



25 August 2010

The Honorable Dmitry A. Medvedev
President of the Russian Federation
23, Ilyinka Street,
Moscow, 103132, Russia

Most honorable President Dmitry Medvedev,

We write with great respect to express our concern about plans to destroy the living crop collections of the Pavlovsk Experiment Station of the Vavilov Research Institute of Plant Industry (VIR). These valuable and irreplaceable collections of diversity of fruit and fodder crops have been maintained since the time of Nikolai Vavilov. Many people consider Vavilov to be a Russian hero because he was an internationally renowned botanical scientist of the 20th century, and because of his indomitable efforts to collect and preserve genetic diversity for crop improvement. The living treasures currently grown at Pavlovsk are important for the future of Russian and worldwide agriculture. We believe that it would be extremely shortsighted to destroy these unique collections.

We are botanists and other plant scientists who have enduring interests and expertise in the study of crop diversity, and are committed to teaching and research focused on conserving the diversity of crops and their wild relatives for future generations. We are aware of the extensive work that has been invested in building and maintaining the Pavlovsk crop collections. As the global climate changes, the Pavlovsk collections may be valuable sources of genes for pest and disease resistance, as well as genetic resources useful in adapting crops to changing climates, allowing their cultivation in more northerly regions.

We know that you have received the appeal of the court's decision of 11 August 2010 that went against Pavlovsk Experiment Station, and that you stated on 13 August 2010 that you "[g]ave the instruction for this issue to be scrutinised." We also know that the Russian Federation made commitments under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) to protect genetic diversity, a commitment that includes protecting the diversity represented by the plant collections at Pavlosk Station.

As you know, 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. In honor of this celebration of the Earth's biodiversity, we implore you to save the world's largest repository of priceless genetic resources of fruit and berry crops and fodder crops at the Pavlovsk Experiment Station.

With great respect,

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