

**Plant Science Industry Supports World Trade Organization Call for Sound Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

**Brussels — 14 December 2017** — CropLife International welcomes the joint statement from 17 governments, including Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Kenya, Uganda, and the United States, circulated at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, which calls to strengthen the implementation and application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). Sound, science-based implementation of SPS measures can help facilitate trade and assure farmers of market access, which allows them to choose the innovative agricultural tools, such as crop protection products and biotech seed, that enable sustainable and stable food production systems.

“Today’s farmers are faced with more challenges than ever before — which means they need access to innovative tools and products that can protect against climate change, help ensure nutritious and high-yielding crops, and preserve natural resources,” said Howard Minigh, president and CEO of CropLife International. “Predictable, transparent, and scientific regulatory frameworks, stipulated by the SPS Agreement, facilitate uninterrupted and timely trade, which has a significant impact in maintaining stable food supplies and decreasing food and nutrition insecurity.”

*The ministerial statement attaches a “central importance” to carrying out risk analysis to assess and manage the risks associated with pesticide use to protect public health and facilitate trade in food and agricultural products. To support this, it calls to increase the capacity and efficiency of Codex Alimentarius in setting international standards on pesticide maximum residue limits (MRLs), to improve harmonization across regional and national MRLs and to allow greater access to pesticides for minor use crops. Harmonization would ensure compliance with the WTO SPS Agreement and prevent trade barriers, such as could result from the proposed European Union adoption of hazard-based cut-off criteria on pesticides that could restrict imports by setting default MRLs.*

*“We support the ministers in this much-needed call to strengthen Codex and encourage the SPS Committee to continue to address trade concerns related to food and agricultural products. We need predictable and science-based MRLs, as well as transparent and efficient biotech approvals systems, to allow farmers access to a full range of tools and technologies and to ensure trade facilitation, particularly on agricultural exports of developing countries,” said Minigh.*

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**For media inquiries, please contact:**

Will Surman or Deb Carstoiu

[will.surman@croplife.org](mailto:will.surman@croplife.org) or [deb.carstoiu@croplife.org](mailto:deb.carstoiu@croplife.org)

Tel: 0032 2542 0417 or +1.202.805.0475

Note to Editors:

*The full list signatories to the ministerial statement is as follows: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Kenya, Japan, Madagascar, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uganda, Uruguay, and the United States.*

*CropLife International is the voice of the global plant science industry. It champions the role of agricultural innovations in crop protection and plant biotechnology in supporting and advancing sustainable agriculture; helping farmers feed a growing population while looking after the planet; and progressing rural communities. The world needs farmers, and farmers need plant science. CropLife International is proud to be at the heart of helping farmers grow.*