

Thank you, Madam Chair

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Crop Trust, it's a true honor and pleasure to address this 8th Governing Body meeting and congratulate the Plant Treaty on its 15th anniversary.

The importance of the Treaty has never been greater. This is not a nicety to be said at a birthday party – it is not an exaggeration - the Plant Treaty has never been more important than it is today and it will continue to be so in the years to come.

The plants that feed us are increasingly struggling - all around the world. Temperature increases, water is becoming scarce, salinity is spreading in important food producing areas, the weather gets wilder and new diseases are emerging. The greatest threat to a food secure world and a resilient agriculture is that the climate changes faster than our plants are able to adapt.

Plants have of course always adapted. But now the pace of change is so fast that the plants - and the farmers who grow them -- can't keep up. They need help. They need our help.

This is why it is so important that the diversity of crops is safeguarded at local, national and international level. We've long known how wise use of crop diversity can improve yields, but we have also seen how we can increase nutritional value and make plants better suited for the crazy weather we are experiencing.

No country – no matter how mighty -- politically, militarily or in any other way -- is self-sufficient in the crop diversity it needs.

This is why the Plant Treaty is so fundamentally important. It is very hard to see how we will be able to sustainably feed a growing world population with sufficiently nutritious food if we don't have a well functioning Plant Treaty. The Crop Trust and others can do a lot to safeguard crop diversity, but the diversity needs to be used, and used widely, and that's where the world really can't manage without the Plant Treaty. The Plant Treaty is fundamentally important for the future of agriculture.

The Plant Treaty should be given much more attention from policy makers and business than what has been the case. The future of food is quite simply dependent on a well implemented Plant Treaty with a functioning access and benefit sharing system.

On behalf of the Crop Trust Executive Board and the Board Chair Sir Peter Crane who unfortunately is unable to address you today I'd like to express our strongest hope that this 8th session of the Governing Body faces up to the tremendous challenges agriculture is facing in the time ahead and that it ends successfully. Governments in this room have a huge responsibility to make wise decisions. NGOs and international organizations have a responsibility to contribute constructively too.

The Crop Trust is an essential element of the funding strategy of the Plant Treaty. We promise to do whatever we can to help develop a cost, effective rational global system for ex

situ conservation, and to fund this system. We are proud to work very closely with the Plant Treaty Secretariat. We are grateful for all the advice and support you give us on a daily basis. The Plant Treaty can always count on our whole-hearted support.

In the years to come we as a global community has to produce more, and more nutritious food. It has to be produced on less land, with less water, less pesticides and less fertilizers. And production needs to give affordable food, and it has to give decent income to farmers all across the world.

Seeds are miracles. It is amazing what seeds can do for humankind. But we need to protect them and use them effectively.

It is our duty at this governing body meeting to help ensure the productive, healthy, equitable, resilient agricultural system that future generations will depend on.

Thank you, Madam Chair