



Submission 1
TT 28 March 2006

THE HON ALEXANDER DOWNER MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

31 MAR 2006

AS → *JSCOT*
SA

Dear Andrew

I am writing to you in relation to the Global Crop Diversity Trust Agreement done at Rome on 1 April 2004, which was tabled in Parliament on 28 March 2006.

The Global Crop Diversity Trust is a product of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which entered into force for Australia on 12 March 2006 following extensive delays in the domestic treaty process. Australia is only now in a position to consider becoming a State Party to the Global Crop Diversity Trust Agreement.

The Trust is important to Australia. We rely more heavily than most countries on imported plant genetic material to support our agricultural research and industries. Accordingly, Australia is a leading donor.

Australia is seeking to secure a position on the Executive Board of the Trust to ensure appropriate consideration of Australia's interests. An important meeting in our campaign to secure such a position is the June 2006 inaugural meeting of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Australia's Executive Board campaign would be strengthened if Australia were in a position to become a Party to the Global Crop Diversity Trust Agreement at the time of this meeting.

I would be grateful if JSCOT would consider issuing an early report on the Global Crop Diversity Trust Agreement, so as to allow Australia the possibility of acceding to the Agreement prior to the Governing Body meeting in June 2006.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Downer