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**International Committee: scientific meeting on facilitated access for researchers to plants and other genetic resources**

*Berne, Switzerland, 30 May. At a workshop of the Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (CFRS) last Friday in Berne, Switzerland, it was asserted that researchers need access to plants and other genetic resources for non-commercial research. Research results are indispensable to maintain biodiversity. The meeting of international scientists took place at the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) and forms the basis to sensibilise the international scientific community by the CFRS, a body of the International Council for Science (ICSU).*

The decisions adopted in Nagoya in 2010 on the so-called "Access and Benefit Sharing" (ABS) System, regulating the access to plants and other genetic resources, are currently being transposed into national law in many countries. But there is considerable flexibility in how these decisions can be legally interpreted. The meeting insisted that scientists must be involved in this process of drafting legislation. To ensure access to plants and other genetic resources, their sustainable utilisation and the rights of the provider countries, measures are required on the part of the research community as well as governments. The SCNAT has been working on these issues over the past 10 years, the insights of which were reflected in the workshop.

According to an agreement concluded between ICSU and SCNAT last Friday, the SCNAT will host the CFRS Secretariat, thereby making a significant contribution at the international level to safeguarding freedom and responsibility of scientists in the conduct of their work.

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#### For further information

- CFRS: <http://www.icsu.org/about-icsu/structure/committees/freedom-responsibility>
- ICSU: <http://www.icsu.org>

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The **International Council for Science (ICSU)** is a non-governmental organisation with a global membership of national scientific bodies (121 Members, representing 141 countries) and International Scientific Unions (30 Members). Its mission is to strengthen international science for the benefit of society. To do this, ICSU mobilises the knowledge and resources of the international science community. The CFRS serves as the guardian of the ICSU Universality of Science Principle. This embodies freedom of movement, association, expression and communication for scientists, as well as equitable access to data, information and research materials. Equally important, it requires responsibility at all levels to carry out and communicate scientific work with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency.