**press release**

MAY 28, 2018

*10th World Potato Congress*

**CIP helping high Andes potato systems adapt to climate change**

**Cusco, 28 May 2018 -** Climate change is one of the major challenges facing agriculture on a global scale, and at the 10th World Potato Congress, projections and initiatives from specialists in the field were part of today’s plenaries and technical sessions, sharing strategies and seeking solutions that can be replicated at different latitudes.

*"To combat climate change we have to combine several things, starting with the varieties of potato sown, which need to be resistant to drought and frost, and to rising temperatures, because these are the factors that may occur in the future. We also need a wide diversity of crops, in order to be ready for any scenario that may arise. And finally, as far as the Andean zone is concerned, we have to improve irrigation systems so that farmers can continue producing if there is no rainfall,”* said Oscar Ortíz, Deputy Director General for Research and Development at the International Potato Center (CIP).

According to CIP projections, temperatures in the Andes will increase by between one and three degrees Celsius in coming decades allowing, for example, several species of insects to multiply and begin to appear at altitudes where previously they did not exist, and transmit diseases to crops. Native potatoes will be the most affected since for thousands of years they have remained protected thanks to stable temperatures. Climate change generating more humidity could also encourage the appearance of late blight, which is the single most important disease in potato.

"*Andean farmers grow potato varieties, selected by their ancestors thousands of years ago, which have remained under climatic conditions, with certain predictable variations, to this day. Those crops may not be able to respond so quickly to change and we may lose the option of preserving them. We need to develop new varieties that guarantee sustainability and food security. The genebank offers a great opportunity, through the conservation of biodiversity, for us to quickly identify the accessions that have resistant genes for these scenarios,"* said David Ellis, Head of the CIP Genebank.

Both scientists agree that at the moment very few countries have the tools to face climate change. It requires a better understanding of risk, investment in research, preserving biodiversity, and developing new varieties, technologies and methods for farmers to produce under diverse, changing conditions. In the end it is the farmer who takes decisions, and therefore it is essential to share with them knowledge about the best alternatives for ensuring food sustainability.

The government of Peru, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MINAGRI), is promoting the organization of the 10th World Potato Congress and XXVIII Congress of the Latin American Potato Association - ALAP 2018, held in the city of Cusco from May 27 to 31.

**About CIP**

The International Potato Center (CIP), with headquarters in Lima, was founded in 1971 as a root and tuber research-for-development institution delivering sustainable solutions to the pressing world problems of hunger, poverty and the degradation of natural resources. CIP is custodian to a collection of potato, sweetpotato and Andean roots and tubers including the world’s largest collection of potato diversity. CIP has regional offices in Peru, Ecuador, Kenia, India and China and works all over the world with projects in 20 developing countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

CIP is part of the CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food security, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring a more sustainable management of natural resources. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR Centers, in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector. [www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org)

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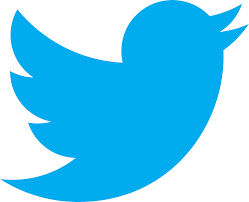
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