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MEDIA STATEMENT

PROCLAMATION OF 12 MAY AS THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLANT HEALTH

05 MAY 2022

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) welcomes the announcement by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly that it has (on the 29 March 2022) adopted the resolution proclaiming 12 May as the annual International Day of Plant Health (IDPH).

The Department views this as a positive step towards addressing the issue of global hunger as plant pests and diseases cause massive crop losses and leave millions without sufficient food supply. The day is a key legacy of the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH), which was marked in 2020–2021. This important and lasting IYPH legacy will allow all relevant stakeholders to continue with the effort of increasing public awareness on the importance of plant health. South Africa joins countries in the world to celebrate plant health as part of recognising the importance of plants to human health; animal health; environmental care and biodiversity; and socioeconomic, agricultural and rural development.

Building on the achievements of the International Year of Plant Health, the IDPH has five specific objectives:

- a) Increasing awareness on the importance of keeping plants healthy to achieve the UN 2030 agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero hunger).
- b) Ensuring safe trade by complying with international plant health standards.
- c) Strengthening early-warning systems for the early detection of and response to plant pests.
- d) Enabling sustainable pest and pesticide management to keep plants healthy while protecting the environment.
- e) Promoting investment in plant health innovations, capacity development, research and outreach.

As part of celebrating this important day, stakeholders or interested bodies are encouraged to organise IDPH events in the form of marathons, concerts, shows, exhibitions, roadshows, farmers' forums, fairs or tree planting ceremonies; host public lectures and have panel or round-table discussions with government officials, educators, scientists, farmers, traditional healers, community members and private sector representatives.

To all international travelers and traders, you are urged to please avoid illegal importation of plant and plant products and to declare plants and plant products at ports before entering the country. At national level, people must refrain from moving regulated host plants and plant products from quarantine to non-quarantine areas without removal permits. Farmers should adopt sustainable pest management practices as part of caring for the health of plants. Ensuring plant health is a shared responsibility among all of us.



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