

AFSTA CONGRESS 2025 ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS!

By Aghan Daniel I AFSTA Communication Officer | daghan@afsta.org

Online registration for the AFSTA Congress 2025 is now open. This extraordinary Congress which will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of AFSTA, will be held from 3rd to 5th March 2025 at Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda.

To register for the event, please visit the AFSTA website at <https://www.afsta.org> and select the AFSTA Congress 2025 logo. This action will redirect you to a range of registration options, including access to the Online Registration Form.

Participating in the AFSTA Congress 2025 is an effective way for seed companies to promote their brand, conduct market research, and showcase their products and services to commercial partners and consumers.

The congress will gather global seed industry professionals, policymakers, and researchers, facilitating valuable connections that can lead to collaborations and partnerships. There are also reserved trading tables that can be used to set up

appointments for B-to-B meetings.

The 2025 Congress theme is “25 Years Strong: Innovating Quality Seed for Africa’s Sustainable Agriculture”. Through plenary sessions, panel discussions, talk shows and round tables, the delegates will be engaged in various topics, including the future trends and vision for the African seed industry, the state and future of plant breeding invocation in Africa, the regional and continental framework for seed industry development in Africa, the innovations in seed certification schemes and quality assurance, the

African seed market access and issues on the movement of quality seed across the borders, the women in the seed sector etc.

Upon finalisation of

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registration, delegates need to book accommodation at the earliest convenience in one of the hotels whose rates have been negotiated by the National Organising Committee (NOC) sitting in Kigali, Rwanda. The venue of the Congress is Hotel Serena Kigali .

“Delegates are encouraged to take advantage of our early bird registration discount, which ends on 31st January 2025,” stated Mrs Kate Ojunga, ,the Chairperson of the National Organising Committee.

She added that non-members do not require a code to register. A code has been sent to AFSTA members by the AFSTA Secretariat to aid them in registering as they enjoy discounted rates on AFSTA memberships.

Overall, the congress offers opportunities for networking, information and knowledge sharing, as well as showcasing technologies and innovations. For those interested in advocacy and representation, this is the event to attend. Cultivating collaboration with research and breeding institutions, together with media visibility, forms the crux of interactions at this quarter-century-old event gathering.

AFSTA CONGRESS 2025

★ **Kigali, Rwanda**

Date: 3-5 March 2025
Venue: Serena Kigali Hotel

Register online Now!!
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www.afsta.org/congress

AFSTA 25 Years

The African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) & the National Seed Association of Rwanda NSAR

invite you to the biggest seed sector Congress in Africa

AFSTA CONGRESS 2025 Kigali Rwanda
3rd - 5th March, 2025
Serena Kigali, Rwanda

From 3rd - 5th March 2025
at the Kigali Serena Hotel in Rwanda

AFSTA 25 Years

NSAR National Seed Association of Rwanda



M E R R Y

Christmas

AFSTA wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025! Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to strengthening our partnership in the year ahead.

AFSTA Board & Secretariat

SAVE THE DATE
AFSTA CONGRESS 2025, KIGALI, RWANDA, 3-5 MARCH 2025



AFSTA CONGRESS
2025 Kigali
Rwanda
3rd -5th March 2025
Kigali Serena Hotel



REGISTER NOW FOR EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT
FOR AFSTA CONGRESS 2025

www.afsta.org/congress

The AFSTA Board of Directors elected the Rainbow Nation to host the annual Congress of AFSTA in 2026

By AFSTA Correspondent I afsta@afsta.org



AFSTA Board Members pose for a photograph during the October meeting in Nairobi, Kenya

The 2026 AFSTA Congress will be held in South Africa; this was one of the major decisions made when the Board of Directors met in Nairobi from 10th to 11th October 2024.

The Board also picked Kenya to host the showpiece in 2027, Zambia in 2028. This change in allocating hosts in advance is essential as it aims to boost attendance numbers and enhance AFSTA's financial revenue from the upcoming Congresses.

During the meeting, the Board also approved the 2025 – 2027 Strategic areas of priority, focusing on (i) seed market Reach, (ii) financial stability of AFSTA, (iii) rebranding the organisation and (iv) strategic partnerships.

In the coming days, the board will lead on ensuring that AFSTA concentrates on topics prioritized in AFSTA's strategic plan where it has a comparative advantage. For other topics, AFSTA could leave the leadership to other associations while collaborating with them to ensure that African positions are considered in the discussion process.

The Board of Directors has reviewed AFSTA's constitution and bylaws to better reflect the current state and future of the seed industry and its updated vision and mission.

AFSTA LAUNCHES OFFICIAL LINKEDIN PAGE, ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO ENGAGE ACROSS DIGITAL PLATFORMS

By Charles Nyachae | charles@afsta.org

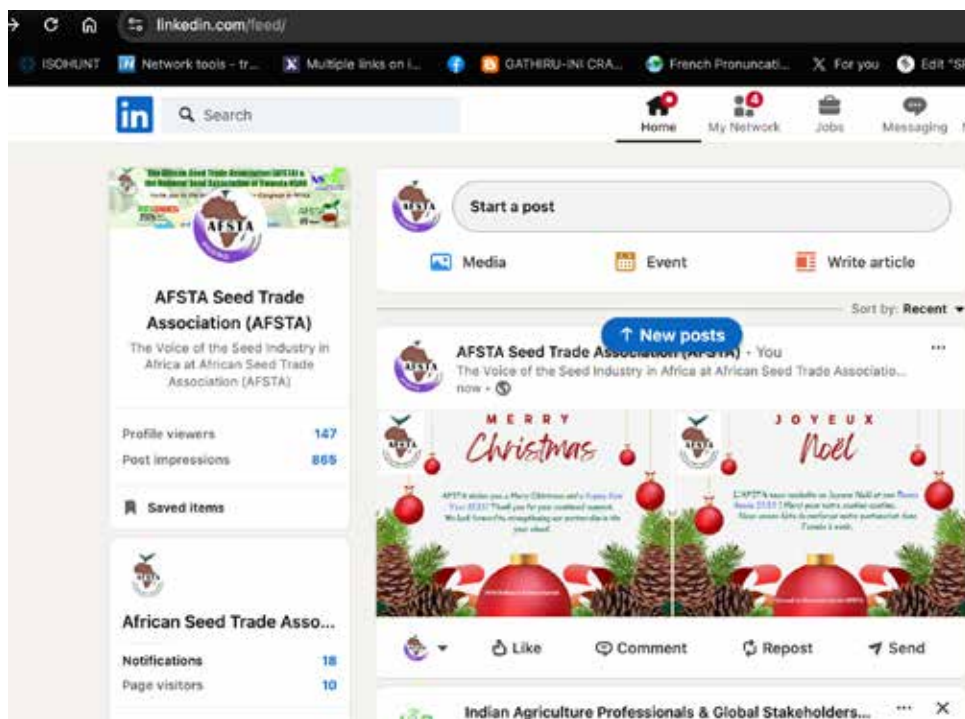
The African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) has launched its official LinkedIn page, designed to further connect, inform, and engage with stakeholders across the seed industry.

The association invites all AFSTA members, industry professionals, and stakeholders to follow the [AFSTA LinkedIn](#) page to stay updated on industry news, events, and developments.

In addition to LinkedIn, AFSTA encourages members to actively engage with its broader digital presence including its website, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube channels. These platforms offer valuable resources, industry insights, and real-time updates that support AFSTA's mission to drive growth and innovation in Africa's seed sector.

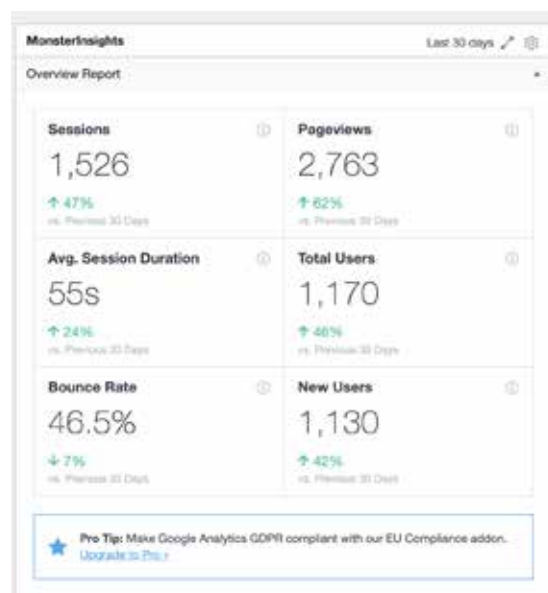
As part of ongoing commitment to providing value to members, the association also reminds members that registration for the AFSTA Congress 2025 is now open, with Early Bird discounted rates available. This is a unique opportunity to connect with industry leaders, share knowledge, and participate in shaping the future of seed trade in Africa.

Furthermore, AFSTA members can promote their brands and services on the AFSTA homepage



for just USD 400 per year, with non-members eligible at a rate of USD 600. This offers excellent visibility to a targeted audience in the seed industry, ensuring your message reaches the right people.

“Stay connected, stay informed, and take advantage of these exciting opportunities as AFSTA continues to build a stronger, more collaborative seed sector in Africa”.



BREEDING AND VARIETY RELEASE DOMINATE DISCUSSIONS AT SEED INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER LEARNING WORKSHOP IN KAMPALA

By AFSTA Secretariat | afsta@afsta.org



Participants at the Stakeholder learning visit in Kampala, Uganda

The African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) through its Technical manager Ms. Catherine Langat, joined African seed industry stakeholders for a learning event convened by AGRA's Centre of Excellence for Seed Systems in Africa (CESSA—AGRA) in Kampala from November 25 to 29, 2024. Ugandan Seed Trade Association (USTA), the African Union as well as representatives from individual seed companies, regulators, distributors, technology providers, development partners, ONE CGIAR and farmers also attended the meeting.

All these stakeholders in the seed industry discussed challenges and shared experiences on the seed system components ranging from breeding, variety release and maintenance, early generation seed production, quality commercial seed production, farmer awareness and participation, seed markets and distribution, national seed policy and regulatory environment. Participants were drawn from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Under the event's theme:

cultivating knowledge-advancing seed systems through collaboration and innovation, AFSTA took part in a panel discussion on the topic *Key Stakeholder responses to challenges and opportunities in Seed Systems*. Discussions at the event confirmed the importance of continued collaboration and partnership between the private seed sector represented by AFSTA and other stakeholders in the African seed industry notably AGRA.



WHY ATTEND THE 2025 AFSTA CONGRESS?

Benefits of Participating in the 2025 AFSTA Congress

Attending the AFSTA Congress in Kigali, scheduled for March 3-5, 2025, offers numerous benefits for stakeholders in the seed industry. Here are some of the key advantages of 3 full days of Interactive Programming:

1. Marketing and Trading

Opportunities: Participating in the AFSTA Congress 2025 is an effective way for seed companies to promote their brand, conduct market research, showcase their products and services to commercial partners and consumers.

2. Networking and Collaboration

Opportunities: The congress will gather global seed industry professionals, policymakers, and researchers, facilitating valuable connections that can lead to collaborations and partnerships. There are also reserved trading tables that can be used to seek appointments.

3. Information and Knowledge Sharing

Participants in the AFSTA Congress will have access to workshops and presentations on the latest seed industry trends globally to enhance understanding of the industry to enable them to improve their operations.

4. Market Insights

Attendees can gain insights into market dynamics, regulatory frameworks, and best practices that can help them navigate the complexities of the seed industry in Africa.

5. Showcasing technologies and Innovations

The congress features exhibitors showcasing new technologies,

products, services and providing participants with first-hand knowledge of advancements that can improve the operations of the participants

6. Advocacy and Representation

The event serves as a platform for the AFSTA African Seed Trade Association and the global industry to stay informed about industry issues and to advocate for the interests of the private seed sector, ensuring that the voices of private sector are heard in policy discussions.

7. Cultivating Collaboration with research and breeding institutions

Transferring seed technologies to seed companies for commercialisation: In Partnership under Africa vegetable breeding consortium (AVBC) and Africa cereals and legumes breeding consortium (ACLBC)

8. Media visibility

In Rwanda, AFSTA will have a media booth where seed companies will give interviews on their products hence gaining publicity for their products and activities.

9. Enjoying the host country culture

Apart from the main business of discussions on seed matters, Rwanda deserves magnificent tourist sites, rich culture, colourful cities and a reputation for world class hospitality makes the country a tempting sanctuary.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE AMERICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION (ASTA)

By Aghan Daniel I AFSTA Communication Officer I daghan@afsta.org



AFSTA Secretary General, Dr Yacouba Diallo together with ISF President Mr. Santosh at the Annual Americas Seed Congress in Argentina

In the framework of its partnership with the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) supported the Secretary-General of AFSTA's participation in the Seed Associations of Americas (SAA) Seed Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 30th September to 3rd October 2024, and the Asia and Pacific Seed Alliance (APSA)'s Asian Seed Congress in Sanya, China from the 2nd to 6th December 2024.

The Seed Association of the Americas (SAA)'s Seed Congress is an essential agri-tech event that brings together leading seed companies and decision-makers in America. At the same time, the Asian Seed Congress is Asia's most significant annual seed convening.

The objectives of AFSTA's attendance at these two events were to: (i) learn from the Seed Association of the Americas (SAA) and the Asia and Pacific Seed Alliance (APSA), particularly about the Annual Congress setting and organisation, and (ii) Engage with leading seed companies and development partners in the Americas and Asia for networking opportunities and extend an invitation to join the African Seed Trade Association's 2025 Congress, scheduled for 3rd - 5th March 2025, in Kigali, Rwanda.

During both congresses, the Secretary-General of AFSTA: (i) participated in the technical sessions

and panel discussions with expert speakers, (ii) visited the exhibition floor and interacted with exhibitors/companies for business opportunities in Africa, and (iii) participated in many B2B meetings for Networking.

Overall, AFSTA's participation in these events provided an opportunity for: (i) experience sharing in seed industry development in Africa and build promising partnerships for seed industry development, (ii) stocktaking on trends and emerging issues and new seed technologies and policies in the Global seed industry and the Americas, (iii) discussions with partners including ASTA on areas of collaboration and (iv) expansion of portfolio contacts from the seed professionals in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

The following steps and action items have been established for the AFSTA secretariat (i) pursuing the collaboration Between ASTA and AFSTA to learn from ASTA and to support the development of the seed industry in Africa (ii) Strengthening the partnership and Experience sharing between APSA, SAA and AFSTA and (iii) engaging the Asian and American seed companies to invest in the Growing Seed Market in Africa.



AFSTA Secretary General, Dr Yacouba Diallo at the 2024 Asian Seed Congress in Sanya

AFSTA ON PRIVATE SEED SECTOR IN AFRICA, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

By AFSTA Secretariat | afsta@afsta.org

Dr Yacouba Diallo recently highlighted the ongoing outdated, complex regulations and inconsistent policies in the African seed sector that have largely contributed to Africa remaining a minor player in the global seed trade at a side event held in October.

The side event on *Investment and Global Trade Support a Vibrant Seed Sector through Agriculture-led Growth in Africa* occurred during the Laureate Ceremony 2024 of the World Food Prize Foundation (WFP). It was co-organised by ASTA and USAID. The format included individual presentations followed by moderated panel discussions.

Five key presentations were delivered at the meeting namely.

- **AFSTA: private seed sector in Africa, challenges and opportunities facing development and trade**
- USAID: vision for seed systems, USAID seed systems strategy for Africa, USAID investments in the African seed sector and how those relate to broader USG priorities (e.g., Feed the Future, VACS Initiative)
- AATF: case studies of projects (investments in foundation seed providers, investments in Bt cowpea and TELA maize commercialisation)
- Corteva: investment and business priorities in Africa, strategic partnerships with governments through PPPs

- ASTA: U.S. seed sector partnerships in Africa, the role of trade in seed systems

The presentation of the Secretary-General of AFSTA on the topic **“The private seed sector in Africa, challenges and opportunities facing development and trade”** was structured around the following key points:

- **African seed sector competitiveness:** Africa is a minor player in the global seed trade, accounting for 2% of the global market value - Low intra-regional seed trade, estimated at a 12-18% rate compared to 62% in Europe, 50% in Asia, and 25% in Latin America. Few crops dominate the commercial seed market: maize (42%), vegetables (20%) & other cereals & pulses (14%).
- **Regulatory and policy challenges:** This section highlights the ongoing outdated or complex regulations and inconsistent policies in the African seed sector.
- **Marketing and trade challenges:** This section emphasised the fragmented seed demand and difficulties in seed demand forecasting, including pricing control, inconsistent government subsidies, trade restrictions, and the limited flow of seeds across borders.
- **Infrastructure and supply chain challenges:** the need

for adequate seed storage facilities is leading to seed spoilage and quality deterioration, and poor road networks make it difficult to transport seeds to farm gates in remote areas, resulting in limited market access for farmers.

The presentation ended with **strategies for unlocking the private seed sector’s potential**, including advocating for incentivised policies and regulatory frameworks, catalysing innovation, empowering seed companies, and building functioning seed markets by implementing sound market information, building market infrastructure and trade facilities, and combatting the illegal seed trade.

Some key questions the Dr Yacouba tackled during the panel discussion included, *“How do you partner with the seed sector to attract private sector engagement in Africa? What do you view as barriers to the adoption of improved seed varieties in Africa? What do you think is the most promising technology – or technical solution – that could improve the seed sector in Africa?”*

SEED ASSOCIATIONS CONTINUE WITH TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING ON BIOTECHNOLOGY

By Aghan Daniel | daghan@afsta.org and Steve Adigun | adigunoludapo@gmail.com



SEEDAN President Alhaji Yusuf Kibiya, Tecni Seeds Stella Thomas, Dr. Ishiaku Khalid, the acting Director General, the National Agricultural Seeds Council and Sen Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, Honourable Minister of State for Agriculture captured recently at a seed meeting.

Two leading National Seed Trade Associations, The Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN) and The Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM) held two virtual trainings for their Biotechnology Committees in partnership with AFSTA and CropLife International during the month of November.

Both events aimed to enhance knowledge and capacity in agricultural biotechnology under the flagship of AFSTA-NSTAs Biotech Committees.

So far, AFSTA with support from CropLife International is undertaking trainings among three NSTAs to increase understanding of biotechnology among members for acceptance of the technology. A total of 11 training sessions have been conducted for three National Seed Trade Associations - SEEDAN in Nigeria, STAM in Malawi and National Seed Trade Association of Ghana (NaSTAG) under this initiative.

SEEDAN held their two-day training on November 15 and 16 virtually while STAM held their training three days later, on November 19, 2024. This was their fourth series of trainings this year while STAM) held its third virtual one. A similar number of training sessions have been carried out during each quarter.

STAM presented updates on GM maize research in the country. The presentations were also geared toward building the trainees' capacity to understand and interpret GMO research findings and link them with intellectual property rights.

The technical report highlights for the Confined Field Trials (CFTs) were shared during the training. For starters, the approval for CFT was given on 24th July 2023 for three years. The CFT is for insect resistance and herbicide tolerance. The insect-resistance trial was harvested after 144 days on 17th May 2024.

According to Prof Abel Sefasi, the Principal Investigator in the project, the herbicide-tolerance trial was harvested after 141 days on 7th June 2024. GM maize had significantly ($P \leq .05$) lower leaf damage by fall armyworm and stalk borer larva compared to the conventional control both at vegetative and reproductive stage of the crop.

Ear damage by Fall armyworm was significantly ($P \leq .05$) lower in GM maize than the conventional control throughout the reproductive phase. The trainees were told that weed control efficiency (comparing with untreated plots), was highest in plots treated with Roundup Power Max at 1.67 l/ha and 2.00 l/ha, achieving efficiencies of 54.9% and 56.3% for the GM maize.

SEED ASSOCIATIONS CONTINUE WITH TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING ON BIOTECHNOLOGY

By Aghan Daniel | daghan@afsta.org and Steve Adigun | adigunoludapo@gmail.com

In his presentation, *Intellectual Property and GM Crops: Possible Collaboration Options for Local Seed Companies*, Prof James Bokosi urged the trainees to look at IPR issues positively because they enhance the performance of institutions by giving recognition and financial benefits to the efforts for creativity. He added that IPR creates competition among the researchers and institutions on the quality of research, have a return on research investment and fosters the technology transfer through licensing and other means.

The training, supported by funding from Croplife International, brought together the association's biotech committee members who are drawn from the seed companies in Nigeria. Discussions revolved around advancements, challenges, and opportunities in agricultural biotechnology.

In Nigeria, the trainees underwent six insightful sessions including plant breeding and hybridisation techniques, genetic engineering in crop improvement, bioethics in agricultural biotechnology, policy development and advocacy in biotechnology, the future of agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and risk assessment.

Using case studies, Prof. Samuel Olakojo highlighted successful projects where genetic engineering has revolutionised agricultural practices, particularly in addressing food security challenges.

He also tackled the ethical dimensions of agricultural biotechnology. This thought-provoking session explored the moral considerations of genetic modification, including concerns about biodiversity, equity in access to biotechnology, and societal acceptance.

On the second day of the training, Prof. Johnson Onyibe led an informative session on policy development and advocacy in biotechnology.

Prof. Onyibe discussed the critical role of policies in fostering innovation while safeguarding public interests. He emphasised the importance of advocacy efforts in educating stakeholders, including policymakers, farmers, and the general public, on the benefits and risks associated with biotechnology.

He also provided insights into the future of agricultural biotechnology, highlighting emerging trends such as CRISPR gene-editing technologies, synthetic biology, and the integration of artificial intelligence in biotechnology research.

Prof. Onyibe encouraged participants to remain adaptable and innovative as they navigate the rapidly evolving field.



AFSTA CONGRESS FEATURED AT SEEDCONNECT FAIR IN NIGERIA

By AFSTA Secretariat | afsta@afsta.org



Participants at the 7th edition of the Seed Connect Africa 2024 Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, held on 26th and 27th November, 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The African Seed Trade Association recently explored the benefits of seed companies attending the annual congress held by AFSTA. Now in its 25th anniversary, the next congress will be held in Kigali, Rwanda from March 3 to 5, 2025.

While giving brief remarks at the opening ceremony of the 7th edition of the Seed Connect Africa 2024 Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, (held on 26th and 27th November 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria, with the theme “Leveraging seed technology to scale up Africa’s Agricultural Productivity”) Communication Officer Aghan Daniel, urged seed companies to attend the annual congress because it provides opportunities for interacting with high profile delegates which presents an opportunity for more business.

He added that the Congress remains a key event in the seed industry, uniting seed professionals, regulators, farmers, innovators and policymakers worldwide. He noted that the Congress represents a critical platform for advancing agricultural development and fostering international collaboration.

Dr. Ishiaku Khalid, the acting Director General of the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), presented the *Champion Seed Sector*

Development in Africa 2024 Award, which signified recognition of AFSTA’s dedication to the African seed industry.

“This inspires us to continue driving innovation and collaboration for sustainable agriculture across Africa,” said Aghan on behalf of AFSTA while receiving the award.

During the conference, Sen Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, Honourable Minister of State for Agriculture, noted that seed technology has a critical role to play in bridging this productivity gap.

“Seeds are the foundation of agricultural systems. As the primary input in farming, they influence every subsequent stage of the production cycle. High-quality seeds, adapted to specific agro-ecological conditions, are the cornerstone of achieving higher yields, ensuring food security, and building resilience against climate change,” Sen Abdullahi said.

“By leveraging seed technology, enhancing research and development, and fostering inclusive growth, we can unlock unprecedented opportunities for economic transformation and food security.”



House of excellence: AFSTA’s dedication to the African seed industry earned it the *Champion Seed Sector Development in Africa 2024 Award* at the November Seed Connect by the National Seed Council of Nigeria

POLICY GUIDELINES WORKSHOP ON PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF PLANT VARIETIES HELD IN CHAD

By E-review Reporter Iafsta@afsta.org

In November, AFSTA through Secretary General, Dr Yacouba Diallo, shared its expertise in Chad during the National Workshop on Policy Guidelines for the Creation, Protection and Commercialization of New Plant Varieties.

The meeting held from 4th to 6th November 2024 at the Radisson Blu Hotel in N'Djamena was organized by OAPI and co-chaired by the Minister of Trade and the Minister of Agriculture.

It was attended by about forty participants, including OAPI experts, researchers, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Trade, representatives of the private seed sector and agricultural producers.

The workshop resulted in the development and adoption of the “Preliminary Draft Policy for the Creation, Protection and Enhancement of New Plant Varieties for the Development of the Seed Sector in Chad”, which is



Participants pose for a group photo at The National Workshop on Policy Guidelines for the Creation, Protection and Commercialization of New Plant Varieties in Chad.

structured around five strategic axes: i) Improvement of the political, regulatory and institutional environment in the field of the creation, protection and enhancement of new plant varieties, ii) Development of structures and instruments for the protection and enhancement of plant varieties, iii) Organization/ structuring of the seed sector and strengthening of the link between research and the private sector, iv) Capacity building of formal seed systems and seed stakeholders, and v) Information, Communication – Education on plant variety protection systems.

Each strategic axis has been broken down into priority actions. The workshop also adopted a six-point roadmap and established an ad hoc committee to coordinate the policy development for creating and protecting plant varieties.

EXPERTS: SEED HAS NOT RECEIVED THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES

Source: <https://africenter.isaaa.org/inside-kenyas-plan-promote-access-high-quality-seeds/>

The critical role of seed has not received the attention it deserves. Yet, it is the fundamental component of food production, the Africa Science Dialogue and the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB-Kenya) media science café held in Nairobi on 11th October 2024 was told.

Speaking during the Africa Science Dialogue and the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB-Kenya), Dr Stephen Mugo of the Center for Resilient Agriculture for Africa said that the situation called for educating the public about various types of seeds and how to use high-quality seeds to enhance food production. Farmers deserve access to the best seeds available to optimize their yields.

During his presentation, he explained three main types of seeds that Kenyan farmers use: Landrace



Exhibitors from Kenya Agricultural Research Organisation captured at a recent seed show.

seeds, open-pollinated variety (OPV) seeds, and hybrid seeds.

He added that hybrid seeds have been a key contributor to the significant growth in agricultural productivity during the second half of the 20th century.

“Hybrids can be further improved through genetic engineering, resulting in genetically modified organism (GMO) seeds. GMOs involve inserting a gene from another organism

into a plant to confer traits like drought tolerance or pest resistance,” he explained.

The café, which sought to update journalists on the status Kenya’s seed regulatory system and seed access, was attended by 20 media practitioners from 13 media houses in Kenya.

Source: <https://africenter.isaaa.org/inside-kenyas-plan-promote-access-high-quality-seeds/>

Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) Annual Congress

By Catherine Langat IAFSTA Technical Manager | catherine@afsta.org



Participants pose for a group photo at the 12th annual congress of the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK).

The 12th annual congress of the Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) took place on 6th and 7th November in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme “**Leveraging Agricultural Technologies to Strengthen Agricultural Resilience and Climate-Smart Seed Systems**”.

The congress was officially opened by Mr. L. Kobuk, the director of crops at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. It witnessed stakeholders in the seed sector, including

the AFSTA Secretariat, seed companies, the public sector, and farmers converge to discuss pertinent issues, particularly those that impede the availability of quality seeds to all Kenyan farmers at the right time in the right quantity, and at the right price.

In the congress, AFSTA Board represented by Ms. Lynette Ngila and the AFSTA secretariat by Ms. Catherine Langat, actively engaged in the congress

proceedings. During the intervention and the panel discussion, the AFSTA Secretariat highlighted that Kenya has done well on seed systems, putting in place an enabling regulatory environment for seed industry – functional and automated seed certification and plant variety protection system, equipped analytical chemistry and food safety labs, as well as robust phytosanitary services.

AFSTA BRIEFS

By Catherine Langat | Technical Manager | catherine@afsta.org

5th Steering Group meeting of the African Seed and Biotechnology Program Platform

The 5th steering committee meeting of the Africa Seed and Biotechnology Program Platform (ASB PP) took place from 16th – 18th December in Nairobi, Kenya. The AFSTA secretariat, which leads the program's private sector cluster, participated in the discussions. Other steering group members, including the African Union and the RECs, represented governments in the Member States. Representatives of One CGIAR, AATF, Africa Seeds, and farmer groups were also present in the sessions.

The ASB PP serves as a policy think tank, stimulating discussions, improving decision-making, supporting evidence-based advocacy, and enhancing knowledge sharing on seed systems across Africa. Its operational guidelines include key governance structures; Steering Group, Thematic/ Geographic Working Groups and clusters, General Assembly and the Secretariat.

Meanwhile, on 11th December, the AFSTA Secretariat held a joint meeting with CABI to discuss potential areas for further collaboration on phytosanitary and plant health matters. Specifically, a discussion on the possibility of AFSTA being a member of the EUPHRESKO III project was held. A follow-up on the same will be held in 2025.

Special Interest Groups (SIG) meet to discuss vegetables, cereals and legumes consortia.

The AFSTA special interest groups for field crops and vegetables held a joint virtual meeting on 8th October 2024. The agenda encompassed specific consortia, such as the Africa Vegetable and Breeding Consortium (AVBC) and the Africa Cereals and Legumes Breeding Consortium (ACLBC). Participants exchanged information on the discussions at the IT PGRFA discussed the menace of counterfeit seed, and prepared for the AFSTA@25 congress.

UN FAO – African Orphan Crops Consortium (AOCC) workshop

On 11th October 2024 the AFSTA Secretariat participated in a joint FAO- AOCC workshop which was held at the ICRAF campus in Nairobi. The workshop was under the theme of improving local agrifood crops for enhanced yield and nutrition in Africa: leveraging the outcomes of the AOCC model for nutritional and economic impact.

With AFSTA's contribution, the meeting workshop achieved the following goals. First, there was a demonstration that the AOCC Movement has established proof of concept, and its implementation is unfolding through the initial efforts of the AOCC graduates trained at national levels. Secondly, there was recognition of the importance of AOCC being embedded in national agriculture strategies as an essential component of the transformation of food systems, and the magnificent, increasing, and unlimited stimulants that AOCC provides to the economic, social, environmental, and human development of the people of local communities including farmers, women, consumers, as well as new businesses. Thirdly, there was an identification of next steps and plans taking the essential elements of the AOCC model to the next level in African countries and elsewhere.

AFSTA BRIEFS

By Catherine Langat | Technical Manager |
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Seed Harmonization in Africa – Webinar

On 2nd December 2024, in close collaboration with the OECD, African Union (Commission and AUDA NEPAD) as well as the Africa Seed System Platform, AFSTA Secretariat co-organized a webinar on status of seed harmonization in Africa. The webinar witnessed close to 150 participants drawn from the National Seed Trade Associations, Member States National Designated Authorities as well as the OECD, AU and other stakeholders in the seed sector in Africa and beyond the continent.

the webinar witnessed an intervention from the OECD where there was a highlight of the OECD seed schemes which is an international seed varietal certification system that is implemented in a harmonized manner by all countries who are contracting parties – both in Africa and beyond the continent

AFSTA Secretariat highlighted the different challenges faced by the private seed sector due to lack of harmonization of the rules and regulations at the continental level. The main challenges highlighted included first the regulatory and policy challenges – outdated or complex regulations, inconsistent policies as well as lack of coordination. Secondly marketing and trade challenges – fragmented seed demand & demand forecasting issues, pricing control and government subsidies, marketing and trade issues, as well as persistent challenges of counterfeit/ fake seed. Thirdly infrastructure and supply chain challenges – storage facilities, transportation networks as well as market access. Lastly the AFSTA Secretariat highlighted the financing constraints – high interest rates, lack of collateral as well as risk aversion.

New OECD Seed Schemes Rules and Regulations for 2024 out

The new OECD Seed Schemes Rules and Regulations for 2024 have been released. These updated guidelines are essential for ensuring the continued quality and integrity of international seed trade. We encourage all members to familiarize themselves with the new regulations and incorporate them into their operations.

For more details, please refer to the official OECD publication or contact the AFSTA Secretariat for assistance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. 31st January - 4th February 2025: ASTA Vegetable & Flower Conference, Orlando, Florida
2. 27th February 2024: AFSTA/ ISF Board of Directors joint collaborative meeting, Nairobi, Kenya
3. 3rd - 6th March 2025: AFSTA Congress 2025, Kigali, Rwanda. [REGISTER NOW FOR EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT](#)
4. 19th - 21st May 2025: ISF World Congress: Istanbul, Turkiye Triennial Symposium of ICRT, Nairobi, Kenya
5. 5th - 7th June 2023: ISF World Seed Congress 2023, Cape Town, South Africa



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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\$600 for Non members for a period of one year.

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