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Media Release

CropLife Africa Middle East and IFDC Join Efforts to Initiate Talks for a Regional Pesticides Regulatory Initiative in West Africa

Cotonou, Benin, 6 April 2005 - Regional regulatory harmonization is the topic of discussion (this week) at the Annual Workshop of the West and Central Africa Members of CropLife Africa Middle East (WCA Hub). The meeting opened yesterday at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Cotonou, Benin, and was organized in corporation with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) following a MoU signed last year to support regulatory initiatives in the region.

Held under the presidency of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Republic of Benin, and under the patronage of West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the 2-day workshop focused on the establishment of a regional pesticides regulatory framework in West Africa, in view of the common agricultural policies of WAEMU, and the regional economic integration of ECOWAS. Other issues addressed at the meeting include: training and local capacity building; obsolete stocks and the Africa Stockpiles Program; EU Regulations, particularly in relation to Maximum Residue Levels; and spraying equipment for safety and effectiveness in crop protection.

In his opening address, the Minister of Agriculture for Benin invited participants to "set-up a 'Road Map' for concerted regional actions and follow-up, as the initiative will serve as coordinating platform to regulate and ensure proper uses of pesticides in improving agricultural productivity in the sub-region."

Yves Demeure, Vice-President and WCA Hub Chair of CropLife Africa Middle East, called on the vital need for cooperation between the plant science industry and regulatory authorities. "We are committed to assisting and cooperating with countries and regional organizations to establish regionally harmonized regulatory schemes that make more effective use of the limited resources of individual countries, as well as fostering co-operations that encourage proper use of our products and promote sustainable agriculture," he said.

In addition to industry experts and national association members of CropLife Africa Middle East, workshop participants include regulatory authorities and pesticides registrars from ECOWAS countries, as well as delegates from the Sahélien Committee on Pesticides (CSP, Comité Sahélien des Pesticides); the Permanent Interstate Committee to Combat Desertification in the Sahel (CILSS, Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel); and the Phytopharmaceutical Committee of the Humid Zone of East and Central Africa (CPHAOC, Comité Phytopharmaceutique de la zone Humide de l'Afrique de l'ouest et du Centre).

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