

2026 Princess of Asturias Award for International Cooperation Laureate Statement

21 May 2026

The Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Nordic Genetic Resource Center - NordGen, and the Crop Trust warmly welcome the 2026 Princess of Asturias Award for International Cooperation for the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

We are deeply honored by this recognition of the Seed Vault's role in securing the future of food and as a symbol of global cooperation and shared responsibility. At a time of increasing climate uncertainty, conflict and pressure on food systems, this award underscores the importance of safeguarding crop diversity as the foundation of food security and resilience. With over 1.3 million seed samples from more than 85 countries, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault is a testament to what is possible when the world comes together to protect our most precious resources.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Princess of Asturias Foundation for this distinction. We also recognize that this honor belongs not only to the Seed Vault's three managing partners, but to the global community that has contributed to the Vault.

Since the Seed Vault opened in 2008, genebanks, governments, scientists and institutions from around the world have entrusted it with duplicates of their most valuable seed collections. Their commitment and collaboration have transformed the Seed Vault into the world's ultimate safety backup for crop diversity – and for the future of food.

The Seed Vault is recognized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as a vital pillar of the global system for the *ex situ* conservation and use of crop diversity. It is also recognized by the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture for its close connection to the Treaty's Multilateral System, which facilitates access to crop diversity and promotes fair and equitable benefit-sharing worldwide.

This award is a tribute to the international partnership and multilateral cooperation that make the Svalbard Global Seed Vault possible. It is also a powerful reminder that protecting the future of food is a responsibility we all share.

This Laureate Statement is signed by the Svalbard Global Seed Vault partners:

- Nils Kristen Sandtrøen, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Norway
Oslo, Norway
- Lene Krøl Andersen, Executive Director of the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen)
Alnarp, Sweden
- Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust
Bonn, Germany