

# Communiqué of the African Conference on Agricultural Technologies (ACAT)

**Nairobi, Kenya**  
**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**



**Ministry of Agriculture &  
Livestock Development**



# Communiqué

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Convened by the Government of Kenya and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) with the support from partners, the first African Conference on Agricultural Technologies (ACAT) was held in Nairobi, Kenya from **October 31 to 3 November 2023** at the Safari Park Hotel. Themed “***Agricultural Resilience through Innovation***”, the ACAT provided a platform for high-level conversations on how to reposition the development and scaling of agricultural technologies and innovations to drive economic growth and development in Africa.

**Recognizing** the aspirations for Africa’s agricultural transformation as elaborated in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); as re-affirmed in the commitments of Malabo Declaration in 2014 and further mainstreamed in Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want, and aligned with the Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024;

**Acknowledge with deep concern** the low level of Africa’s investment in Research & Development as a proportion of GDP which stands at 0.5%, way below the world average of 1.8 % and which consequently translates into slow pace of research in critical sectors such as Agriculture;

**Appreciating** the critical role that the agricultural sector, including livestock production plays in supporting livelihoods, industrial and economic growth across the continent;

**Recalling** the centrality of science and technology in driving agricultural productivity hence pivoting socio-economic development and rural transformation translating to national prosperity and Africa’s collective food and nutrition security;

**Further recalling** the commitment made during the Second Africa-wide conference on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) convened in partnership with the Government of Rwanda and AUDA-NEPAD in Kigali-Rwanda in April 2022 towards intensifying efforts on commercialization and deployment of technologies for the benefit



of local communities;

**Recognizing** also the many challenges that the youth, women, and people living with disabilities engaged in agriculture on the continent face, including limited access to opportunities, technologies and productivity enhancing resources;

**Noting** also that Africa spends substantial amounts of financial resources importing food, yet through adoption of technologies, there is great potential for increasing productivity to reduce the import burden while also facilitating intra-Africa trade;

**Equally Noting** the urgent need to build farmer resilience in Africa, considering that agricultural production and food systems in the continent are highly vulnerable to climate change, armed conflict, social and political instability as well as commodity-supply related shocks such as fertilizer, foreign exchange and fuel crises;

**Regretting** that the face of African agriculture outlook is still characterized by rudimentary traditional tools as such as the handheld hoe and the abysmally low penetration of agricultural mechanization that has stagnated at below 10% of its full potential;

**Mindful** of the lessons gained from past and present efforts and the compelling need to forge an African-centered approach to transformation through development and deployment of technological solutions adapted to local conditions;

**Appreciating** the good progress made on the continent in establishing policies, strategies, plans, laws, regulations and institutional arrangements to facilitate technological advancement in the agricultural sector, including slow but on-going efforts at domestication and implementation of policy instruments;

**Appreciating also** that substantial resources have been invested in research and development of agricultural innovations, through which multiple products and crop varieties are aligned for release in readiness for deployment and commercialization;



**Concerned** that in addition to the less friendly regulatory environment for technology release, the commercialization, deployment, and adoption of crop varieties is extremely slow due to limited funding for scaling of technologies;

**Appreciating** the important role that the private sector can play in driving agricultural research and development, which has not been fully exploited given the challenging operational environment and insufficient incentives;

**Noting** that the world is entering the fifth industrial revolution that will be driven by great technological innovations where quantum computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, the Internet of Things and systems, advanced biotechnology, big data analytics, precision farming, robotics, nanotechnology, 3D printing and 5G network connectivity;

**Noting** also the huge potential of biotechnology innovations such as genetic modification (GM) and genome editing in enhancing agricultural production and productivity and improving the health and wealth of our people; yet the development and commercialization of related applications continues to be derailed by prohibitive regulatory environments and resistance fueled by disinformation;

**We, participants of the inaugural African Conference on Agricultural Technologies:**

1. **Encourage** African governments, regional economic communities, and continental bodies and organs to sustain the dialogues and actions to fast-track agricultural technology deployment while integrating Science Technology and Innovations in their respective development frameworks.
2. **Appeal** for commitment of funding to support STI as affirmed in 2016 by African Heads of State in the Lagos Plan of Action to increase science and technology budgets to at least 1% of GDP by 2025 and the commitment to increase the budget allocation to the agricultural sector to at least 10% of the budget in line with the Malabo Declaration.



3. **Call** for concerted efforts to urgently address the negative impact of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) opposing novel technological innovations including genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Africa through constructive dialogues and objective engagements, supported by scientific evidence. There is need to navigate away from defending science and instead embrace strategic and transparent communication to effectively counter dis-information.
4. **Commit** to collaborate towards identifying and engaging a critical mass of high-level agricultural technology ambassadors to serve as the voice of the continent on matters related to the development and deployment of Agricultural technologies.
5. **Call** for consistent and strategic engagement of all critical stakeholders especially the private sector, farmers, and gender groups towards co-creation of innovations and participatory policy making processes, technology development, commercialization, and deployment of agricultural technologies.
6. **Stress** the importance of creating a functional enabling environment and sufficient incentives to facilitate research, development and commercialization of agricultural innovations and establishment of a functional private sector.
7. **Reiterate** the need for investment in functions that are critical for supporting commercialization and adoption of agricultural technologies including reinvigorating extension services, creating efficient markets and elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers;
8. **Urge** Africa Union (AU) member states, regional economic communities, and other key stakeholders to nurture political will to drive technological advancement in the agricultural sector towards food self-sufficiency and intensified intra-Africa trade in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area - AfCFTA.





9. **Call upon** the AU to formally recognize and engage institutions that have excelled in the field of development and deployment of agricultural technologies such as AATF as their technical arms on agricultural technology matters.
10. **Endorse** the recognition and adoption of ACAT as the continent-wide biennial forum that will showcase emerging technologies and innovations, promote networking and shared learning, and unlock access to technology and its delivery.
11. **Commit** to sustain engagement on agricultural technology in between ACAT editions through organizing and engaging in Strategic Dialogues in Agricultural Technology in Africa (SDATA) to foster discussions within and across the following strategic groups: the youth, ministers, researchers, the private sector, and farmers.
12. **Resolve** to meet again in Kigali, Rwanda from 19 - 23 May, 2025 to take stock of the progress made against the commitments herein agreed to.

In closing,

We, ACAT participants,

Recognize and appreciate the commitment of the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and AATF Goodwill Ambassador on Agricultural Technologies, H.E Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan;

and

Appreciate the President and the people of Kenya for their hospitality and hosting the ACAT 2023 edition.

**- ENDS -**

