



COMMUNIQUE OF THE 1ST EDITION OF SEED CONNECT AFRICA 2018 CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION HELD ON 5TH AND 6TH JUNE, 2018 AT ROCKVIEW HOTEL (ROYALE), NIGERIA



THE NIGERIA SEED INDUSTRY: EVALUATING THE SEED SECTOR AND DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK TO BOLSTER THE GROWTH OF THE SEED INDUSTRY

The maiden annual edition of SEEDCONNECT Conference and Expo 2018 convened by the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC) in collaboration with Contact Consulting and other key partners was held between the 5th and 6th of June 2018.

A total of 501 participants from Nigerian seed companies, regulating agencies, National Agricultural Research Institutes, CGIAR organizations, IT service provider, Financial Institutions, advocacy groups, policy makers, international participants from UPOV, Geneva, CORAF/WECARD, Africaseeds, AGRA and E-fresh, Netherlands participated in the conference to brainstorm on sustainable road map capable of strengthening the Nigeria Seed Industry. The conference was declared open by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and chairman governing board of NASC, Chief Audu Ogbah OFR. Also present were the Governing Board of NASC and members of Diplomatic corps.

The conference also marked the official launching of the farmers seed helpline **070000seeds** by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Six plenary sessions and 4 paper presentations which elicited robust discussions, question and answer sessions was a high point of the meeting. The thematic issues discussed were;

- Developing an integrated seed supply chain and employing e-technology as a tool for accelerating seed market in Africa.
- The role of policy and legislation in enhancing seed industry development for Nigeria economic growth recovery.
- Addressing the challenges of low agricultural productivity in Nigeria-Role of key stakeholders.
- Implications of adopting genetically modified seed technology in Africa.
- Entrepreneurship opportunities for women and youths in Nigeria seed industry.
- Partnership opportunities and benefits for attaining sustainability in Nigeria seed industry.

The overall objectives of the workshop were to among others:

- Review the Nigerian seed Sector with a focus on past innovations, success, failure and challenges.



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- Identify critical priority actions to be undertaken by stakeholders to leverage each other's strengths, scope, and scale up operation efficiencies of the sector.
- Identify critical gaps and develop a strategic framework for scaling up delivery of high-quality seed to farmers.

The conference came up with the following observations;

- i. Policy somersault is a cause of failure in Government programs.
- ii. Communication, transportation, propensity to purchase and logistics are problems hampering sourcing of quality seeds.
- iii. Poor agronomic practice is also a major factor responsible for low productivity.
- iv. Poor information on soil mapping for soil enhancement is also a bane to productivity of quality Seeds.
- v. There is an apathy to GM technology due to poor awareness.
- vi. Poor extension services is a bane to synergy between NARIs and farmers.

And recommended as follows:

- i. SeedConnect should be a yearly conference and the name registered with CAC.
- ii. Government have a role in ensuring farmers' access to good quality seeds.
- iii. The on-going discussion on the reduction of tariff for agricultural equipment, spare parts and also stainless steel for fabrication of implements must be pursued to logical conclusion.
- iv. There is need for adoption of existing technology already developed by NARIs to improve seed production.
- v. E-technology in the Nigerian seed industry should go beyond SMS as obtainable in other countries with continuous content upgrade.
- vi. Seed tracker should be developed and deployed for use. The Cassava Seed tracker developed by IITA should be developed to help in coordination of all seed activities electronically.
- vii. The problem of Internet Connectivity which may mar the sustainability of the e-system can be eliminated by adopting offline method in areas where there is no connectivity.



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- viii. Government must provide necessary infrastructure and a well-regulated environment for agriculture to thrive. Seed law should be fully implemented.
- ix. Government should put in place favourable policy that will enhance the development and adoption of new varieties.
- x. Policies should be drawn and made to promote varietal development and the right of breeders. Accreditation by UPOV and the development of an IPR law and policy will be a right step to take.
- xi. There should be proper synergies between breeders and seed companies in Nigeria.
- xii. Extension services should be revived and institutionalized.
- xiii. There are inadequate breeders in Nigeria. Students should be encouraged to take interest in plant breeding programs.
- xiv. There should be more awareness the GM technology, and all stakeholders must be carried along and it must be domesticated.
- xv. There should be adequate investment in the seed value chain, cooperative youth and women group should be trained to take advantage of the opportunities that abound in the seed sub-sector.
- xvi. NASC should adopt a youth inclusive seed program similar to IITA youth agripreneurs. NASC should synergise with National Youth Service Corp program and develop a model that will attract these youths to the seed business.
- xvii. Community seed production should be up-scaled.
- xviii. There should be a sustainable partnership between seed sub sector and the financial sector to make funds available for potential youth entrepreneurs.
- xix. Seed entrepreneurship should be promoted in tertiary institutions.

APPRECIATION

The stakeholders expressed their appreciation to NASC and its conference partner for convening the SeedConnect Africa Expo 2018 and sued for continuous and more robust partnerships that will take the Nigeria seed Industry to the next level.