



MEDIA RELEASE – 23 February 2010

## Providing breeding solutions for the developing world

HYDERABAD, INDIA – The Molecular Breeding Platform (MBP), a public initiative conceived by the Generation Challenge Programme (GCP) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was officially launched in Hyderabad, India, 17–20 February 2010.

The MBP is an online one-stop shop providing solutions and innovations in plant breeding for developing countries through analytical tools, services and project design. Molecular breeding – an advanced approach that employs molecular markers to select plants with desirable traits – is a more precise, rapid and cost-effective method of plant breeding, in comparison to its more commonly known conventional counterpart. It has greatly benefited the private sector by improving the efficiency of the breeding process and by reducing the time taken to develop new varieties.

The MBP aims to ensure that the fruits of the investments made in developing the tools and technology for molecular breeding are also available to the developing world, particularly in countries that are yet to embark on molecular plant breeding. In selected cases, specialised support will be provided to research institutes to facilitate their use of molecular breeding.

As a first step, the platform will pilot 14 pre-existing projects on molecular-assisted breeding covering eight crops across 16 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia – Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Africa; and China, India and Thailand in Asia. However, the platform is open to any institutions working in crop breeding to meet development goals to ensure food security.

The MBP is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional financial support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission.

More details:

- [‘MBP on the move’](#) (short feature on official MBP launch workshop, February 2010, plus link to presentations and reports)
- [Press release](#) at MBP’s initiation, September 2009 (background on the MBP)
- MBP [website](#)
- Contact MBP Coordinator, Graham McLaren, [g.mclaren@cgiar.org](mailto:g.mclaren@cgiar.org)

### **About the CGIAR Generation Challenge Programme (GCP)**

GCP’s mission is using genetic diversity and advanced plant science to improve crops for greater food security in the developing world. Created by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in 2003 as a time-bound 10-year Programme, GCP’s goal is to add value to crop breeding, targeting farmers in drought-prone and harsh environments. Through capacity enhancement and by assisting developing world researchers to tap into a broader and richer pool of plant genetic diversity, GCP strives to ensure that crops improved by cutting-edge research will reach farmers in the developing world.