

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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TALKING POINTS GLOBAL SEED VAULT
Svalbard, 2 September 2009

It is a privilege and pleasure to visit the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

My thanks to my gracious Norwegian hosts for the tour of this one-of-a-kind structure built deep in the arctic permafrost.

The world faces many daunting challenges today. One of the greatest is how to feed a growing world population in the context of climate change.

The seeds stored here in Svalbard will help us do just that.

They come from virtually every country in the world. They contain the essential characteristics that plant breeders and farmers will need to ensure that crops become climate-ready and even more productive.

Sustainable food production may not begin in this cold arctic environment, but it does begin by conserving crop diversity.

No country can manage this huge task by itself.

I'm glad that this Seed Vault provides back-up protection for collections held by every country. This is an essential global insurance policy for the international community within the framework of the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

On behalf of the international community I wish to express my gratitude to the Government of Norway, and its partners the Global Crop Diversity Trust and NordGen, for the remarkable accomplishment of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

This gift to humanity and symbol of peace will continue to inspire and serve for generations to come.

Thank you.