



KIGALI SET TO HOST AFSTA CONGRESS IN MARCH 2025

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AFSTA Congress 2025 Kigali, Rwanda

3-5 March 2025
Kigali Serena Hotel



sugarcane, among others. About 61% of Rwandan soil is suitable for agriculture as the soils are fertile.

It is amidst this background that the country will host the 25th AFSTA Annual Congress from March 3-5, 2025 in Kigali.

According to the Secretary General of AFSTA, Dr Yacouba Diallo, the secretariat and the National Organising Committee based in Kigali have put all their hands on the deck to ensure that the Congress lives up to its expectations.

"We hope to surpass 400 delegates we usually receive during our congresses," he told E-Review.

For a country where smallholder farmers contribute to 75% of its agricultural Rwanda stands out as a potential new frontier for commercial seed business, according to seed experts.

Rwanda's principal crops include coffee, pyrethrum, tea, flowers, beans, cassava banana, Irish potatoes, rice, wheat,

Rwanda has developed a robust document called the **Rwandan National Seed Strategic Roadmap**, which addresses the needs of the country's seed sector. Created through consultations with various stakeholders, this document offers a comprehensive plan to guide the industry towards success and sustainable growth.

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AFSTA Briefs



KENYAN RESEARCHERS RELEASE ARMYWORM-RESISTANT MAIZE SEED

Story link: <https://www.millingmea.com/kenyan-researchers-release-armyworm-resistant-maize-seeds/>

The Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) researchers have released new maize varieties resistant to fall armyworms in a move to boost food security in the country.

Dr. Eliud Kireger, Director General at KALRO said the new seeds were developed to contain the spread of the dangerous migratory pest.

Fall armyworm is a destructive insect pest that poses a significant threat to over 80 crop species, including maize, rice, sorghum, and legumes.

"We expect farmers to increase production in coming years once they start planting the new armyworm-tolerant varieties and eventual expansion of area under farming," Kireger said.

This comes after the research institute, during its Second Strategic Plan 2023/24–2027/28 official launch on April 17, sought the private sector's participation in commercializing innovative agricultural technologies developed by KALRO.

"Our mission at KALRO is to innovate and develop superior crop varieties, while the private sector plays a crucial role in multiplying and delivering these to farmers," explained Kireger.

According to Kireger, the National Varieties Release Committee, which is chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture approved the seeds on February 20 last year.

This followed recommendations by the National Performance Trail Committee led by the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service.



Maize sorting process in a laboratory

The approval saw the release of FAWTH2001, FAWTH2002 and FAWTH2003 maize varieties.

"After final approval by the NVRC and eventual gazettelement, the seeds will be released to commercial seed companies for production, before planting season," Kireger said.

CIMMYT grants US\$500,000 to boost agriculture in Kenya

Dr. Kireger made remarks at the inauguration of a \$500,000 (KES 62.3 million) agricultural infrastructure project funded by donors and overseen by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).

The facilities include a seed drier shed, cold room and water reservoir to support irrigation.

On his part, Prassana Boddupalli, CIMMYT Director said the armyworm-tolerant maize varieties were realised through combined efforts of local and international research organisations.

According to him, the organizations have been working on the Plant Health Innovation Platform (PHIP) that seeks to use integrated pest management of the pests using technology.

"The maize varieties have been developed from Mexico germplasm or Cuban and they have been systematically transferred in Africa. They have passed the national performance trial by the KEPHIS," said Boddupalli.

James Karanja, a maize breeder working with Kalro said they will provide farmers with maize varieties that will address drought, pests and diseases.

"We urge seed growers to come inbound and help to multiply the seeds so that farmers can benefit from these climate-smart technologies," he said.

Story link: <https://www.millingmea.com/kenyan-researchers-release-armyworm-resistant-maize-seeds/>

ZAMBIA: CHIEF REGULATOR CALLS FOR PARTNERSHIP ON GENETIC MODIFICATION

By AFSTA Secretariat | aghan@afsta.org



Mr Lackson Tonga Zambia National Biosafety Authority Chief

Zambia's National Biosafety Authority chief, Mr Lackson Tonga has asked the seed sector to stop labelling Zambia as an anti-GMOs state urging them and the world to look at opportunities that the technology stand to offer Africa.

While addressing this year's African Biosafety Coordination Partners Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, he regretted that this notion has presented a missed opportunity and urged research institutes in the country to wake up and start working together on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

"There is need to change and work together to enable biotech work in Zambia to thrive," he said.

On her part, Dr Florence Wambugu, CEO, Africa Harvest noted that politicians have largely derailed adoption of GMOs in Africa. She gave the example of Uganda where a lot of funding on GMOs work has not yielded much in terms of acceptance of the technology.

While making a presentation at the same meeting, Dr. Sam Timpo of Africa Biosafety of The African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE) a continent-wide biosafety service and resource network for African regulators and policymakers. He urged the seed sector to look at the Cartagena Protocol as an enabler and a saving grace than a problem while tackling biosafety issues.

MOZAMBIQUE: STUDY SHOWS THAT 90% OF SEEDS IN THE COUNTRY ARE NOT CERTIFIED

Nearly 90 per cent of materials planted by farmers in Mozambique, are grains and not certified seed, a new report has revealed.

The study conducted by the country's Seed Sector Promotion Association in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations was alarmed at the high numbers who have given certified seed a wide berth..

While releasing the findings of the report, Celso Ruface, an expert in seed technology at FAO, explained that the use of grain instead of seeds contributes to low crop productivity.

"We identify fake seeds often after sowing the product; when different plants start to appear, with very different characteristics. During production, we find that the grain looks different, one is shorter, another is longer, various colors and so on; so it

is work that was done during a campaign that has no use as a seed and we go back to using grain," he said.

Celso Ruface emphasized the need to hold accountable the economic agents who market fake seeds of dubious origin.

Story link: <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-study-shows-that-about-90-of-the-seeds-circulating-in-the-country-are-not-certified-257095/>

LIBERIA INCREASED RICE PRODUCTION BY 53 PERCENT IN 2023

By Judoemue M. Kollie



Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah, Liberia's Agriculture Minister. | (Photo Credit - MoA, Liberia)

Liberia's rice production increased by 53 percent in 2023, its agriculture minister, Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah said recently.

Minister Nuetah termed the increase in rice production as a remarkable success.

"I realised that from the report of the Emergency Rice Production Offensive (ERPO) initiative, we developed 18,000 hectares with rice seed varieties which is remarkable. It is remarkable because at

the results of the intervention based on the record, we were able to produce 30,000 metric tons of rice, which is a part of our success stories," he said during the opening of the Stakeholders Engagement Forum on Addressing Pricing and Market Linkages in the rice and cassava value chains.

The Stakeholders Engagement Forum was held in Monrovia in June to address challenges faced within the rice and cassava value chains following the successful implementation of the Liberian government's World Bank funded ERPO initiative.

Liberia relies significantly on rice import to meet consumption requirements for its population. Report from the Food and Agriculture Organization shows that in 2022 the country imported approximately 350,000 metric tons of rice.

Though the nation imports huge quantities of rice each year, frantic efforts are being made to produce more of it domestically.

According to the World Bank 2023 report, growth in the agricultural sector which accelerated to 5.9 percent in 2022 from 3.3 percent in 2021 was driven mainly by increase in the production of rice and cassava.

The agriculture minister has set a target to support farmers to produce 50,000 metric tons of rice annually within the next six years. He said the target metric tonnage of lowland rice will ensure sufficient rice annually to reduce importation.



13 International organizations sign historic agreement to fight illegal seed practices

By Staff Reporter



The African Seed Trade Association is among 12 organisations that have teamed up together with the International Seed Federation (ISF) in the fight against illegal seed practices (ISP). This was done through a historic memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed at the ISF World Seed Congress 2024 last May.

The outfits have been drawn from those who represent and defend the interests of plant breeders worldwide.

The other organisations on the fold include the Asia and Pacific Seed Alliance (APSA), Euroseeds, the Seed Association of the Americas

(SAA), the Anti-Infringement Bureau for Intellectual Property Rights on Plant Material (AIB), the Breeders Trust, CIOFORA (International Community of Breeders of Asexually Reproduced Horticultural Plants), CropLife International, Gestión de Licencias Vegetales (GESLIVE), SICASOV, the Seed Innovation Protection Alliance (SIPA), and the Seeds Innovation and Protection Initiative (SIPI).

Through this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), these organizations aim to enhance awareness of and promote the implementation of Legal Seed and Plant Practices globally. These practices support value creation in the agricultural and

horticultural sectors and drive innovation for farmers and growers. Such innovation is vital for developing plant varieties that address the current and future needs of plant breeders, including adaptation to climate change and resistance to various pests and diseases.

"It is time that we act together to raise awareness about not only the magnitude but also the serious consequences that illegal activities in seeds may have not only economically to seed companies and farmers but also to consumers," said Marco van Leeuwen, President of ISF.

"The MoU was signed here today at our centennial congress to send a clear message: events like the ISF World Seed Congress must not become a platform for infringers to trade in illegal seeds," said Michael Keller, Secretary General of ISF. "In fact, ISF has put in place a procedure to exclude entities and individuals who are proven to commit illegal seed practices from future congresses."



AFSTA Briefs

By AFSTA Secretariat | afsta@afsta.org

AFSTA signs MoU with the International Seed Federation (ISF)



AFSTA Board, Secretariat, SANSOR and ISF SG during the signing of the MoU in Rotterdam

On the sidelines of the 100th edition of World Seed Congress 2024 in Rotterdam, Netherlands (May 27-29, 2024), the voice of the seed sector in continent, the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) signed an MoU with the International Seed Federation (ISF). Among other things, the two seed associations agreed to collaborate on key seed activities in each other's calendar. Four AFSTA staffers, Dr Yacouba Diallo, Secretary General, Charles Nyachae, Logistics and Information Technology Officer, Catherine Lang'at, Manager Technical Services and Mrs Mercy Bor, Accountant and Finance Manager, attended the Congress.

AFSTA applauds the implementation of the Plant Variety Protection in the ARIPO Member States

The AFSTA Secretary General participated in the Regional Workshop on Plant Variety Protection for ARIPO Member States, held in Accra, Ghana, from June 19th to 21st, 2024, organized by the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), in cooperation with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Agriculture of Ghana. During the Workshop, the participant for the 17 countries of ARIPO and international organization (UPOV, ISF, AFSTA, USPTO) discussed tools and information relevant for effective collaboration with key stakeholders in the legislative and UPOV membership and Arusha Protocol accession procedures. The Workshop provided room to share the experience and the lessons learned from the long process of Ghana in becoming UPOV member.

New Secretary General visits SEMAE headquarters France

On June 1, 2024, Dr Yacouba Diallo, AFSTA Secretary General together with Catherine Langat (AFSTA Technical Manager) visited SEMAE headquarters, France. The meeting provided an opportunity to deepen collaboration between AFSTA/SEMAE and foster its strategic goals and strengthening the deployed services and linkages between SEMAE and national seed associations in Africa.



AFSTA and SEMAE Team in France

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Secretariat at annual African Biosafety Initiative Meeting

From June 4 to 6, 2024, two AFSTA Staffers, Aghan Daniel, AFSTA Communication lead in charge of Biotechnology and Ms Catherine Lang'at, Technical Manager and in charge of Plant Breeding Innovations attended the African Biosafety Initiative (ABCI) partners meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. Experts from both the private and public sectors are discussed trends and developments in plant biotechnology across the continent. The discussions included updates on various ongoing initiatives, the current regulatory challenges in managing agricultural biotech products, and the opportunities on the horizon. AFSTA, representing the African private seed sector, is participated in the discussions, emphasizing the need for an enabling regulatory environment to unlock the full benefits of plant breeding innovation in light of climate change and the continent's growing population.

AFSTA Board says goodbye to Mr Justin Rakotoarisaona



The AFSTA Board has officially sent out a statement to all members of the association, partners and all seed stakeholders informing them of the departure of Mr. Justin Rakotoarisaona from the AFSTA Secretariat after 24 years of exemplary service to the African seed sector and beyond.

"We are deeply grateful for his guidance and leadership during his tenure with AFSTA," said the statement signed by the President, Mr Amodou Sarr.

"We are also pleased to welcome Dr. Yacouba Diallo to the AFSTA family as our new Secretary General. Dr. Diallo assumed office in April 2024, and we look forward to your continued support in advancing AFSTA's mission. We wish Justin a joyful retirement as he embarks on new endeavors in the seed industry," the statement noted.

For any matters concerning AFSTA, please feel free to contact Dr. Yacouba at yacouba@afsta.org.

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AFSTA Congratulates Burkina Faso for OECD admission

The Secretary General of AFSTA, Dr Yacouba Diallo, has applauded Burkina Faso for joining the OECD Seed Schemes for the Varietal Certification.

In a short congratulatory message, Dr Diallo said that this step is proof that the national seed certification procedures comply with the international standards in the country.

Burkina Faso joins a growing list of African countries that are in the OECD Seed schemes. At the occasion of the 2024 Annual meeting of the OECD meetings that are currently taking place in France, Burkina Faso was positively considered to join the OECD seed schemes. Quality seeds is the backbone for food security as well as the economic development and stability of African farmers, who rely on Agriculture as an economic activity. AFSTA partnering with the national seed trade associations are closely collaborating with the national authorities in public private partnerships to assure that the quality of seeds reaching the farmers is guaranteed through schemes such as the OECD seed schemes.

AFSTA kicks off Biotech training in Nigeria

In an effort to enhance the pace of adoption of crop biotech in priority countries, AFSTA, last year, rolled out a program to train members on biotechnology. These trainings are geared towards constantly engaging and updating seed company officials and farmers on the latest happenings in the biotech space.

This initiative has seen trainings on understanding of the technology carried out in Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria.

The latter, which is the latest on board through its national seed trade association known as Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN), held its first training on June 12, 2024 for the ten member committee. The outfit is mainly composed of home-grown companies who have often felt left out of the biotech conversation.

"We wanted to start the conversation from simple topics such as types of biotechnology and key terminologies used in the technology," said Alhaji Yusuf Ado-Kibiya, President SEEDAN.

On his part, the chairman of the committee, Olonilua Femi, noted that they also wanted to know the steps in modern biotechnology research. He added that the trainings have come at the right time given the widespread antagonistic campaign against genetically modified organisms in Nigeria.

Genetic Resource and Digital Sequence Information

AFSTA, represented by the Technical Manager, Catherine Lang'at, participated in the stakeholder and Rights holder Dialogue on Digital Sequence Information (DSI) Negotiations at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which took place in May 2024 under Chatham House Rule and involved representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), industry, and non-commercial research institutions. The convening spearheaded by the Meridian Institute was the first of its kind in bringing together these critical rightsholders and stakeholders to share perspectives on the multilateral mechanism (MLM) for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund. AFSTA made a presentation and shared the discussion around the use of DSI in the seed sector. The overall discussion covered three major topics: data governance; physical genetic resources and the DSI MLM; and DSI global fund disbursement.

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Genetic Resource and Digital Sequence Information

In May 2024, AFSTA, represented by Technical Manager Catherine Lang'at, participated in a stakeholder and Rights holder Dialogue on Digital Sequence Information (DSI) Negotiations at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The event, organized by the Meridian Institute under Chatham House Rule, brought together representatives from Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), industry, and non-commercial research institutions. This first-of-its-kind meeting aimed to discuss perspectives on a multilateral mechanism (MLM) for benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, including a global fund. AFSTA presented and discussed the use of DSI in the seed sector, focusing on data governance, physical genetic resources, the DSI MLM, and global fund disbursement.

In preparation for the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16) and the concurrent meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols in October 2024, AFSTA has been actively participating in monthly CBD Informal Advisory Group (IAG) meetings, representing the seed sector and contributing to the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group of COP 16.



Registration is open to all seed companies operating in Africa

[Register Now!](#)

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[Click here to register for the Consortium](#)

Establishment and the Role of ACLBC

Established by the **African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA)** and the **International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)** through the **Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)**, the focal emphasis of such a consortium is multifaceted. Primarily, it enables sharing genetic resources and breeding techniques to superior crop varieties. Private sector participants invest in crop breeding research, seed multiplication and distribution channels, which facilitate farmer access to seeds of improved crop varieties by farmers more rapidly than the public programmes alone could achieve. The consortium also serves as an incubator for innovation in plant breeding technologies, harnessing cutting-edge techniques like molecular breeding. Moreover, it creates commercial opportunities for businesses involved in agri-inputs production and marketing with reference to seeds, agrochemicals, farming equipment, and other related services.

SAVE THE DATE
AFSTA CONGRESS 2025, KIGALI, RWANDA, 5-7 MARCH 2025



AFSTA CONGRESS
2025 Kigali
Rwanda
5th - 7th March, 2025
Serena Kigali, Rwanda



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Your logo will be linked to your website or if you want to advertise a particular product you can send us artwork to be linked to your logo. The cost of the website advert is US\$ 400 for AFSTA members and US\$500 for Non members for a period of one year.

Contact : Charles Nyachae, ICT & Logistics Officer on: charles@afsta.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Rwanda National Seed Congress: 31st July to 1st August 2023, Kigali, Rwanda
2. Euroseeds Congress 2024, 13th - 16th October 2024: Copenhagen, Denmark
3. APSA Congress 2024: 2 - 6 December, 2024 Sanya, China
4. **25th AFSTA Congress 2025, 5th - 7th March 2025: Kigali, Rwanda:**

EDITORIAL:

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Disclaimer:

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