that suits their particular market so defining what is better is often quite a difficult challenge but always they want something better.

It's all important. We have in the old varieties an enormous range of diversity of genes that can help us to respond to any challenge, whether it's new diseases and different climates, but the only way to make those actually valuable is to combine them into superior combinations, to make better varieties and the more countries become developed the more they're going to rely on protection. This is the way to improve investment In, in inventing. That's what intellectual property is about isn't it, to encourage investment and it's the same with varieties; that to encourage more breeding we need to have an incentive to do the breeding, so long as there's a connection all the way through from what the farmer wants to the breeding and the marketing of the product that meets the farmer's needs and the consumer's needs, then there can only be an increasing need for UPOV; an increasing need for plant breeding. It will never end as population increases as our challenges change, the only thing we can be sure is that there will be change. We talk about climate change today but there are going to be different challenges so we're always going to have to continue plant breeding. We'll always need something like UPOV to continue promoting investment in new breeding.