



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION NO.: 421-00859

BY: **MS. MAY (SAANICH-GULF ISLANDS)**

DATE: **NOVEMBER 2, 2016**

Print Name of Signatory: Signed by the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, PC, MP

Response by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

SIGNATURE
Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Grain industry

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

The Government of Canada notes the petitioners' support for international agricultural aid policies that support family farmers and Canadian policies and programs that protect the rights of small family farmers in developing countries to use and freely exchange seeds.

Hunger and poverty remain a major global development challenge, and a strong relationship exists between growth in agriculture, eradication of hunger and poverty, and economic prosperity in developing countries. Increasing food security is one of Canada's three priority international development themes, as outlined in Canada's Aid Effectiveness Agenda.

In many developing countries, a large number of the rural poor rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and income. Therefore, increasing long-term investments in sustainable agriculture development, focused on smallholder farmers, are key to addressing food insecurity and poverty. This enables a dynamic, growing economy that creates jobs and higher incomes and improves the food and nutritional well-being of families and communities.

Canada supports a comprehensive approach to international aid that includes initiatives to address the immediate need for food assistance and nutrition, but also the longer-term investment of supporting farmers in adopting sustainable agricultural practices, and promoting innovative research that improves agricultural productivity.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), is the international organization with a mandate to "provide and promote an effective system of plant variety protection, with the aim of encouraging the development of new varieties of plants, for the benefit of society." Participation in this international organization has the effect of stimulating investment and innovation in plant breeding which benefits farmers, consumers, and society as a whole. Canada is supportive of these goals, as are seventy-three other countries and two intergovernmental organizations, which are also members of UPOV.

Canada amended its *Plant Breeders' Rights Act* in February 2015 to bring it into conformity with the 1991 Act of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV 91). The amendments to the *Plant Breeders' Rights Act* include the explicit "farmer's privilege," which allows farmers to continue saving, conditioning (clean, treat, etc.), and storing seeds of protected plant varieties for replanting on their own land.

The Government of Canada continues to be committed to meeting the needs of our agriculture sector at home, and supporting our partners internationally to ensure food security and agricultural sustainability globally.