

The Time is Right to Ratify

THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

As the world population continues to grow, farmers depend on seed researchers to develop new crop varieties.

Using a broad array of parent materials, also known as plant genetic resources, from around the world, seed researchers make crosses over many generations to create varieties with the desired characteristics that meet farmers' and consumers' needs.

- ♦ The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture creates a specialized, global system for the management and exchange of plant genetic resources.
- ♦ The U.S. is a signatory to the treaty but ratification is pending. ***Without ratification, the U.S. is missing opportunities to protect our national interests.*** Our companies and government agencies must abide by the legally binding material transfer agreement established by the treaty in order to access international germplasm.
- ♦ The U.S. is the world's biggest market for seed and the largest seed exporter. We cannot afford to be absent from the negotiating table.

American researchers need access to materials in gene banks in other countries and a rational system to manage these exchanges. These diverse genetic resources are the key to solving threats from drought, plant diseases and insects.

- ♦ If the U.S. does not ratify the International Treaty, there is a risk U.S. researchers will not be able to meet the world's most pressing problem - a growing global population.

Important Facts

- ♦ Signed by the U.S. on November 1, 2002.
- ♦ The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recommended ratification in 2010.
- ♦ Placed on the calendar of the Senate for a vote in December of 2010 but was not voted on before Congress adjourned.
- ♦ Over 125 countries, including the EU and Japan, representing major sources of plant germplasm have ratified the Treaty.
- ♦ No other U.S. laws would need to be changed in order for the government to implement the treaty.
- ♦ The treaty will not diminish existing intellectual property protections.

Ratification of the Treaty is supported by the following organizations:

- ♦ American Seed Research Foundation
- ♦ American Seed Trade Association
- ♦ Biotechnology Industry Organization
- ♦ Crop Science Society of America
- ♦ National Council of Commercial Plant Breeders
- ♦ National Farmers Union

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.foreign.senate.gov/treaties/110-19 ♦ www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/pending/index.htm
www.worldseed.org/cms/medias/file/PositionPapers/OnSustainableAgriculture/Single_international_ABS_regime.pdf