
**Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between
CropLife Africa Middle East and Agriculture & Trade Promotion (ATP)**

Address at the Signature Event

Accra, Ghana, July 22, 2009.

Dr. Rudolf Guyer, Executive President, CropLife Africa Middle East

Dear Dr. Ismael Ouedraogo,

Dear colleagues and staff of the ATP Project,

Dear guests and friends invited to today's event,

It is a big pleasure for me to be back in Ghana only 6 weeks after my last visit in June when a very similar event took place with IFDC here in Accra. I am therefore pleased to meet and recognize today many friends and guests who I met in my previous visits.

The signature of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Agriculture & Trade Promotion Project today marks another important milestone in the strategic re-positioning of our industry association particularly here in West and Central Africa.

However, before entering more in the details of the engagement and the strategic approach of our industry in this part of Africa I would like to describe and explain to you in a few words the global network and purpose of our industry association.

CropLife International represents the Plant Science Industry on a global level and is registered as a non profit organization in Brussels, Belgium. The association is driven by the leading 8 multinational companies who are all engaged in the discovery, development and marketing of innovative products and technologies in the field of high quality seeds and crop protection solutions. Together these 8 companies serve approximately 70 to 80 % of the global market needs.

At the regional and national level the CropLife network is composed of all those stakeholders who are active in the production, formulation and distribution of these agricultural inputs. In Africa the CropLife network has been divided in three hubs each led by an Area Coordinator. The three hubs are North Africa Middle East led by Ali Mohamed Ali from his branch office in Amman, the hub West and Central Africa led by Yao Bama Octave from his branch office in Abidjan and the hub East and South Africa led by Les Hillowitz from his branch office in Johannesburg. At the local level there exist 30 national CropLife associations in AME.

The CropLife brand and logo is the result of a corporate review and redesign of our global industry association at the beginning of this decade in 2001 and 2002. At that time our industry realized that the growing challenges presented to its member companies by consumers, politicians and the society at large could no longer be addressed with a rather passive, reactive and low profile public approach which had been the preferred and quite successful approach in the previous decades.

Since 2002 a big effort has been made to raise the profile and reputation of our industry. In order to encourage and equip our company members and employees to become more vocal speakers and ambassadors of our industry's purpose and aspiration a set of key messages have been developed and distributed very recently. Useful hand outs and tool kits were developed and are available for members and industry stakeholders.

I would like to share with you briefly and explain the three overarching core messages – core messages that are increasingly being used in all our internal and external communication - for example at the end of all our e-mails.

The first Core Message is “GROWING FOOD”. It is our profound conviction that without our industry’s quality inputs consisting of high quality seed varieties and ever improved crop protection products the global food requirements simply cannot be produced. Without modern and effective agricultural technologies the needed food cannot be produced today and even less tomorrow. We therefore clearly challenge all those views and stakeholders who are promoting organic production as a solution to the global food crisis or as a viable solution to lift sub Saharan countries out of poverty and subsistence farming. We also would like to emphasize that organic production schemes oblige primarily women and children to continue to perform long hours of extremely painful and ineffective hand weeding. Long and painful hours in the field that should be dedicated to other activities such as education and taking care of the family if these rural communities are to be given a real chance to leave poverty and misery behind.

The second Core Message is “CREATING RENEWABLES”. It is our conviction that if mankind wants to survive on this planet for another few thousand years we need to create our daily needs and resources from renewable processes and sources. Agriculture is so far the only concept where basic materials and energy can be created without depleting the existing and limited fossil resources. We do certainly not claim to have a solution to the energy hunger of this world. The initially huge excitement about biofuels has been replaced by a more realistic assessment of the possibilities of this technology over the past months. However, we are nevertheless convinced that agriculture and our industry can and will make an important contribution to serve the basic needs of our society with renewable inputs.

The third and last Core Message is SUPPLYING SUSTAINABLY”. It is our industry’s ambition to improve production and products continuously to build sustainable systems and processes. The sustainability concept is embraced in a clearly defined “life cycle concept from cradle to grave” for all our products. We are aware that we have not yet implemented those principles everywhere and to their full extent. However, our association is working very hard to deliver on this ambition and to have sustainable processes not only for our products and industry members but also for all the million of farmers who are using our products. Our own sustainability concept meets with the farmers’ desire and wish on all continents and in all countries: namely to leave his field and soil behind for his children and grand children in a fertile and healthy state which will enable them to continue to serve the needs of their generation. We are convinced that the responsible use of our inputs and products is the basis for a much more sustainable agricultural production system than the often heard promotion of organic farming system especially if recommended here in Africa. Together with IFDC and other professional stakeholders we do advocate a massive increase of the use of fertilizer on African arable soils. If Africa continues to extract and harvest every year a triple or quadruple of nutrients of what is returned to the soil by fertilizer – whether organic or inorganic – these African soils will soon be depleted totally and their decreasing fertility will no longer have the potential to feed future generations.

Aligned with the above Core Messages our global CropLife network has been working very hard over the past two years to team up with other stakeholders to engage in a public dialogue and in particular to convince responsible policy makers of the importance of choosing and supporting appropriate agricultural policies at all levels, globally, regionally and nationally. These efforts have lead to the creation of a multi stakeholder platform organized under the slogan:

Farming First

I encourage you all to visit the respective website and you are kindly invited to join the group of supporters of this initiative. I think we also do have a leaflet of this campaign for all of you.

As a first and encouraging outcome of these concerted efforts the recent G-8 Summit in Italy this July has adopted a totally fresh and new position with regard to agricultural policies in developing countries. The previously favoured approach of simply offering food aid to combat famine wherever needed will be replaced by efforts and policies to strengthen countries own agricultural resources. Improved local agricultural systems are understood and expected to serve as the most important engine for local economic development. We look very much forward to the implementation of this changed approach in the years to come, on a global, regional and then in particular on a national level in Africa and the Middle East.

After this global “tour d’ horizon” I would like to return to the situation here in West and Central Africa. For several decades not very attractive agricultural policies and conditions did prevail in many countries in this region. Driven by investors and shareholders to produce more sales and higher profits our global companies had to invest their resources in those markets and regions where the return on investment was more attractive and not at risk by sudden potential political or economic crisis. As a result of this assessment most multinational companies have reduced their presence in Africa as a whole but particularly here in West Africa. This development created a considerable internal challenge: Can our association continue to be present and spend money in a region where our main sponsors – the multinational companies – are no longer really interested to make business?

It has been this internal challenge between the ambition and conviction that our products and technologies are actually badly needed in all the countries of West and Central Africa on one side and the rather low and decreasing business interest of most member companies on the other side that has led us to partner with more and more external stakeholders. Stakeholders who share the same ambition and convictions as our industry but – unlike our private company members – are not measured quarterly by investors and shareholders on sales growth and profit increases. We are encouraged that more and more such external stakeholders exist and are willing to cooperate with CropLife Africa Middle East.

The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding with ATP today is therefore a further step in confirming and strengthening our new strategic approach in West and Central Africa. I am personally particularly pleased to meet in this new cooperation again with Raphael Vogelsperger. Raphael, together with Yao Bama Octave, has been one of the key actors in shaping our changed strategic approach here in West and Central Africa. I recall dozens of joint training courses on responsible use realized by Raphael and Peter Mills over the past years and I very much look forward to revitalize this cooperation with Raphael.

The proposed objectives and ambition of the ATP project aim at strengthening agricultural input - output chains with a particular focus on a few selected crops. There is no doubt that we will be able to design targeted and promising joint action programs between our two organizations. We are also very pleased to have found in ATP an additional stakeholder and supporter in our fight against counterfeit and illegal crop protection products. This problem of counterfeit products is a very high priority and of growing concern for our industry particularly here in West and Central Africa.

Based on the today’s concluded cooperation our both organizations will contribute another small but nevertheless important share to the earlier described vision of enabling rural communities to become an engine for local and regional economic development. From a CropLife perspective we look very much forward to this challenge and are happy to offer our expertise and resources in this combined effort.

I thank you for your attention.