



THE AFRICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

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PRESS RELEASE FOR AFSTA CONGRESS 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFSTA Congress 2019 attracts 400 delegates from around the World

MOMBASA, SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019 – The 19th African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) Annual Congress ended on 7th March with a resounding success confirming its importance as a priority gathering for seed people in the continent.

Held at the PridelInn Paradise Beach Resort and Spa in Mombasa, Kenya, the Congress saw 400 delegates from 60 countries from all over the world attending the most successful gathering of seed merchants in the continent.

The Congress was officially opened by Prof. Hamadi Boga, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation.

He noted that cross border trade in seeds continues to face difficulties despite the enactment of trade rules and protocols plus the existence of regulations harmonizing the critical trade.

“Seed companies have been facing hurdles on seed certification, variety testing and release across the African continent and across regional trading blocs, while ideally, such blocs should facilitate trade,” said Prof Boga.

The obstacles have persisted in the East African Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), making trade difficult even for a country like Kenya that completed the process of harmonising regulations to ensure free movement of seed, the PS said.

He said that the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture is happy to work hand in hand with Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK) to continue sensitizing seed stakeholders on the harmonized seed regulations, standards and procedures in the regional trade blocks.

“The process is on-going and it is important that all stakeholders in the seed industry are conversant with the harmonized seed regulations to enhance seed trade within the COMESA, EAC and other regional economic blocks,” he added.

The PS urged the regional economic communities to finalize their tripartite agreement with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) for ease of seed movement to ensure farmers had access to quality certified seeds.

While welcoming the delegates to the Congress, AFSTA President, Mr Riadh Gabsi said: “The AFSTA Congress continues to grow year after year because we, the seed people, ably use it as a forum to sow relationships, which have led us to harvest prosperity in our work as we promote quality seed trade in Africa.”

He added that AFSTA continues to believe that a developed agricultural sector is key to the economic prosperity of African nations for which seed has played a key role.

This, he noted, had led AFSTA to make continuous efforts to improve the environment for the seed business through its five-year Strategic Plan with a view to meaningfully contribute to the promotion of the transformation of agriculture into an attractive, modern and sustainable livelihood option for communities throughout the Continent.

The congress, primarily a gathering of top seed traders and producers, traditionally cover a wide spectrum of issues in the seed value chain.

This year, the Congress addressed regional and international seed issues that have scientific and technological bearing on seed production and trade including biotechnology, plant breeding innovation, seed treatment, phytosanitary measures, strengthening vegetables production through quality seed trade in Africa and update on technologies for African agricultural transformation.

The congress was preceded by a half-day workshop on seed treatment which discussed management of the fall armyworm (FAW).

Several representatives of regional and international organizations participated at the congress namely the African Union (AU), International Seed Federation (ISF), the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV) among others.

Two replacements in the AFSTA Board also took place during the Congress. Two new board members, Mr. Ibrahim Abdullahi from Nigeria and Mr. Given Mudenda from Zambia replaced Mr. Richard Olafare from Nigeria and Mr. Benson Zulu from Zambia respectively whose terms had ended.

The next AFSTA Congress will be held **from 3rd to 6th March 2020** at the Avani Hotel in Livingstone, Zambia on the shores of Zambezi River near the great Victoria Falls.

Ends

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About AFSTA: AFSTA is a not-for-profit membership association which champions the interests of private seed companies in Africa. It is registered in Kenya as an International Organization.

The association was started in 2000 in Pretoria, South Africa, and it meets annually around the first week of March. It has a membership of more than 118 seed companies, 27 African national seed trade associations and more than 44 associate members worldwide. 30 seed companies exhibited their work during the Congress.