



# THE MESSENGER

Newsletter of the **AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION**

Issue No. 1

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## AATF Mission & Core Business

To link needs of resource-poor, smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa with potential technological solutions through:

- ✦ Identifying and facilitating royalty-free transfers of proprietary technologies through negotiation
- ✦ Entering into contractual agreements with existing institutions that will manage deployment of the technologies
- ✦ Ensuring that subsequent constraints after access are addressed

## Strengthening the AATF human resource capacity



**Phelix Majiwa** joined AATF on November 3, 2003 as Projects Manager. Phelix, a Kenyan, is a molecular biologist with many years of practical experience in molecular biology and genomics, and has a long-standing interest in the safe applications of biotechnology for

improvement of human welfare in developing countries. Phelix graduated with B.S. (*cum laude*) in biology and chemistry from Jarvis Christian College, earned an M.S. in molecular biology from the University of Texas, Dallas and a Ph.D. in molecular biology from the University of Brussels (VUB). He joins AATF from ILRI where he was the leader of molecular epidemiology and diagnostics project. Phelix will provide overall leadership in the management of the AATF projects portfolio.

**Nancy Muchiri** joined AATF on January 5, 2004 as the Communications/Donor/Public Relations Manager. Nancy graduated with a BA from the University of Nairobi in 1988, where she later attained her postgraduate diploma in mass communications. She brings to AATF experience in public relations and fundraising from the private sector and not-for-profit organisations. Her role will include managing the foundation's public and donor relations. She joins AATF from SOS Children's Villages Kenya where she was head of the Communications and Fundraising Department.



**Richard Boadi** joined AATF on January 19, 2004 as Legal Counsel. Richard, a citizen of Ghana, is a member of the bars of the State of New York and the Republic of Ghana. He is a graduate of Cornell University (LL.M.) in the United States, Ghana Law School (B.L.), and the University of Ghana (LL.B.). He brings to

AATF extensive legal experience including work as senior attorney with the New York State Office for Technology, Contract and Commercial Law Attorney with the New York City Human Resources Administration, Teaching Assistant with the University of Ghana's Faculty of Law, Junior Barrister with Reindorf Chambers in Accra and Assistant Legal Officer with the Ghana Copyright Office. As Legal Counsel, Richard will advise the Board, management and staff of AATF on current technology transfer policy and legal developments at national, regional and international levels; draft, review and negotiate agreements to which AATF is party; create and foster networks with licensees; and handle other in-house legal needs of the AATF.

## The Messenger is ...

**A publication of the AATF to update partners and stakeholders on progress and activities. We would appreciate your views, comments and contributions.**

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## Investment update

As part of the UK's commitment in the G8 Africa Action Plan to improve African access to agricultural technology, the **United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)** has committed £5m to the AATF between January 2004 and December 2009.

**The Rockefeller Foundation** has released US\$1 million to the AATF towards the development of AATF's first pilot projects.

## Special appreciation to the DAC

In this first issue of *The Messenger*, we would like to express our appreciation to the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) which was succeeded by the Board of Trustees. The committee comprised Walter Alhassan, Gerard Barry, Allan Chiyembekeza, Sam Dryden, Vincent Gwarazimba, Romano Kiome, Josette Lewis, Violet Mandishona, Barry McCarter, Gavin McGillivray, Peter Matlon, Ronald Meeusen, Kinyua M'Mbijjewe, Joseph Mukiibi, Andrew Mushita, Cyrus Ndiritu, Christopher Ngichabe, William Niebur, Kanayo Nwanze, Eugene Terry, Barry Thomas, Carl-Gustaf Thornstrom, Godber Tumushabe, Florence Wambugu and Klaus Winkel. The DAC helped establish boundary principles that guide relations between AATF and its partners and spell out the operational standards of the foundation. Key among these principles are policies that state:

1. That no personnel of any international donor organisation providing financial assistance for AATF's operations shall be a member of the AATF Board of Trustees.
2. That no personnel of any of the multinational companies that provide advanced technologies to the AATF under license shall be a member of the AATF Board of Trustees.
3. That the AATF shall not accept any financial support for its core operations and project implementation costs from any of the multinational companies providing advanced technologies to the AATF under license.

## Projects portfolio development update

The development of the AATF pilot projects portfolio was undertaken in an iterative manner, using principles, criteria and processes proposed and endorsed by the Design Advisory Committee, and the AATF Board of Trustees. Eight problem areas were defined as priority targets for AATF intervention out of which five, **Insect resistance in maize**, **Nutritional quality enhancement in maize and rice**, **Cowpea productivity improvement in Africa**, **Bananas and plantain productivity in Africa**, and **Striga control in cereals**, were identified as pilot projects, under guidance by the Programme/Product Development Committee of the Board. Three of these, **Striga control in cereals**, **Insect resistant maize for Africa (IRMA)** and **Pro-vitamin A in maize**, have been endorsed for fast track implementation in 2004.

Negotiations are underway for the different interventions required. In early February, the foundation in conjunction with the Network for the Genetic Improvement of Cowpea for Africa (NGICA) will hold a one week workshop in Accra, Ghana, to discuss how to improve cowpea productivity and utilisation.