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PRESSRELEASE

50 000 seed samples sent to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Svalbard Global Seed Vault receives major seed shipment as world leaders meet to tackle climate change in Copenhagen.

Sunday, December 13, a large shipment of seed samples reaches the airport of Longyearbyen, Svalbard. More than 50 000 seed samples have finally arrived at their destination - the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

The shipment contains seeds from crops adapted to dry climates. Among them is sorghum, a high energy crop, known for its wide adaptability and resistance to drought. This "camel among crops" could be a key to agricultural development in areas affected by aridity and saline soils. Among the depositors are two major agricultural research centers, both working with adaptation of plants to dryer areas: ICARDA (International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas) and ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics).



-Genetic diversity is vital for solving the challenges to agriculture which climate change will cause. It is only through using this diversity that scientists can breed new varieties of our crops, able to thrive in dramatically different conditions expected in the future. This diversity is stored in seeds, and seeds from all continents are now stored in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, says Roland von Bothmer, professor of genetics and plant-breeding at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, and part of the team responsible for running the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Since the Vault opened in February 2008, there has been a remarkable reaction from the world's seedbanks, which have sent over 400,000 samples for protection in the Arctic permafrost.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is the ultimate security net for the world's crop diversity. The Seed Vault aims at safeguarding the world's most important plant genetic resources for food and agriculture with a maximum level of security. The Seed Vault offers free-of-charge back-up for the seed collections held in seed banks around the world.

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FACTS

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is owned by the Norwegian government and is co-funded by the Global Crop Diversity Trust. NordGen – the Nordic Genetic Resource Center - is responsible for the day to day operation and management of the Seed Vault. NordGen organizes deposits in collaboration with depositing gene banks and the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

The Global Crop Diversity Trust, in partnership with the UN Foundation and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, funds the preparation and shipment of seed samples from developing countries and international research centers such as ICRISAT and ICARDA.

For more details about the Vault

NordGen: www.nordgen.org

Svalbard Global Seed Vault: www.sgsv.no

The Global Crop Diversity Trust: www.croptrust.org