

PRESS RELEASE

World Seed Congress delegates urged to respond to global challenges

Opening the International Seed Federation (ISF) World Seed Congress, ISF President Jean-Christophe Gouache said that the seed industry needs to “respond and adapt to global challenges to ensure it continues to thrive, and not just survive, in this changing world”.

Addressing the 1700 delegates who convened in Budapest, Hungary on 22 May 2016, Mr Gouache cited examples of geopolitical, economic and technological changes as affecting the movement of seed. With innovation in plant breeding defined as one of ISF’s top priorities, Mr Gouache said: “We must do everything we can to move toward more consistent policies for products developed through the latest innovations, to make them accessible to all and ensure uninterrupted trade.”

Welcoming delegates to Budapest, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjarto said: “The seed industry has to take the lead in developing innovation that will help address global challenges such as food security,” said Mr Szijjarto.

Exploring the congress theme of “Growing Beyond Bridges”, ISF Secretary General Michael Keller illustrated each of ISF’s strategic objectives with a bridge, and explained how ISF plans to achieve its goals for plant breeding innovation, intellectual property rights, genetic resources, engagement, and the international movement of seed

Mr Keller highlighted the adoption of the International Standard on Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) as a landmark decision for the movement of seed that represented a significant step towards harmonized phytosanitary measures. “This is a pre-requisite for the development of new plant varieties and the availability of pest-free, high quality seed; and a pre-condition of global food security,” said Mr Keller.

ISF is coordinating implementation of the standard at country level through national seed associations, many of whom will gather on 25 May 2017 for a post-congress workshop designed to support their engagement with their National Plant Protection Office.

“The ISF World Seed Congress is the best forum for us to connect with our members, and for our members to connect with each other – to share experiences, to exchange ideas and to do business,” said Mr Keller. “Anyone involved in seed should be here – whether you’re breeding, producing or marketing it, we all have a part to play in achieving our shared mission: to make the best quality seed accessible to all.”

During the three-day event, delegates from 64 countries will discuss, debate and collaborate on the issues and challenges facing the seed industry through open meetings, panel discussions and roundtable events.

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About ISF

ISF is widely regarded as the voice of the global seed industry. It has represented the interests of its members since 1924, and today represents 7500 members of the international seed trade in more than 70 countries worldwide.

Read more about who we are and what we do on our website: www.worldseed.org