

# REPORT ON THE AFSTA ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2017

By Justin J. Rakotoarisaona, Secretary General of AFSTA

- The Guest of honor, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment, Dr. Dogo Seck;
- The President of the International Seed Federation, Mr. Jean Christophe Gouache;
- The President of AFSTA and All the AFSTA Board members;
- Representatives of the national, regional and international seed organizations;
- Distinguished delegates;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

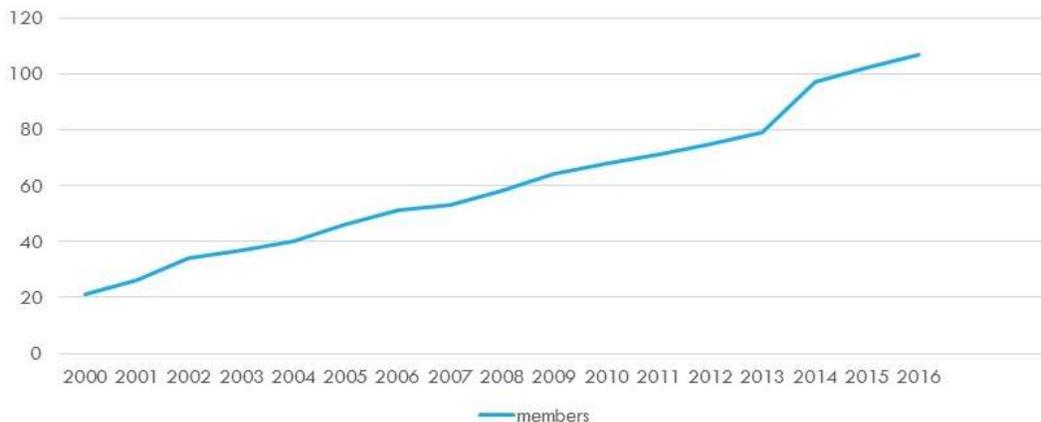
It gives me much pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of the AFSTA secretariat and to say how grateful we are to you accepting to grace this event of the 17<sup>th</sup> AFSTA annual congress. Some of you have been with AFSTA since its establishment in 2000 and I thank you for your consistent support and loyalty to AFSTA. A special welcome goes to those of you participating for the first time. The AFSTA congress is an opportune time to make new contacts, renew contacts and discuss issues of mutual interests with delegates.

I trust that the 3 congress days in Dakar will be an excellent opportunity to listen to experts talking about various topical seed industry issues and at the same time, fully participate in discussions and express your views on these topics. In AFSTA, we value and cherish friendships formed on strong common ground of “creating the best environment for trade and innovation in quality seed for the benefit of members and farmers in Africa”, which is the mission of AFSTA.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to share some facts about AFSTA as well as outline successes and challenges that have confronted the association since it was established in 2000, when we began the long journey of building the seed industry in Africa:

## AFSTA MEMBERSHIP



Our membership has increased from 37 in 2000 of which only 9 were national seed trade associations to currently 107 members comprising of 27 African seed associations, 36 individual seed companies and 44 associate members.

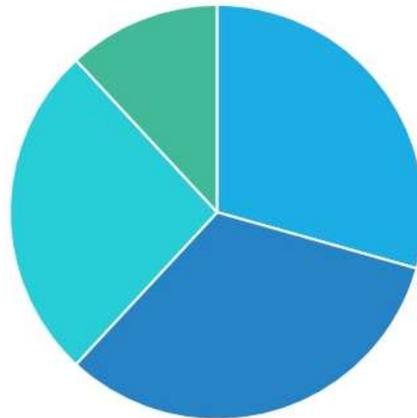
## MEMBERS IN AFRICA



When AFSTA was established in March 2000, there were 18 African countries covered by AFSTA and 17 years later, there are AFSTA members in 27 African countries and the number continues to grow.

# MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION

AFSTA members in 2016



■ Africa Seed Association ■ Non-Africa Seed Associations ■ Private Seed Companies ■ Service Providers

The current membership status of AFSTA is summarized in this diagram:

## NEW AFSTA MEMBERS 2016

Ordinary members:

- **Sorghum Solutions Africa (Pty) Ltd from South Africa**

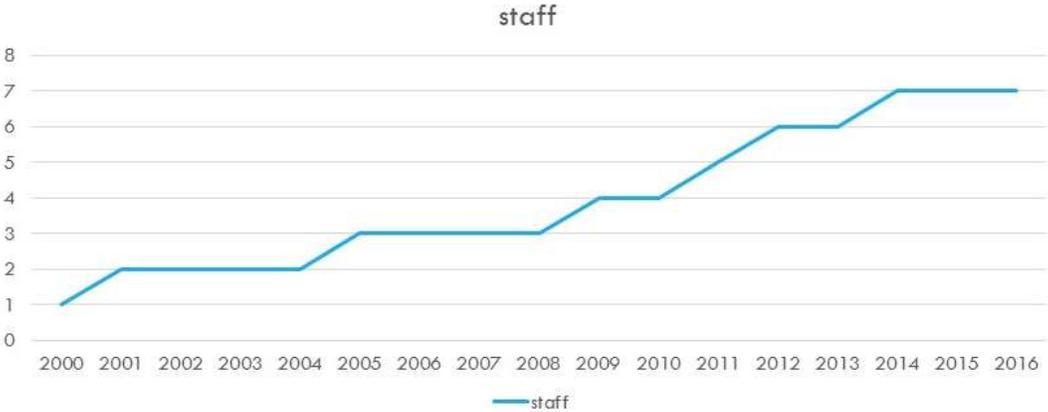
Associate members:

- **SAIS s.p.a from Italy**

It is my pleasure to inform you that in the 17<sup>th</sup> congress, 2 new members joined AFSTA of which 1 is ordinary member and 1 associate member. I take this opportunity to welcome these 2 new members to the association. We appeal to all potential

members to join the AFSTA family so that the Association is stronger to face the development of the Africa seed industry.

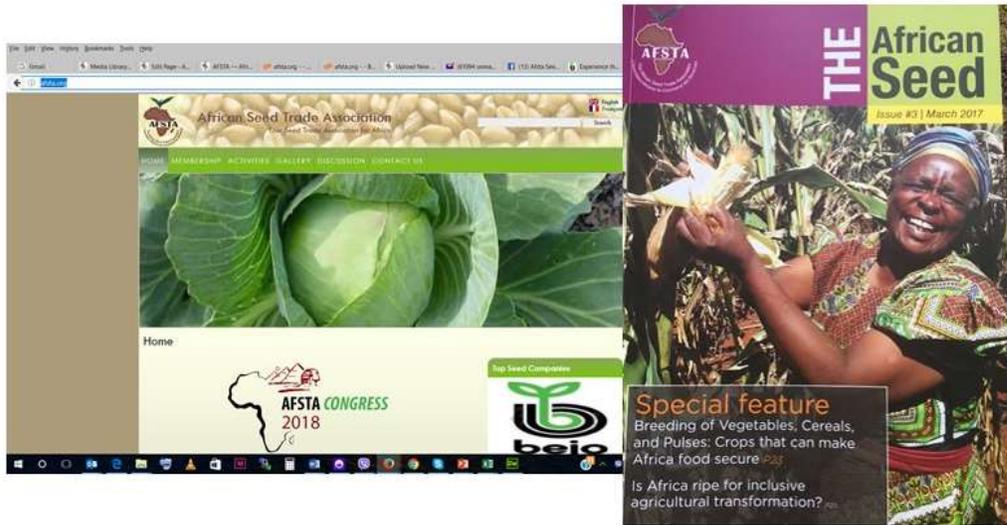
## STAFF AT AFSTA SECRETARIAT



Regarding the AFSTA secretariat, the staff has grown from 2 in the beginning to 7 of whom 6 are professionals with 1 support staff with regional office in Dakar, Senegal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

# AFSTA WEBSITE & AFRICAN SEED MAGAZINE



AFSTA acknowledges that effective communication is the backbone of its success. We continue to make concerted efforts to inform and update AFSTA members on relevant information on the seed industry.

This has been achieved through the use of quarterly Electronic Newsletter (E-Review), periodic Flash News and the website.

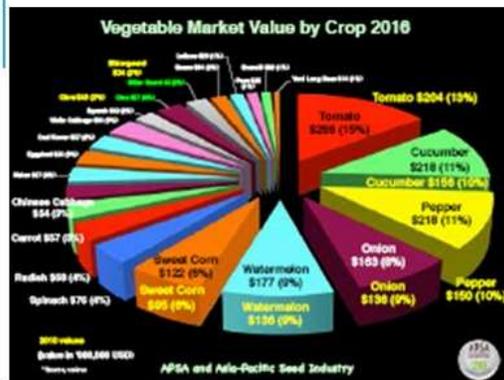
The number of visitors to our website today stands at over 3,400,000. This is indeed a good number for the visit received.

AFSTA is also using social media of Facebook and Twitter to disseminate information and request members to utilize these communication channels to share their experiences in the seed industry.

Online advertisements are also available and members are urged to continuously visit the website for updates and more details on this facility can be obtained from AFSTA Secretariat

Ladies and Gentlemen,

## SEED STATISTICS



We would all agree that having reliable seed statistics to facilitate seed trade in Africa is crucial. Unfortunately, despite efforts undertaken by AFSTA, this remains a challenge for AFSTA Secretariat without concrete result, but we will not lose heart and continue building it up.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

# SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



With a view to involving AFSTA members in promoting trade in improved quality seeds in Africa, AFSTA set up two Special Interest Groups on “Vegetables” and “Field Crops” as a platform for knowledge sharing and also as a source for technical support to the development of the seed industry in Africa. These two special groups are dynamic and have increasing number of enthusiastic members to keep alive and achieve its objectives.

Distinguished guests,

# COMESA/EAC/ECOWAS/AFSTA



I can say with absolute certainty that the path to robust growth in the Africa seed industry includes trade and investment in seed business and to do so, there is need for a conducive environment and a bigger size seed market through harmonization of the seed trade regulations. However, in their current state, you would agree with me that many of the national seed policies and regulations are still barriers to seed trade.

In the past seed trade relied on domestic market for growth but in today's global economy where high percentage of stakeholders resides outside the domestic boundaries, this is no longer possible.

In line with this, AFSTA has actively participated in the development of regional harmonization of seed trade regulations

in trade blocks of EAC, COMESA, SADC, and ECOWAS. I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those member states that have implemented the harmonized seed regulations and wish the rest of members a successful implementation process, which AFSTA recognizes is very challenging requiring serious dialogue with all the national and regional seed stakeholders.

I would like to point out that the AFSTA congresses have connected our members to global opportunity in seed business and helped them tap into new regional seed markets.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased that the association has increased its visibility and has been invited to most of the major seed fora at national level through the National Seed Trade Associations, regional, continental and global levels through AFSTA Secretariat. This is important in tackling various issues hampering seed trade in partnership with the public seed sector. We know all that the seed sector plays a crucial role in facing the challenges of the food insecurity for the fast growing population of the continent.

Distinguished delegates,

A major core function of AFSTA is to work with national seed stakeholders towards establishment of National Seed Trade Associations (NSTAs) where they do not exist. A number of NSTAs have been established through the efforts of AFSTA as I presented earlier. However, most of the NSTAs need to be strengthened to be professional in order that they can play their role effectively. Issues affecting the performance of various NSTAs have been raised during past AFSTA congresses and also in the priority workshops conducted in a number of countries. AFSTA is seeking out to development partners to support the strengthening of the NSTAs to contribute to the growth of the Africa seed industry.

Ladies and gentlemen,

AFSTA embarked on sensitization of its members on biotechnology using a global and national strategies, in close partnership with and support from Crop Life International. Our approach has been to get the members of National Seed Trade Associations understand and support the technology. In this sense, we have reached more than 30 seed companies in Malawi, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. This year 2017, we shall continue with the sensitization in these four countries and possibly also work in Uganda. We do hope that seed companies will continuously engage with us in this project as commercialization of GM technology has become more and more a reality in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In West Africa, AFSTA has worked to advance the cause of the seed industry especially the private seed sector with various partners such as CORAF and ECOWAS with generous support from the USAID regional office in West Africa based in Accra Ghana. I wish here to express our heartfelt thanks for this partnership and support. Indeed, AFSTA has actively participated in the implementation of the USAID-funded West African Seed Program (WASP) through its Dakar-based regional office. Among the achievements were increased availability of quality seeds, improved access by farmers to performing varieties and strengthened National Seed Trade Associations in West and central Africa.

## AFSTA BOARD MEMBERS IN NAIROBI OCTOBER 2016



Since the strategic plan for 2014 to 2016 has just been completed last year, the AFSTA Board members produced a new strategic plan for AFSTA for 2017 to 2020 that defines the AFSTA strategic priority areas for the next three years with a view to contributing to the development of the African seed industry.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is time for me to most sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the success of this congress 2017 including:

- The government and people of Senegal for their support and hospitality (as we can see that we have even here from them ambulance, fire brigade and first aid medical team for the delegates);

- The National Organizing Committee and AFSTA staffs , for their tireless efforts to prepare for this congress 2017;
- All the sponsors who financially support the congress;
- All the speakers and moderators;
- All our distinguished guests, your presence raises the profile of the AFSTA congress. I would to recognize the presence of the International Seed Federation (SF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), the Union for the Protection of the New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), The World Vegetable Center (AVDRC), West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research (CORAF/WECARD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).
- I also want to thank King Fahd Palace Hotel for being wonderful host in this excellent environment with good facilities.

I wish to end my speech by thanking the AFSTA Board members, all AFSTA members and my colleagues at AFSTA Secretariat for their efforts and commitment to the success of AFSTA, and in particular, this Congress.

I wish you a successful congress 2017 and enjoy your stay in Dakar.

Thank you for listening!