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AATF Mission & Core Business

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

AATF Officially Launched

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) was officially launched in June by Kenya's Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Kipruto arap Kirwa, at a colorful ceremony held at the Foundation headquarters at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kabete Campus, Nairobi, Kenya. The President of The Rockefeller Foundation, Dr. Gordon Conway, presented the keynote address where he underscored the important role of the African governments in selecting technologies suitable to African agricultural problems. The occasion was graced by diplomats, top scientists, government officials, farmers, and NGOs and private sector representatives from Africa, Europe and the United States of America.

Reaffirming the Kenya Government's commitment to promoting new agricultural technologies and information as a basis for a thriving agricultural system, the minister lauded the initiative and urged the AATF to speed up efforts to link farmers to technologies that would help them overcome pests and weeds such as the stem borer and *Striga*, both serious constraints to maize production in Kenya and neighbouring countries.

The AATF Board Chair, Prof. Jennifer Ann Thomson, said the Foundation had a clear mandate that would support delivery of agricultural projects to resource-poor farmers without duplicating efforts. "We must stimulate synergism – make sure we know what precisely our role is as AATF and know to whom we are delivering, in this case the resource-poor farmers," she said.

The newly appointed Executive Director, Dr. Mpoko Bokanga, highlighted the foundation's top priority as attending to the smallholder African farmer, saying: "AATF will work to facilitate partnerships and innovative linkages to bring to Africa the technologies within the reach of farmers to increase productivity." He said AATF was conceived by people and institutions of goodwill that understand the power of partnerships and working together. During the launch the AATF offices were officially opened by the minister who, together with donors and farmers, planted trees to commemorate the occasion.

The outgoing Implementing Director, Dr. Eugene Terry, noted that the plight of Africa's resource-poor farmers is all too

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USDA/AATF MOU

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to share and disseminate agricultural technologies to improve African production systems, increase food security, reduce poverty, expand agricultural trade and commerce on a sustainable basis, and provide new opportunities for African farmers. The signing took place on June 21 during the Ministerial Conference on Harnessing Science and Technology to Increase Agricultural Productivity in Africa, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. J.B. Penn, USDA under secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, and Mpoko Bokanga, the AATF Executive Director, signed the memorandum.



Kipruto arap Kirwa and Jennifer Ann Thomson open the AATF facilities

real. "I do hope we can bring a sense of urgency to the tasks before us, because Africa's hungry children need to be fed to be able to play their role," he said. (www.aftechfound.org/launch.php)

Eugene Terry joins AATF Board

Eugene Terry has joined the AATF Board of Trustees. A plant pathologist and an agricultural research and development specialist with 36 years experience in research, technology generation and dissemination, and research management, Eugene has held leadership positions in capacity building and institutional management in universities, international agricultural research institutes and international development agencies. Until 31 July, Eugene was Implementing

Director of AATF, handing over to the first Executive Director of the Foundation, Mpoko Bokanga. He is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya and has served as a Trustee of the International Water Resources Management Institute in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Eugene is currently working as a Consultant to the CGIAR Africa Task Force that has been charged to make recommendations on the re-alignment of the CGIAR programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.



Small Group Meeting on Mycotoxins

An international small group meeting on mycotoxins was hosted by AATF in June in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was called to steer the process of seeking solutions to "mycotoxins in food grains", one of eight priority targets for AATF intervention through public-private partnerships. The participants defined problems related to mycotoxins, suggested possible interventions, devised means of information exchange and technology dissemination and agreed that the dimensions of the mycotoxin problem and its impact on food, health and nutrition in Africa needed to be evaluated to inform recommendations on interventions. Maize, peanuts, cassava, cowpea, sorghum and millet are prone to mould contamination producing mycotoxins that affect health and nutrition. Recommendation was made for awareness and education programmes to modify agricultural management practices during planting, harvesting and storage to reduce mycotoxin-related problems. Participants agreed there is need for development of crops resistant to fungal infection and biotic and abiotic stresses that predispose them to mycotoxin infection. Mycotoxins are toxic chemicals produced by moulds growing on food commodities or animal feedstuffs and are a health risk to humans and animals. (www.aftechfound.org/press-msgm.php)

