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Second Communiqué on Integrated Seed Sector Development

**African Union Commission
African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP)**

Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa: The Role of Entrepreneurship and Priority Themes for Joint Action

The concept of integrated seed sector development (ISSD) was endorsed by the African Union Commission in the Communiqué on Integrated Seed Sector Development of May 2011 as part of efforts towards the implementation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) which was endorsed by the AU Heads of State and Government in 2007 during their 8th Ordinary Session and acknowledging that different seed systems co-exist, each with its own unique characteristics and contributions. Therefore, the Communiqué recommends that a pluralistic approach to seed sector development is required to optimally serve objectives of food security, economic development and biodiversity through entrepreneurship.

The delegates from the following AU Member States: Burundi; Ethiopia; Ghana; Malawi; Mali; Mozambique; Uganda; and Zambia, and regional organisations in Africa: ASARECA; and RUFORUM, discussed seed sector development in a meeting organised by the African Union Commission and Wageningen University and Research centre, financially supported by the Government of the Netherlands in partnership with Agri-ProFocus, CTA, Future Agricultures Consortium, IFAD, IFDC, Royal Tropical Institute and Self Help Africa. The meeting took place from the 8th to the 10th of April 2013 at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana.

This pan-African synthesis meeting was guided by a regional workshop held in Adama, Ethiopia in September 2012, and national seed entrepreneurship assessments, consultative multi-stakeholder workshops and national seminars in Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Uganda and Zambia.

Recognising that a number of principles guide the operationalization of the integrated seed sector development concept, including the appreciation of the relevance of informal seed systems, the need for integrating informal and formal systems and inclusive participation. Accordingly, programmes can be built upon a range of seed systems to foster pluralism and integration. An evidence based approach

contributes to guiding interventions in different seed systems. Enabling policies can foster the development of a vibrant seed sector.

Recognising the complementary roles of the private and public sectors and working according to the structure of the seed value chain contributes to identifying specific roles and responsibilities.

Whereas a number of African countries recognize the pluralistic nature of the seed sector and ISSD principles in their national seed policies and legal frameworks, many still experience challenges in adapting seed policies and regulations to farmers' practices and realities.

The meeting observed that:

The establishment of a pan-African Integrated Seed Sector Development programme within the broader AU ASBP would facilitate a cross-border network for dialogue and joint action into themes that benefit from the continental approach. The programme can contribute to greater coordination, integration and knowledge sharing among regional and national seed programmes and initiatives.

The meeting concluded that:

Promoting entrepreneurship and market-orientation through capacity building, organizational management and institutional development is key to seed sector sustainability. Overall, there is emphasis on strengthening entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship needs to be developed and supported in such a way that it responds to the demands of different seed systems. There is an important role for the public sector focussing on client-oriented service provision and an enabling environment supportive of this. Public-private partnerships can reduce the burden on state resources and encourage stronger market-orientation to development.

A number of themes are on the common agenda for joint action and learning, under the umbrella of the African Union Commission – African Seed and Biotechnology Programme:

- elaboration of Seed Related Initiatives and Programmes within country agricultural and food security investment plans which have been developed along the CAADP principles and objectives
- regional harmonization processes
- access to varieties in the public domain
- common challenges to promoting entrepreneurship in seed value chains
- informal seed systems and community biodiversity management
- the role of global seed industry in Africa
- seed distribution and seed relief
- knowledge institutes in innovative seeds sector development
- matching global commitments with national realities

These thematic areas will be further elaborated in the envisaged programme for Integrated Seed Sector Development in Africa with a facilitating role for the national ISSD Taskforces. The African Union Commission, through its Africa Seed and Biotechnology Programme, the Regional Economic Communities, Africa Seed Network, relevant sub-regional organizations, the private sector and development partners are requested to continue providing the necessary political, technical and financial support to African Union Member States for further jointly developing the agenda of these thematic areas. Activities under the thematic areas can contribute to, or be embedded within, the countries' agricultural development strategies and investment plans, which have been developed and elaborated on the principles of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).