

## Media Advisory

### Safeguarding and commercializing agricultural innovations in Africa

*Plant Variety Protection is key in facilitating agricultural transformation and enhancing product development and commercialization of new plant varieties.*



**[Nairobi, November 29, 2020]:** African governments and regional economic communities should create a conducive environment including policies, legislations, institutional arrangement and best practices for sustainable commercialization of agricultural innovations as a prerequisite to unleash the sector’s potential to boost growth, nutrition security and reduce poverty in Africa.

For the African agriculture sector to continue thriving, harmonization in commercializing innovative agricultural technologies is critical to ensure technologies developed are of high, known quality and movement across borders are efficient. Further, this will stimulate innovations and breeding of improved seed and crop technology for agricultural transformation on the continent.

The importance of plant breeding to meet the challenges of increasing population, climate change, increased demands for food cannot be overemphasized. This calls for breeders to continuously produce better varieties to ensure higher yield gain by smallholder farmers. African farmers can make incredible progress – and many are –

but they often lack the tools and technologies and knowledge to become more productive and profitable.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) system of plant variety protection (PVP) provides an effective incentive for plant breeding in many different situations and in various sectors, and results in the development of new, improved varieties of benefit for farmers, growers and consumers. PVP is key in facilitating agricultural transformation and enhancing product development and commercialization of new plant varieties.

At the upcoming webinar on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 hosted by AATF on the theme *“Enabling Environment for Safeguarding and Commercializing Agricultural Innovations in Africa”*, a panel of renowned agricultural experts will explore, using tangible case studies, how PVP is enhancing commercialization of new plant varieties; access and delivery of innovative agricultural technologies ; regional harmonization of varietal release and registration for commercialization and biosafety legislation for regulating the commercialization of agricultural innovations.

The session moderator will be Dr. Denis Kyetere, Executive Director of AATF. He notes that Africa is on a pathway towards intensified agricultural transformation with the number of commercially oriented-farmers and agro-enterprises growing by the day. This transformation has been accompanied by a growing number of agricultural technologies that researchers and their partners have developed through over the years.

“While the policy environment helps to facilitate several aspects of agricultural innovations and commercialization such as adoption of productivity enhancing technologies, agro-processing and other aspects of value addition; robust mechanisms for intellectual protection ensure continuity and sustainability of those innovations,” says Dr. Kyetere.

“At AATF, we believe that a supportive policy and regulatory environment and public participation will stimulate innovation and technology uptake. We also believe that agribusiness is critical in transforming the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Africa,” he adds.

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#### **About AATF ([www.aatf-africa.org](http://www.aatf-africa.org))**

Founded in 2003 to address Africa’s food security prospects through agricultural technology, AATF believes that the agricultural sector is a key foundational pillar as



Africa consolidates its economic growth and carves out its new position as a major global economic powerhouse and the next growth market in the world. It was formed in response to the need for an effective mechanism that would facilitate and support negotiation for technology access and delivery and formation of appropriate partnerships to manage the development & deployment of innovative technologies for use by smallholder farmers in SSA:

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