

## **Geoffrey Hawtin**

Geoffrey Hawtin is an agricultural scientist and research leader with expertise in agrobiodiversity and plant breeding. He has directed two CGIAR Centres: Bioversity International (then IPGRI - International Plant Genetic Resources Institute) in Rome from 1991 to 2003 and Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) in Colombia from 2008 to 2009. He led the creation of the Global Crop Diversity Trust and was its first CEO. He has also served as Director of the Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Sciences Division of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, and was Deputy Director General of the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Syria. He has served, among others, on the Boards of Trustees of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, and CATIE, Costa Rica, as well as the System Management Board of CGIAR. He has MA and PhD degrees from Cambridge University, and in 2017 was awarded an OBE by Queen Elizabeth II for *“services to global agrobiodiversity conservation, subsistence livelihood enhancement and sustainable food programmes”*. In 2024 he was awarded the World Food Prize, jointly with Cary Fowler, for *“their extraordinary leadership in preserving and protecting the world's heritage of crop biodiversity and mobilizing this critical resource to defend against threats to global food security.”*

### **Abstracts of the MS Swaminathan Centennial Lecture by Geoffrey Hawtin**

#### **Seeds On Ice: Conserving Crop Diversity So Our Children Can Eat**

Conserving the vast diversity of our crops was a topic very close to Dr M.S. Swaminathan's heart, not only the scientific and technical aspects but also ethical and policy concerns. While genetic diversity underpinned the Green Revolution, it also confers resilience in today's agriculture and provides the raw material and information needed to help ensure future nutritional and environmental security. Yet this diversity has already been depleted and we continue to lose material from the wild, farmers' fields, and even the genebanks set up to safeguard it. Efforts are underway globally to stem this loss and facilitate its use. These include expanding *in situ* conservation, helping farmers maintain and improve their varieties, and supporting local, national, and international genebanks. Much has been achieved, but further research is needed, policies must be refined, and the conservation system strengthened worldwide. All of this requires resources that are increasingly hard to come by. But without adequate political and financial support, we limit our options for helping ensure our children and grandchildren will be able to have adequate, healthy and varied diets.