



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs**

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**Press Release**

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## **€3 million Irish Aid Pledge for Crop Diversity on World Food Day**

Today is World Food Day (16 October). Despite progress achieved in agriculture and rural development, more than 850 million people in the world remain hungry and poor. Seventy percent of the world's hungry live in rural areas. World Food Day aims to raise awareness that agricultural development is the first step in long-term sustainable economic growth.

Conor Lenihan T.D., Minister for Development Cooperation and Human Rights today announced a €3 million pledge to the Global Crop Diversity Trust, over the next three years. Crop diversity programmes ensure that crops adapt to different growing conditions and are bred into varieties with traits such as drought resistance and additional nutritional qualities.

Making the announcement, Minister Lenihan said:

“Ireland’s experience of famine a century and a half ago makes us very aware of the consequences of limited crop diversity. Our support for the Trust is grounded in this experience our commitment to improving food security for future generations. This pledge also reflects our commitment to the role of agriculture in development and the first Millennium Development Goal of the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. The key to eradication of extreme hunger is the establishment of food security for all. Crop diversity underpins food security.

In the coming weeks I will be establishing a Hunger Task Force, drawing together international public and private sector expertise, to examine the particular contribution Ireland can make to tackling the root causes of food insecurity, particularly in Africa.”

“Ireland’s contribution to the Trust is an example for all,” said Cary Fowler, Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust. “If other countries were to match Ireland’s generosity, the loss of global crop diversity would be a problem of the past, not a catastrophe in the making.”

Note for Editors:

The Global Crop Diversity Trust was founded by the International Plant Genetic Resources Initiative and the Food and Agriculture Organisation in 2004. The Trust is an international non-profit organisation committed to ensuring the conservation and availability of crop diversity.

Apart from improving food security, the objectives of the Trust meet with a number of Irish Aid's goals, in particular poverty reduction, agricultural development and environmental sustainability.

World Food Day [www.fao.org/wfd/2006/index.asp](http://www.fao.org/wfd/2006/index.asp)

Global Crop Diversity Trust [www.croptrust.org](http://www.croptrust.org)

ENDS+++

16 October 2006

Press Office