PRESS RELEASE

Adoption of innovative technologies can increase income for farmers.

Agricultural biotechnology is one of the ways to improve crop production, increase yields and profits for smallholder farmers.

[Nairobi, April 28, 2021]: Smallholder farmers in Africa are not profiting from their agricultural activities due to challenges brought about by climate change, unstable prices for agricultural produce and deterioration of productive land for farming. Agricultural biotechnology can increase crop yields through development of drought-tolerant and pest and disease-resistant crops that perform better and yield more harvests.

Dr. Denis Kyetere, AATF Executive Director made the remarks during the 4th Calestous Juma Executive Dialogue (CJED) event on Innovation and Emerging Technologies held on 28th – 29th April 2021, where he spoke on *Making Emerging Technologies relevant for Smallholder farmers in Africa.*

He observed that agricultural biotechnology is accelerating development and thus increasing farmer profit margins.

According to the ISAAA 2020 report, incomes of farmers planting biotech crops globally have increased in both developed and developing countries with economic gains of US$224.9 billion benefitting more than 16 million farmers in the last 23 years.

Dr. Kyetere added that in addition to improving plant performance, the use of Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) genes to produce insect resistant crops has reduced the excessive use of insecticides which is saving farmers costs on inputs and contributing to human health and the environment.

Bt is a microbe naturally found in the soil and has been used as a biological pesticide for several decades to control insect damage mostly in the horticulture industry.

He urged African leaders to allocate more funding for research and development for emerging technologies such as agricultural biotechnology, emphasizing that this would increase capacity in biotechnology research in Africa for the benefit of the continent.

"Investment in biotechnology research will produce a critical mass of expertise to enable the continent to exploit the benefits of the technology in improving agricultural productivity among farmers," said Dr. Kyetere.

Dr. Kyetere further called on governments and players in the agricultural sector to embrace public-private-partnership collaborative model to attract private sector to support biotechnology research and contribute to increasing capacity in the field.

"AATF spearheaded efforts to reduce ineffective regulatory systems which has improved biotech research in Africa. More efforts to increase friendly regulatory environment to stimulate biotech research is still required," he stated.

The CJED, organized by the AUDA-NEPAD, brought together experts across the continent to deliberate on strategic innovation and emerging technologies for smart agriculture to strengthen Africa's food security.

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About AATF (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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