



# THE AFRICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION

Jumuia Place I, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Lenana Road  
P. O. Box 2428 – 00202, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 20 2727853/860 Fax: +254 20 2727861  
Email: [afsta@afsta.org](mailto:afsta@afsta.org) Website: [www.afsta.org](http://www.afsta.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **AFSTA Congress 2013 attracts 225 delegates**

Nairobi March 14, 2013 – Organized by the Seed Producers and Traders Association of Mauritius (SPATA), the 13<sup>th</sup> African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) Annual Congress was held at Le Méridien Hotel, Balaclava, Mauritius from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The Congress was another resounding success for the African seed industry. Two hundred and twenty five (225) delegates from 39 countries actively participated in the congress which proved to be an excellent avenue to explore more seed businesses and strengthen the network among the seed stakeholders.

A few delegates enjoyed a Golf Tournament sponsored by Seed Co Limited on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2013. During the gala dinner on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2013, The Group Chief Executive of Seed Co Limited., Mr. Morgan Nzwere, awarded a cash prize that the winner would donate to a charitable organization of his choice.

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology of The Republic of Mauritius, Honorable Dr. Rajeshwar Jeetah who graced the opening ceremony, emphasized on the importance of the seed sector in attaining food security in Africa. He called on the delegates to continue deploying their efforts to deliver quality seeds to farmers.

The AFSTA President, Mr. Jitu Shah, during his opening speech, said “the world now recognizes the vital role the seed industry plays in shaping policies that govern seed trade.” He encouraged the delegates to play a key role in influencing responsive policies, rules and regulations that govern the seed industry.

The congress was preceded by an ISTA/OECD half-day workshop, attended by over 80 participants. Mr. Eddie Goldschagg and Mrs. Grethe Tarp made presentations for OECD and for ISTA respectively.

The congress discussed various important items for the African seed industry with a view to analyzing the current situation and charting out the way forward for the seed sector development. The following topics were addressed during the congress:

- Mr. John Ndirangu Kabare of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), presented on the latest developments in ARIPO giving insight on ARIPO's protocol for the Plant Variety Protection;
- Dr. Earnest Asiedu form West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD) explained the West African Seed Program (WASP), which will run for five years in 7 countries in West Africa;
- The status and implementation of the COMESA harmonized seed regulations was presented by the CEO of ACTESA/COMESA, Dr. Chungu Mwila and the seed expert of ACTESA, Dr. John Mukuka;
- Mr. Charles Nyachae, ICT and Logistics Officer of AFSTA presented on the use of ICT in enhancing agricultural productivity and gave a demonstration on the use of AFSTA website and available tools;
- Mrs. Margot Boergartz of Bayer Crop Science gave a captivating presentation of the stewardship of seed treatment;
- Understanding the Maize Lethal Necrosis Disease (MLND) situation in Kenya and the implication on Food Security in the Region was presented by Mr. Damien Viollet, Head of Bayer Crop Science in

East Africa with Panelists being Dr. Rikus Kloppers of Pannar seed and Dr. Evans Sikinyi, Executive Officer of the Seed Trade Association of Kenya;

- Dr. Marcel Bruins, Secretary General of the International Seed Federation (ISF) presented a comparative analysis of the African seed industry to the rest of the world and made some recommendations for AFSTA;
- A presentation on Strengthening vegetable breeding in Africa: "Access to traits at the World Vegetable Center" was made by Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, Regional Director of the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC);
- Mrs. Pamela Chitenhe, Regional Director for DuPont Pioneer in Africa and Middle East, highlighted the World Food Security and DuPont Global Food Index, which was followed by interesting discussions on food security.

All these presentations attracted full houses with the delegates actively contributing to the debates and discussions.

Several representatives of regional and international organizations attended the congress namely the International Seed Federation (ISF), Asia Pacific Seed Association (APSA), the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), African Regional Intellectual Property Right Organization (ARIPO), Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Organization for Intellectual Property Rights (AOIP).

Seed companies had many delegates visiting their exhibition booths and the trading room which was extremely busy provided an opportunity to forge business relationships among the- seed companies.

Two special interest groups on "Field Crops" and "Vegetables" respectively spearheaded by Mr. Denias Zaranyika of Seed Co Limited, Dr. John MacRobert of CIMMYT and Dr. Jacqueline Hughes of the World Vegetable Center (AVRDC), were launched during the meeting of National Seed Trade Associations and seed companies, which was held on the afternoon of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

The AFSTA General Assembly 2013 elected the AFSTA Board, chaired by Mr. Jitu Shah, with 13 members that will serve until the next General Assembly in March 2014. Six new members of AFSA were also approved.

The congress ended with a sentiment of general satisfaction in all its aspects. The delegates looked forward to the next congress, which will be held in Tunis, Tunisia from 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The traditional hand over of the AFSTA flag from Mauritius to the Tunisian team represented by the Chairman of the National Organizing Committee of Congress 2014, Mr. Riadh Gabsi, took place and was led by the AFSTA Secretary General, Justin Rakotoarisaona.

## ***Ends***

### ***About AFSTA***

*AFSTA is a not-for-profit membership association formed in 2000 to champion interests of private seed companies in Africa. It is registered in Kenya as an International Organization. Currently, the Association has 94 members, including seed companies and National Seed Trade Associations, among others*

#### **Contact:**

##### **AFSTA Secretariat**

**Jumuia Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Wing B, Lenana Road**

**P. O. Box 2428 – 00202, Nairobi, Kenya**

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