



COMMUNIQUE OF THE 4TH EDITION OF SEED CONNECT AFRICA 2021 CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION HELD ON 29TH AND 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT NAF CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA, NIGERIA



The largest gathering of seed industry stakeholders in Africa, “Seed Connect Africa” conference and exhibition, with the main theme titled: **Partnership for a resilient and robust seed industry in Nigeria** was held on the 29th and 30th November, 2021 at the Nigerian Air Force Conference (NAF) Centre, Abuja.

The conference, which was convened by the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) in collaboration with other national and international partners had in attendance, policy makers, law makers, major actors across the seed value chain, Seed Entrepreneurs, Research Institutes, IT Service Providers, Financial Institutions, National and Foreign Collaborators, Advocacy Groups, Media and several international participants.

The conference, which was declared open by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood Abubakar amidst several good will messages had robust discussions on eight thematic areas namely:

1. Building a Robust Seed Industry for a Food Secure Nigeria: Key Priorities for access and availability of quality seeds
2. Collaboration, strong inter agency coordination and synergy as panacea to resilience building and closing gaps in the Nigerian Seed Sector
3. Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Law: Panacea for Progress of Nigeria's Agriculture and Food Security
4. Developing seed market and increases farmers demand for quality seed
5. Assuring healthier seeds: Quality assurance, production technologies and multiplication strategies for cassava seed system in Nigeria.
6. The imperative of high-quality seeds for a successful agricultural productivity and better livelihood for farmers in Nigeria.
7. Seed demand and supply; the place of technology in building resilience for a robust seed system in Nigeria
8. Challenges of regional seed trade and its impact on AfCTA.

Participants at the conference observed, discussed issues of regional and national interest and suggested actions to address the issues as follows:

- High level of partnership and collaboration will play an important role in making Nigeria and the region food secured. The present level of partnership of NASC



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with other agencies was adjudged as one of the factors for the positive transformation witnessed in the Seed Industry. Stakeholders in the Industry are hereby encouraged to develop profitable collaborations in achieving the goal of building a resilient and robust seed industry in Nigeria and the region at large.

- In the context of collaboration, encroachment of inter-agencies roles and mandates were identified as an impediment to foster synergy among the actors. It was resolved that NASC, should continue to facilitate discussions that will boost inter agency collaboration with clear cut mandates and strategies for all the actors.
- Crop productivity with emphasis on maize is still considered to be marginal, due to low level of penetration of hybrid seeds into the system. Difficulty in assessing high quality inbred lines, utilization of land races and old varieties, orchestrated by limited research fund were identified as some of the problems. Repositioning of NARIs and Academic Institutes towards addressing their major mandates, shifting from headquarter based organizations and provision of more fund for research were suggested to bridge the gap between demand and supply of quality seeds.
- Low level adoption of improved seed is still paramount in the seed system. Possible reasons were multifaceted, ranging from unstructured nature of the informal market, diverse perception of farmers on seed support, to none availability of the seeds. Provision of ancillary services in remote seed production clusters, aggressive seed promotional programs were recommended to be adopted by seed companies to enhance farmers' knowledge on the potentials of the improved seed and bridge the gap between demand and supply.
- Cassava was recognized as playing significant role in agriculture, but there is a low level of private sector interest in the seed system of the crop, due to high reproducibility of the propagating materials for generations before recurring to the source. Also, varietal mix-up during transportation of propagating materials poses a threat to the crop production. The collaborative effort of NASC to have develop the cassava seed tracker was applauded. Seed companies were enjoined to develop interest in this novel segment of seed industry.
- Utilization of high-quality seeds for successful agricultural productivity was identified not to be exclusive, as it involves other complementary inputs and technical assistance. Activities of seed fraudsters were identified as a major



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threat to seed industry development. The introduction of seed codex, to mitigate seed faking in Nigeria was accepted and recommended to be introduced to other countries in the region.

- The role of ICT in the development of the seed industry was recognized. The need to further develop and deploy more ICT innovations to fast track seed trade, varietal performance mapping, seed tracking and sharing market information services was emphasized.
- The problem of free movement of seeds within the ECOWAS region is still persistent despite ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme. It was advised that ECOWAS should increase advocacy among member nations to facilitate the implementation of the regional agreement. Member countries were advised to communicate challenges encountered in the seed trade to the commission. All complaints should be passed through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for effective resolutions.
- The low inclusion of women and youths in seed business and other various seed value chains was observed. It was suggested that more youths and women should be allowed access to finance and other productive resources in pursuance of seed business.
- The role of technology in terms of varietal development was also identified as being important for the optimal agricultural productivity in the Country.