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WHEAT INITIATIVE AT THE G20 CLIMATE CHANGE WORKSHOP: THE URGENCY OF ACTION CONSIDERING CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY

(Berlin) On September 2, the G20 hosted a workshop on Climate Change. The [Wheat Initiative \(WI\)](#) participated in the workshop along with colleagues from its Associated Programme “[International Wheat Yield Partnership](#)” (IWYP). The delegation included Richard Flavell (IWYP Chair of Science and Impact Executive Board), Jeff Gwyn (IWYP Programme Director) and Teresa Saavedra (WI Programme Manager, and Peter Langridge (Chair of the Scientific Board).

During the workshop, Peter Langridge took the opportunity to address the attendees: “Wheat production is particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change (...) there are positive new developments coming out of research from around the world. For example, results in Canada and Australia have shown that farmers can capture an extra few weeks growing season through novel seeding strategies; wheat breeders in India have produced wheat varieties that optimise the growing season to allow double cropping with rice.

While the technology development is largely supported at a national level, the benefits from innovations should be global to satisfy the urgent needs. This has been a major focus of the Wheat Initiative and there has been a high level of interest from both the public and private sectors and a strong collaborative ethos in the research community.”

The urgency of action becomes very clear with the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#) in mind. The Wheat Initiative was established to coordinate global wheat research thereby supporting global food security. The WI has learnt the importance of investment in the right technologies, their evaluation and implementation:

“Technologies, ideas and capabilities clearly do exist to ameliorate the impacts of climate change. The International Wheat Yield Partnership has provided a good model and example for building these delivery pathways. However, without effective and strong investments in international technology evaluation and delivery pathways by governments, we risk delaying or missing the narrow window of opportunities provided by science.”

Climate change is international and has required us to adapt and improve our technologies – it will also require us to adapt our research funding and delivery strategies but there is a long path from technology development to its application. At the international level, this path is usually slow and often relies on serendipity. Our experience in working has taught us that identifying the most appropriate technologies and devising a delivery path is not trivial. Are we capturing the full benefit of the national research activities? We need to build rapid pathways for technology evaluation; to identify what is available – largely from national research programmes, and how and where it can be applied around the globe. There are good models for doing this, but they do need to be supported and expanded.”

“In creating higher yielding wheats for delivery to public and private sectors, north and south, the International Wheat Yield Partnership is committed to mitigating the effects of climate change on wheat production. The Partnership brings together governments of different countries, scientists and delivery pipelines to maximize success and impact. It provides a proven model for international investment for food security in the face of climate change”. Richard Flavell, Chair of Scientific and Impact Executive Board, International Wheat Yield Partnership.

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