

Opening Conference, 25. February 2008, 1600 – 1830 pm

Svalbard Global Seed Vault - Saving Seeds for Eternity?

Welcome and opening address

Why Seed Vault, why Norway, why Svalbard?

By Terje Riis-Johansen, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Norway

Safe harbour in a perfect storm - the story of the Vault in the context of the threats facing agriculture

By Cary Fowler, Executive Director, Global Crop Diversity Trust

Plant genetic resources conservation from a farmers view point

By Tatay Gipo, Rice farmer, Philippines

To be translated by Ditdit Pelagrino, Executive director of SEARICE, The Philippines

The role of crop diversity for food security

By Maria Mayer de Scurrah, President of Grupo Yanapai, Lima, Peru.

Arctic climate change and global consequences

By Pål Prestrud, Director of CICERO (Centre for Climate and Environmental Research, Oslo)

Future challenges regarding plant genetic resources and the role of the global seed vault

By Patric Mooney, Executive Director, ETC group

Speakers bios

Terje Riis-Johansen

Minister Terje Riis-Johansen has been the Minister of Agriculture and Food in Norway since 2005 and Leader of Skien Centre Party since 2003. Previously, Mr. Riis-Johansen served in the Skien Municipal Council as a Member of Industry Council, and as a Political Advisor to the Ministry of Finance during Kjell Magne Bondevik's first government. He was the General Manager of Riis-Johansen parkanlegg AS from 1999-2005. He was also a member of the executive committee of the Norwegian Farmers' Union from 2000-2005.

Cary Fowler

Prior to joining the Trust Cary Fowler was Professor at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and from this position he was leading the feasibility study which led to the construction of the Svalbard Seed Vault. He has been working with the conservation and use of crop diversity for more than 30 years, and among other achievements he was a key person in the development of FAO's Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources in 1996.

Tatay Gipo

Tatay Gipo is a Philippine farmer conserving diversity and developing new rice genotypes on-farm. He has been awarded for developing robust rice varieties, and he has been an inspiration for civil society organizations working for the empowerment of farming and indigenous communities and strengthening their control over agricultural resources. He has through several projects been assisting SEARICE, which is an NGO based in the Philippines, but whose work includes a regional program on local management of plant genetic resources and policy work at a global level.

Maria Mayer de Scurrah

Grupo Yanapai is an NGO working on research and development of small scale farming. Conservation of plant genetic resources and development of low input technology are the main issues. Maria de Scurrah is especially committed to the rich diversity of potato genetic resources in her country. UN has dedicated 2008 to the international year of the potato.

Pål Prestrud

Pål Prestrud is the director of CICERO, which is the leading centre for climate change research in Norway. He is doctorate in biology from the University of Oslo. Previous work includes leading positions at the Research Council of Norway, Norwegian Polar Institute and the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment.

Patric Mooney

ETC group (pronounced 'etcetera' group) is a civil society organisation dedicated to the conservation and sustainable advancement of cultural and ecological diversity and human rights. Pat Mooney has for more than 30 years worked with civil society organizations dealing with agriculture and biodiversity, and especially issues within economy and politics related to seeds and genetic resources. He has received several awards for his work.