

A year to celebrate plants: UN proclaims 2020 the International Year of Plant Health

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IPPC hails proclamation of the International Year of Plant Health

UN General Assembly proclaims 2020 as year to recognize and protect plant health

20 December 2018, Rome – The UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Plant Protection Convention Secretariat, based at FAO, welcome the UN General Assembly's adoption today of a resolution proclaiming 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). The year is expected to increase awareness among the public and policy makers of the importance of healthy plants and the necessity to protect them in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Today, up to 40 percent of global food crops are lost annually due to plant pests. In terms of economic value, plant diseases alone cost the global economy around US\$220 billion annually and invasive insects around US\$70 billion. "The International Year of Plant Health is a key initiative to highlight the importance of plant health to enhance food security, protect the environment and biodiversity, and boost economic development," IPPC Secretary Jingyuan Xia said.

"Despite the increasing impact of plant pests, resources are scarce to address the problem. We hope this new International Year of Plant Health will trigger greater global collaboration to support plant health policies at all levels, which will contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Agenda," he added.

Finland first proposed the year to the governing body of the International Plant Protection Convention in 2015. In July 2017, the FAO Conference adopted a resolution in support of the proposal. "Pests and diseases don't carry passports or observe immigration requirements and, therefore, the prevention of the spread of such organisms is very much an international undertaking that requires the collaboration of all countries. This is why Finland proposed to proclaim 2020 the International Year of Plant Health," Jari Leppä, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland said.

The UN General Assembly invited FAO, with the IPPC Secretariat, to serve as the lead agency to spearhead activities, and called on governments, civil society, and the private sector to engage at global, regional and national levels. An International Plant Health Conference will be among thousands of plant health events to be held globally throughout 2020.

Healthy plants are the foundation for all life, ecosystem functions and food security. Plant pests and diseases damage crops, reducing the availability of food and increasing its cost. Sustaining plant health protects the environment, forests and biodiversity from plant pests, addresses the effects of climate change, and supports efforts to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

The IPPC is an international treaty that entered into force in 1952 and provides a framework to protect the world's plant resources from the harm caused by pests. It is currently composed of 183 contracting parties.

Captions

The International Year of Plant Health will be marked in 2020 and is expected to increase awareness about the importance of healthy plants in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Related Links

- Watch the International Year of Plant Health [video](#)
- Factsheet: [“Championing an International Year of Plant Health”](#)
- [IPPC website](#)

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