



## Press Release

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## For immediate release

### New agreement boosts drive to more sustainable agriculture

*Ministry of Agriculture signs memorandum of understanding with IWMI to promote organic resources for sustainable agricultural intensification*

**(Colombo, 11 March 2016).** A new agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture and the International Water Management Institute will help develop initiatives to improve waste-derived compost using nutrient enrichment and pelletizing technologies. Signed at the Ministry on Thursday, 4<sup>h</sup> March 2016, by Mr. B. Wijayaratne, Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Jeremy Bird, Director General of the International Water Management Institute, the new MoU offers an important opportunity for sustainable intensification of agriculture on the island.

IWMI has been actively experimenting in Asia and Africa with composting using multiple organic waste sources (co-composting) and pelletizing. IWMI has already initiated research in Sri Lanka converting the organic part of municipal waste and septage into safe fertilizer pellets for agriculture. The new MoU will expand this work with comprehensive crop trials in different areas of the island, including plantations.

IWMI will provide a pelletizing machine for the Ministry of Agriculture which will be used for experiments and train the farmers at the Regional Agricultural Research & Development Centre, Makandura.

“While crops need nutrients, soils need organic matter to store water and nutrients”, said the Head of IWMI’s Sri Lanka Program, Herath Manthirithilake. “The solutions we are supporting with research combine both elements which can save on expensive imported fertilizer and ultimately could create new jobs in the local compost industry.”

The Ministry of Agriculture and IWMI will collaboratively conduct the agronomic trials for the new product, targeting various climatic zones and local soil types. The research will hopefully provide the evidence needed to implement the approach more widely.

Sri Lanka was a signatory to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals agreed last year, which include a commitment to more sustainable food production.

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**Notes for editors:**

The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** is a non-profit, scientific research organization, headquartered in Colombo, which focuses on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. IWMI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. It leads the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems which examines how we can intensify agriculture while still protecting the environment and lifting millions of farm families out of poverty. [www.iwmi.org](http://www.iwmi.org)

The **CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)** combines the resources of 11 CGIAR Centers, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and numerous national, regional and international partners to provide an integrated approach to natural resource management research. WLE promotes a new approach to sustainable intensification in which a healthy functioning ecosystem is seen as a prerequisite to agricultural development, resilience of food systems and well-being. This program is led by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a member of the CGIAR Consortium and is supported by CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future. [wle.cgiar.org](http://wle.cgiar.org)