

## PRESS RELEASE

The seed sector is critical in the delivery of seed-based technologies to farmers.

*Strong partnerships can help to form resilient seed and food systems.*



*Dr. Munyaradzi Jonga, the Seed Production Specialist and TAAT Maize Compact Lead at AATF making a presentation during the 1<sup>st</sup> Rwanda National Seed Congress held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2023.*

**[Kigali, Rwanda, August 2023]:** The availability of quality seeds is critical to enhance crop productivity for a food and nutrition secure continent. However, this has remained a challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region due to challenges brought about by drought, pest and diseases which have hampered optimal productivity. Nevertheless,

there is still huge potential to maximize Africa's agricultural productivity by leveraging on already available high-quality seeds of newly improved climate-smart varieties produced from different breeding programmes within the region, such as the DroughtTEGO hybrids, a meeting heard.

Speaking during the 1<sup>st</sup> Rwanda National Seed Congress in Kigali, Rwanda, Dr. Munyaradzi Jonga, the Seed Production Specialist and TAAT Maize Compact Lead at AATF noted that even where several crop varieties have been released and registered in recent years, countries in the region are still lagging in achieving seed and food security contributing to the low adoption of new seed-based technologies by farmers.

Dr Jonga pointed out that partnerships in technology commercialization are crucial in technology development; new products awareness and demand creation and uptake; supporting capacity to access; and deliver appropriate agricultural technologies to smallholder African farmers.

Furthermore, he noted that policy and regulatory enabling environment is key in seed systems development and commercialization.

Experts agree that international and national research organisations develop technologies and innovations, including climate-resilient crop varieties. However, the outputs of research in Africa are not easily commercialised. Cognizant of this, seed systems are putting in place mechanisms to enable private companies to access and commercialise climate resilient varieties.

"AATF is spearheading commercialisation of technology and innovations emanating from research through partnerships with different organisations including national research systems to deliver improved seeds to smallholder farmers," Dr. Jonga said.

Through AATF partnerships in technology commercialization, he stated that the organization has produced over 35,480 metric tons of climate-smart maize seeds that have been commercialized through Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA), StrigAway, TELA and TAAT Maize projects over the past 10 years, reaching more than 3.5 million farmers and enough to grow maize on about 1.4 million hectares in Africa.

AATF works across many areas to ensure innovations can ultimately reach farmers. These areas include regulatory approval, licensing agreements and product commercialisation, the organization has a proven track record of connecting African farmers with advanced technology that addresses their specific challenges and opportunities.

**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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