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## PRESS RELEASE

Douala, Cameroun, April 23, 2009.

### **“Efficient Communication to Fight Counterfeiting and Enhance Stewardship”.**

The Annual workshop of the West and Central Africa (WCA) hub convened on April 21-22 in Douala, Cameroon. The agenda addressed the need to strengthen communication among all stakeholders about the threats posed by counterfeits and illegal trade of crop protection products (CPPs), to combat such practices and to promote stewardship to maximize the benefits of CPPs and minimize their risks. This approach has been decided following the recent increase in proliferation of counterfeited CPPs in the countries of the hub with resulting growing concerns for local regulatory authorities, CPPs managers, farmers and the entire food chain.

Participants to the workshop were regulatory and agrochemicals registration authorities members of the central Africa phytosanitary committee (Comité Phytosanitaire d’Afrique Centrale, CPAC) a common registration committee for the six countries of the economic and monetary community of central Africa (Communauté Economique et Monétaire d’Afrique Centrale, CEMAC). The workshop was also attended by regulatory experts from CropLife Africa Middle East member companies, delegates of national associations of the WCA hub together with representatives of local and regional stakeholders’ organizations.

Discussions addressed the needed measures to improve agricultural productivity so as to ensure food security and preserve the environment and biodiversity. These goals can be achieved best through proper and full implementation of the six principles of the “Farming First Action Plan”

[http://www.farmingfirst.org/downloads/farming\\_first\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.farmingfirst.org/downloads/farming_first_action_plan.pdf).

Dr Rudolf Guyer, Executive President of CropLife Africa Middle East noted, “African countries particularly in Sub Saharan Africa need to focus on farming first to ensure healthy affordable diets for their people and to achieve sustainable development. The 6 principles of the Farming First initiative will help subsistence farmers to become small scale entrepreneurs; allowing them to feed families, villages, and cities. The plant science industry provides training programs to share knowledge with farmers, helps protect crops, and conducts Research & Development to help further the principles in Farming First”. Deliberations then focused on several issues related to the proper use and distribution of CPP. Dr. Rudolf Guyer called on the media to help promoting the 6 principles of the Farming First Action Plan and the related key messages. “Media also have an important role to play and share responsibility in educating the public, farmers and consumers on the threats posed by counterfeiting and illegal CPPs. These illegal products pose a significant safety risk to crops, humans and the environment”, he emphasized.

The workshop also debated on the EU food safety regulations (MRLs), empty containers management, and the needed involvement of the national associations in ASP – a special program targeting the removal of old and obsolete pesticide stocks in Africa.

The workshop concluded with relevant recommendations emphasizing the strong commitment of the local industry associations in rolling out the global IPM course and the international Code of Conduct particularly the E-learning tool to members of the national associations.

Addressing the workshop Eric Bureau, Vice President of CropLife Africa Middle East and WCA Hub Chair called for the “vital and crucial need for rapid workable registration procedures to encourage investments in crop protection innovative technologies, while confirming CropLife’s commitment to support the ongoing regional regulatory initiatives in the CEMAC sub-region”.

In his opening address the representative of the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development emphasized the importance of enhancing training and education of farmers, retailers, and communication on CPPs for professionalizing the supply chain.

For details contact:

**Bama O. YAO,**  
WCA Hub Coordinator  
CropLife Africa Middle East  
Tel.: (+225) 22 507 783  
Fax: (+225) 22 507 7 82  
E-mail: [bama@croplifeafrica.org](mailto:bama@croplifeafrica.org)

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