Cambridge leads UK institutions in agreement on crop science with Indian government

A collaboration between leading scientists in the UK and India will focus on tackling global food shortages with research into increasing crop yields and improving disease and drought resistance.

This collaboration will create opportunities for leading experts in the UK and India to come together to tackle global challenges in the areas of food security, crop science and biotechnology. Vice-Chancellor Professor Leszek Borysiewicz.

India’s Department of Biotechnology and a consortium of British research institutions, led by the University of Cambridge, signed a Memorandum of Understanding yesterday at the Ministry of Earth Sciences in New Delhi for the establishment of a joint UK-India crop science programme.

The aim of the agreement is to enhance collaborative research, promote knowledge exchange, and support capacity building to develop resilience in food security.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the University of Cambridge by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Leszek Borysiewicz, Professor Krishnaswamy VijayRaghavan of India’s Ministry of Science and Technology, and Director of the Research Councils UK India Dr Nafees Meah, on behalf of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

It was also signed by representatives from NIAB in Cambridge; the John Innes Centre and the University of East Anglia, in Norwich and Rothamsted Research.

Professor Leszek Borysiewicz said: “This collaboration builds on the close links already established between leading researchers in the United Kingdom and India and is another great example of both countries’ commitment to growing our partnerships in translational and applied research. “This collaboration will create opportunities for leading experts in the UK and India to come together to tackle global challenges in the areas of food security, crop science and biotechnology.”

Professor VijayRaghavan said: “The United Kingdom has been a long-standing partner with the Government of India in Science and Technology, a collaboration that has grown from strength to strength.”

All parties agreed on the importance of crop science as an area of enormous potential for scientific collaboration, and its central role in driving global food security in India and beyond. The agreement foresees joint projects focusing on the fundamental science underpinning yield enhancement, disease resistance and drought resistance; research into crop re-breeding; and the translation of fundamental research into sustainable agriculture practice. It also contemplates the establishment of a joint Indo-UK Plant Science Centre in India.

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