

## Plant Research to Save the Planet

Honolulu, HI, Saturday, July 18, 2009—A Global Plant Council has been formed as part of an historic and groundbreaking summit of major plant science societies from around the world. Twenty one scientists representing 13 plant science societies gathered in Honolulu July 15–16 at a summit organized by the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB) to explore ways in which plant scientists can come together to address global concerns such as world hunger, energy, climate change, health and well-being, sustainability, and environmental protection. The mission of the Global Plant Council will be to define and engage in coordinated strategies to address these critical issues and to increase awareness of the central role of plant science in their resolution. The shared vision and unified effort of plant scientists from all regions of the world will enable the most effective use of knowledge and resources to tackle the major challenges confronting all nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As stated by Dr. Kasem Zaki Ahmed, representing the African Crop Science Society, “The world relies on ten major crops to provide 95% of the food consumed by humans and farm animals. To address the problems facing Africa we must improve existing crops and develop new ones that have higher yields and greater resistance to pests, pathogens, drought, and other environmental stresses.”

Plant biology--and thus plant science research--is central to other global challenges as well. European scientist Dr. Wilhelm Gruissem (president of the European Plant Science Organisation) noted, “We must address the key issues of biodiversity in natural and managed environments”. Dr. Zhihong Xu, president of the Chinese Society of Plant Physiologists noted, “We need to increase the search for and investment in the discovery and development of new and existing bioactive compounds and medicines from a diversity of plant species.”

The newly formed Global Plant Council will move forward to create partnerships and collaborations that tackle and solve what we all recognize as critical and immediate problems for our planet.

“The Global Plant Council is the first step that plant scientists across the globe have taken to speak with one voice on the pressing challenges that face humankind,” said Mel Oliver, summit moderator.

ASPB was joined at the summit by scientists representing societies from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and South America.

### **Contacts:**

European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO)  
Karin Metzloff [Karin.metzloff@epsomail.org](mailto:Karin.metzloff@epsomail.org)  
Wilhelm Gruissem [wgruissem@ethz.ch](mailto:wgruissem@ethz.ch)

American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB )  
Crispin Taylor [ctaylor@aspb.org](mailto:ctaylor@aspb.org)