



Press Release

Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory, Singapore makes its First Deposit with Norwegian's Svalbard Global Seed Vault

10 October 2016, Norway and Singapore - Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL), the Norway's Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) and the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) are pleased to announce Singapore's first deposit in the Norwegian's Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a fail-safe seed storage facility that was designed and built to protect crop seeds against the risk of getting destroyed or extinct in a global or local catastrophic event. The seeds of seven unique rice varieties are specially selected for this event as they represent TLL's continued efforts in research to develop elite and unique rice varieties that are able to contribute to the long-term food security needs of the region. The deposit from Singapore also anchors our commitment in ensuring sustainable agriculture by partaking in this process of seed conservation and biodiversity protection.

The seed deposit ceremony is held in conjunction with President Tony Tan's State Visit to Norway. HM The Queen Sonja and Mrs Mary Tan will be present to witness the handover of seeds by Mr Peter Chia, Chief Operating Officer of TLL, to Mr Jon Georg Dale, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Norway. These rice lines are from the species of *Oryza sativa L.* and are specially selected for their agronomic traits, grain quality as well as unique backgrounds that culminated after years of research undertaken at TLL. Scientists at TLL are driven by a vision to develop sustainable innovations and achieve impactful applications that will create impact for the society. In the area of agricultural sciences, TLL has devoted much effort to the development of know-how and platform technologies to improve rice crop productivity and help contribute to the food security.



Rice is the most widely cultivated crop in Asia and plays a very important role in the livelihood, history and culture of the people in Asia. There is an increased awareness on how the risk of rice shortage compounded by environmental challenges as well as demand from population growth could affect various parts of the value chain, including the livelihoods of farmers whose source of income is dependable on the yield of each harvest. The availability of rice lines that are naturally bred and imbued with traits to combat bacterial and fungal diseases as well as to overcome environmental challenges can help enhance global rice supply and impact livelihoods.

"These seeds may be of crucial importance for the future food security. Each one has something to offer, a trait that a plant breeder might need to improve the yield, resilience or disease resistance to the plants that the farmers plant from season to season." says Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food Jon Georg Dale.

"It is highly appreciated that Singapore join the Global Seed Vault mission and by that contribute to international efforts for conservation of plant genetic resources. By this deposit Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory will be gene bank number 70 to send seeds to SGSV, and be part of a distinguished group of ten institutes to deposit seeds now in October 2016." says Åsmund Asdal, Svalbard Global Seed Vault Coordinator at NordGen.

"We are highly supportive of this initiative to conserve the existing global crop diversity. The genetic information held in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault could one day provide the world with the essential elements for the sustainable development of important new crop varieties. Although TLL is based in a small non-agricultural country like Singapore, we feel that science and technology has a role to play in helping to safeguard our present biodiversity for the future. We are thus proud to be part of this meaningful



conservation effort and play our part in helping ensure food security for our common future.” says Peter Chia, Chief Operating Officer at TLL.

About Svalbard Global Seed Vault (SGSV)

Deep inside a mountain on a remote island in the Svalbard archipelago, halfway between mainland Norway and the North Pole, lies the Global Seed Vault. It is a fail-safe seed storage facility, built to stand the test of time and the challenge of natural or man-made disasters. The Seed Vault represents the world’s largest collection of crop diversity. For more information, please visit www.seedvault.no and <https://www.croptrust.org/what-we-do/svalbard-global-seed-vault/>

About Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Norway

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has chief responsibility for food policy and agricultural policy. Agricultural policy covers land utilization, agriculture and forestry, reindeer and other animal husbandry, and department of new agriculture based industries. The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is owned and governed by the Norwegian Government and The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has the administrative responsibility for the Seed Vault. For more information, please visit <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/id627/>



About Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen)

NordGen – the Nordic Genetic Resource Center – is a Nordic organization dedicated to the safeguarding and sustainable use of plants, farm animals and forests. The Nordic countries have been co-operating for more than 30 years on conservation of genetic resources. NordGen was established in January 2008 as a result of a merger between the Nordic Gene Bank, the Nordic Gene Bank Farm Animals and the Nordic Council for Forest Reproductive Material. NordGen is mainly financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers. For more information, please visit <http://www.nordgen.org>

About Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL)

TLL, established in 2002, is a beneficiary of Temasek Trust and its vision is to build a preeminent organization of global talent to undertake bio-molecular science research and applications to benefit people in Asia and beyond. The research institute focuses primarily on understanding the cellular mechanisms that underlie the development and physiology of plants, fungi and animals. Such research provides new understanding of how organisms function, and also provides foundation for biotechnology innovation. For more information, please visit www.tll.org.sg



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