KNOWLEDGE THAT TRANSFORMS

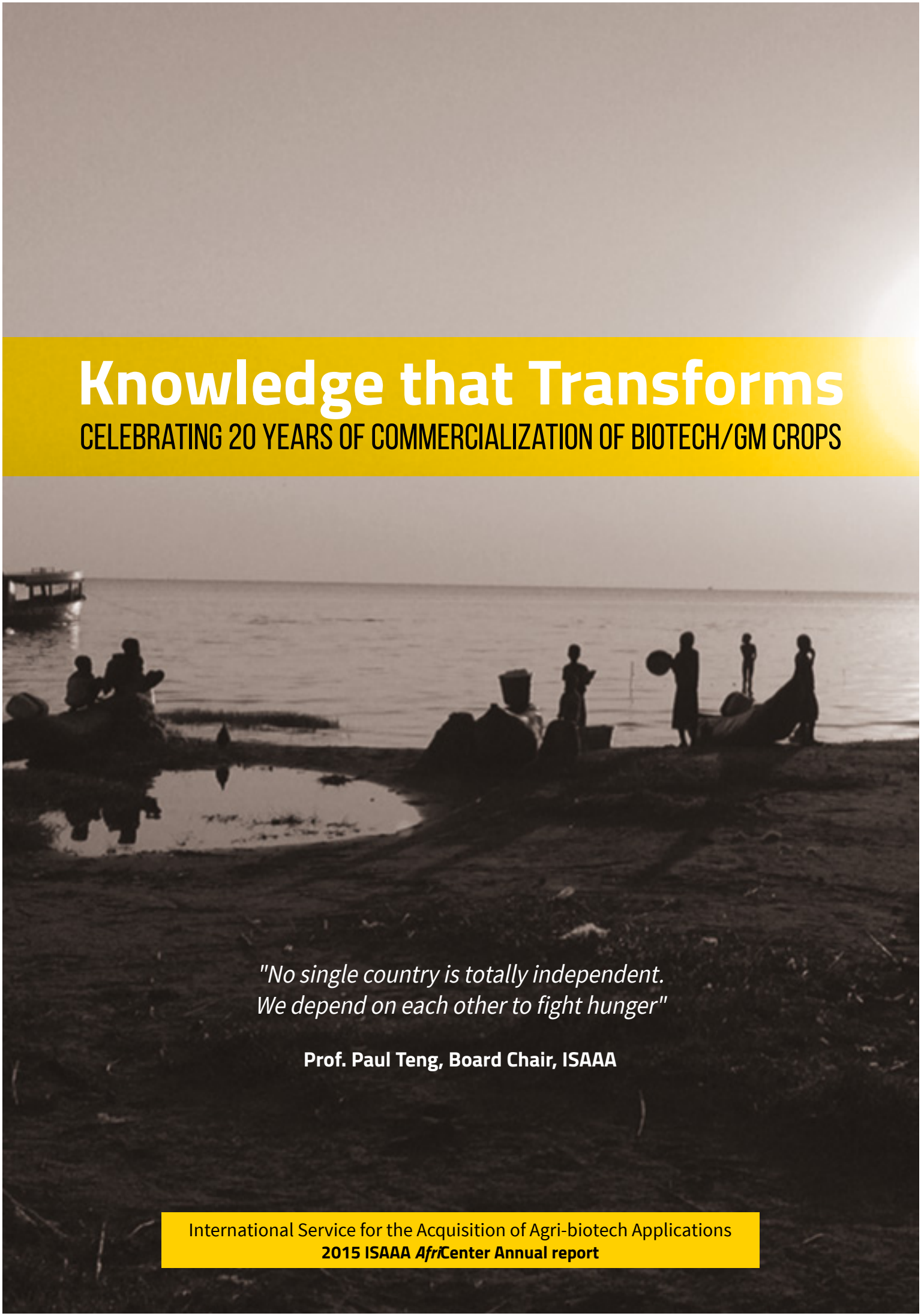
ISAAA
International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications

2015 AFRICENTER ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating 20 Years of Commercialization of Biotech/GM crops

Knowledge that Transforms

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF COMMERCIALIZATION OF BIOTECH/GM CROPS



"No single country is totally independent.
We depend on each other to fight hunger"

Prof. Paul Teng, Board Chair, ISAAA

International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications

2015 ISAAA *Afri*Center Annual report

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ISAAA's Niche

ISAAA is a not-for-profit international organization that shares the benefits of crop biotechnology to various stakeholders, particularly resource-poor farmers in developing countries. This is achieved through knowledge sharing initiatives and the transfer and delivery of proprietary biotechnology applications. ISAAA's global knowledge sharing network and partnerships in the research and development continuum, provide a powerful combination of science-based information and appropriate technology to those who need to make informed decisions about their acceptance and use. In addition, an array of support services completes the holistic approach to agricultural development and ensures effective implementation and timely delivery of crop biotechnologies. These services include capacity building for policy makers and scientists; regulatory oversight on such issues as biosafety and food safety; impact assessment, and science communication.

ISAAA has three centers in South East Asia (*SEAsia*Center), Africa (*Afri*Center), and North America (*Ameri*Center). ISAAA *Afri*Center was established in 1994 in Kenya, and has an Africa mandate.. It is hosted by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Nairobi, Kenya.

Vision

A food secure Africa free of hunger and poverty

Mission

To share knowledge on agricultural biotechnology and biosafety through strategic communications and outreach for informed policy and choice

Approach

To achieve its mission, the *Afri*Center focuses on the following thematic areas:

- Sharing knowledge on all aspects of crop biotechnology for informed policy and choice
- Strengthening capacity for effective science communication
- Engaging policy makers in order to create an enabling environment for crop biotechnology development
- Forming strategic partnerships that capitalize on the comparative advantages of public and private sectors in the agri-biotech and biosafety continuum
- Facilitating international representation of Africa's agri-biotech and biosafety agenda

Capability Statement

ISAAA is exceptionally designed to provide communications and policy support services on all aspects of crop biotechnology and biosafety. It does not generate or own any agri-biotech products. This high degree of independence makes ISAAA's operations credible as it interfaces with various institutions and partners that serve developing countries. ISAAA *Afri*Center has a team of multidisciplinary experts who develop and implement strategic development communication programs that are well focused for maximum impact. The team provides communication and policy support services to promising projects across Africa and offers trainings on effective science communications. A number of *Afri*Center staff are certified to conduct net-mappping exercises that help in identifying relationships between and among stakeholders for effective outreach. *Afri*Center also co-ordinates study tours for Africa's key agri-biotech stakeholders. We are often contracted by different actors to facilitate such visits for experiential learning on all aspects of agri-biotech and biosafety. Given the controversial nature of agricultural biotechnology, the Center has a rapid response mechanism to address contentious issues when they arise. To broaden its expertise and optimize performance, *Afri*Center works with a network of Associates who contribute to its mission through involvement in various programs, on a need-basis. The Associates, who come from reputable public and private institutions from across the globe, are drawn from various disciplines that complement the Centre's areas of focus. The *Afri*Center is also a one-stop shop for the current agri-biotech and biosafety information in the continent.

Director's Remarks

We strive for a debate that is informed by credible scientific evidence and encourage the public to #TalkGMOFacts.

Jambo!

Dr. Margaret Karembu
Director, ISAAA *Afri*Center

The year 2015 was an exciting one at ISAAA *Afri*Center. After 20 years of sustained growth in its programs, 2015 represented a major landmark in many distinct ways. In our core knowledge sharing program, we organized and hosted the International Conference on Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communications (ABBC 2015). The 2-day conference that brought together 157 delegates from 30 countries exhibited our commitment in working with global partners to seek ways of strengthening knowledge sharing initiatives on modern biotechnology. ABBC 2015's outcomes will undoubtedly play a key role in informing future communication strategies for greater impact. One of the conference's outcomes dubbed " Nairobi-ABBC 2015 Declaration" is appended. Three other international events included the coordination of Cornell Alliance for Science Leadership course, hosting of the ISAAA BICs Networks and OFAB chapters' Annual Planning Meeting.

Our mandate on knowledge sharing is inspired by the need to transform the agri-biotechnology discourse. We strive for a debate that is informed by credible scientific evidence and encourage the public to #TalkGMOFacts. To achieve this mandate, *Afri*Center facilitated the launching of ISAAA's flagship knowledge sharing product, the Annual report on the Global Status of Commercialised Biotech/GM Crops: 2014, in 20 African countries. Out of the launch events, over 285 million media impressions were made through stories that covered the events. Over 1000 copies of the report were re-printed and distributed widely, including to offices of the 54 African Heads of State and Governments, Parliaments and University libraries. The report was also repackaged into simplified easy-to-use knowledge products, and its top ten facts translated into 19 different African languages to reach out to grassroot communities.

We continued co-ordinating the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB-Kenya Chapter), a platform that brings together stakeholders in agri-biotechnology to deliberate on topical issues. Our focus in the year was to intensify outreach at the grassroots through County Editions. Twelve (12) OFAB sessions were held, reaching out to over 1000 participants.

Over the last decade, the Center vigorously pursued its desire to grow strategic partnerships aimed at leveraging on unique skills and share resources, while avoiding unnecessary duplication. 2015 was in many ways, a milestone year for our partnerships program. This was manifested in the increased number of collaborations with like-minded institutions as highlighted in this report. We strengthened our ties with existing partners and formed new linkages that have helped expand our reach.

In the year under review, some of these partnerships enabled us to hold the ABBC 2015, and organise four major seeing-is-believing biotech study tours to Brazil, India, South Africa and Sudan. Over 100 participants benefitted from the tours and are now becoming champions for the technology. These biotech tours detailed in the report are a key tool in facilitating experiential learning for informed policy and choice. However, supporting and sustaining them remains an expensive undertaking. The strategic partnerships between ISAAA and key investors continue to make these critical biotech study tours a reality.

On the policy front, *Afri*Center continued to engage parliamentarians and key decision makers. We ensured they remained well informed about the advancements of agri-biotechnology, both locally and globally. The Center extended invitations to various policy makers from Africa for the aforementioned biotech study tours. These decision makers got an opportunity to meet with their counterparts from other countries, enabling peer-to-peer learning. In addition, 2015 witnessed for the very first time in Kenya, two applications for open field cultivation (environmental release) of genetically modified maize and cotton.

To support this process, *Afri*Center undertook a series of policy outreach activities for parliamentarians, senators and key county government officials. These were done in partnership with the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), the Kenya University Biotechnology Consortium (KUBICO) and the BioAWARE initiative of the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

We remain alive to the fact that for agri-biotechnology to be fully accepted, those who play a role in shaping public opinion must be equipped with adequate science communication skills. To this end, the Center held over 10 workshops for media practitioners, regulators, extension officers, farmer leaders, scientists and researchers across the continent. Close to 250 participants were trained on effective science communication and sensitized about global development in the field of agri-biotechnology. The detailed nature of these capacity strengthening workshops and beneficiaries' testimonials are captured in the report. The Center also continued to offer its expertise on policy engagement and communications to various projects across Africa.

Indeed, 2015 has been a lively year for the *Afri*Center. However, we could not have attained our achievements without the support and belief from many partners and investors. So, to our various partners whose confidence continues to inspire us; our funders whose unwavering support has made our work possible; and to our leadership who continue to model dedication and service, we are indeed grateful. We look forward to your continued collaboration in intensifying the sharing of knowledge for informed policy and choices in Africa.

Asante Sana. Thank You.
Merci Beaucoup. Obrigado شكرا لك

Executive Summary

We draw our energy from the positive developments realised in 2015 which is a cause for optimism.

Year 2015 marked the 20th anniversary (1996 – 2015) of commercialization of Biotech/GM crops. Paradoxically, the concerns most African Governments have on GM technology still persist. These concerns relate to the possible adverse effects on human health, environment, and the fear that adoption of biotech/GM crops may jeopardize exports of conventional agricultural products to the EU market. This is despite expansive experience and studies that have provided scientific evidence to the contrary. Additionally, failure to secure a critical mass of sustained political support for the technology has resulted in policy contradictions in some African countries. Such trends could have significant implications on the general uptake of modern biotechnology in the region.

Learning from the April 2015 International Conference on Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communication (ABBC 2015) and in recognition of the critical role politics play in shaping public perceptions, *Afri*Center in partnership with like-minded local and regional institutions intensified political outreach activities in the period under review. Notable among these include: study tours to countries growing biotech/GM crops such as South Africa (March 2015), Brazil (March 2015), India (September 2015) and Sudan (November 2015), for different stakeholders from various African countries.

The Center played a key role in securing political support for 2 applications for environmental release of Bt maize under the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) and Bt cotton in Kenya. This was done through sensitization activities and exposure visits focusing on both parliamentarians and County Government leaders in the maize and cotton growing regions. The success of these series of outreach activities is credited to the existing close partnership with NACOSTI as the Government representative in charge of promoting Science Technology and Innovation (STI) as well as technology developers.

With the need to sustain ongoing momentum in support of a favourable policy environment for the technology in Africa, *Afri*Center will continue to build on past success, and strategic partnerships with parliamentarians and senior Government officials over the coming period.

The Center has cut an niche in providing biosafety communication support to biotech and biosafety activities in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. These are among the 8 African countries that are currently at advanced stages of completing CFTs of various crops or reviewing their biosafety profiles. Kenya and Uganda are involved in the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project which is set for commercialization by 2017. It is flagged to be the first crop to be commercialized in the eastern Africa region and thus our intervention will greatly contribute to the translation of the field trials into commercial products for farmers.

We draw our energy from the positive developments realised in 2015 which is a cause for optimism. So far, in addition to the aforementioned countries conducting trials, there are three countries in Africa with commercialized crops; South Africa, Burkina Faso and Sudan while 8 others are conducting trials on important food security crops.

The policy and regulatory environment is also improving.A case in point is the Nigerian President's assent to the country's Biosafety law and establishment of the National Biosafety Management Agency, Tanzania's amendment of the stringent liability regulations to allow research on priority GM crops, Mozambique's revision of their law to allow CFTs, South Africa's approval for general release of WEMA and finally Ethiopian Government's initiative to review the Biosafety proclamation to give room for research and commercialization of GM crops.

The pronouncement by the Kenyan Deputy President H.E. William Ruto of the government's intention to lift the GMO importation ban in the near future, underscores the growing political will by African governments to adopt modern agricultural practices. However, the upsurge of aggressive activism against the technology and threats across Africa by GMO critics signifies the huge task ahead for *Afri*Center and partners in intensifying knowledge-sharing and policy outreach moving forward.

The ISAAA AfriCenter Director, Dr. Margaret Karembu with Kenya's Deputy President William Ruto (L) during the 2015 Annual National Biosafety Conference

Knowledge Sharing

ISAAA's flagship product for knowledge and information sharing is the Annual Review on the Global Status of Commercialised Biotech Crops and their positive economic, environmental and humanitarian impacts.

Tanzania's Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Godfrey Zambi (left) launches Brief 49 - June 2015.

The Annual Review (popularly referred to as the Brief) is unique and has become the standard reference for biotech crops by popular media, the academia and governments. It is launched every year in different countries around the world.

In 2015, Brief 49 was launched in 20 African countries namely : Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Sudan, Swaziland,Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

OFAB Chapters in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe assisted the *Afri*Center in conducting successful launches of Brief 49 in their respective countries.

Further, 1000 copies of the report were distributed to different stakeholders including Heads of State and Governments.The objective is to scale out the reach and usage of the report and expand this knowledge sharing initiative in Africa. Additional copies were distributed to parliaments in all 54 Africa Union members and Universities where lecturers use it for teaching purposes.

By launching Brief 49:

- We garnered close to 285,000,000 media impressions.
- Facilitated policy pronouncements during the launches.
- Parliamentarians and farmers intensified call for an enabling environment to access the technology.

Brief 49 launch in Nigeria - April 2015

Brief 49 highlights the progress with biotech crops in 2014, a year which marked the 19th anniversary of commercialisation of biotech crops. Globally, 18 million farmers in 28 countries grew 18.5 million hectares of biotech crops. In Africa, 3 countries - Burkina Faso, South Africa and Sudan planted 3.3 million hectares of biotech maize, cotton and soybean. High adoption rates reflect farmer satisfaction with the products that offer substantial benefits ranging from more convenient and flexible crop management, lower cost of production, higher productivity per hectare, health and social benefits and a cleaner environment through decreased use of conventional pesticides. Collectively, they contribute to a more sustainable agriculture.

Policy Pronouncements

Brief 49 launch in Burkina Faso - February 2015

"*Burkina Faso will continue using biotechnology, a technology which has already given considerable benefits to farmers in the country. Bt cotton has maintained Burkina Faso as the number one country in cotton production in West Africa at 700,000 tons per year.*"

Mr Relwindé Auguste Maxime Compaoré, Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Burkina Faso

Brief 49 launch in Tanzania-June 2015

"*Tanzania cannot afford to ignore the benefits of biotechnology in developing various sectors of the economy especially in agriculture. The responsibility of the Government is to partner with other stakeholders to ensure that the country has capacity for safe and progressive use of agricultural biotechnology.*"

Hon. Godfrey Zambi, Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Tanzania

Brief 49 Launch in Benin-May 2015

"*At this juncture, I wish to pledge my support for the adoption and commercialization of GM crops in Nigeria as this will enhance food security and improve the GDP, especially in this era when Government is moving away from the oil economy to non-oil economy.*"

Hon. Abdu Bulama Minister for Science and Technology, Nigeria

Brief 49 launch in Kenya-February 2015

"If anything, food derived from GM crops are healthier because scientists have tested them for any adverse effects to human's well-being."

Hon. Dr. Robert Pukose, Deputy chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Health, Kenya

Selected media coverage of Brief 49 report in different countries

Following the successful launch of Brief 49 report in 2015, *Afri*Center sustained media coverage and captured voices across Africa speaking on the benefits of agricultural biotechnology throughout the year.


Biotech could help offset effects of climate change, says report


SOCIÉTÉ

PLUIES DILUVIENNES À ABIDJAN, HIER

Des glissements de terrain font 6 morts

RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

La vulgarisation des OGM recommandée


Agriculture

Nigeria not under hunger threat – Agric Minister

Biosafety Law: Minister raises farmers' hope on Presidential assent


RÉGLEMENTATION DE LA BIOTECHNOLOGIE AGRICOLE

Des acteurs réclament la signature de mécanismes institutionnels

ÉMERGENCE À L'HORIZON 2020

Des commerçants soutiennent le programme du gouvernement


Mr President, step in to crank up stalled biotech bus

Alongside print, hundreds of clips from electronic media (radio and TV) were also captured.

Repackaging of Brief 49 and other IEC Materials in 2015

In addition to the Annual Brief, ISAAA repackages key biotech and biosafety messages into a variety of print, video and social media formats (referred to as derivatives) to further reach a wide range of stakeholders including those who are new to the technology and have not formed an opinion about it. In 2015, these materials included but were not limited to: illustrated infographics; country series with focus on adopting-countries; monographs on top ten facts about biotech crops in Africa. Video and video vignette series on highlights of the report, and social media formats for use on Facebook, Twitter and blogs. In addition, translations of the Annual Brief derivatives in key African languages was done to further expand stakeholder reach. E-copy versions of these publications are available at: www.africenter.isaaa.org

Infographic on the Status of Commercialized Biotech Crops in Africa, 2014

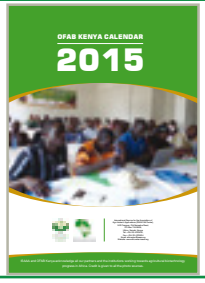
Africa Rising: Top Ten Facts about Biotech/ GM Crops in Africa 2014

Top Ten Facts about Agri-biotech & BioSafety in Kenya by 2014

Key Biotech Crop Traits in Africa by 2014

Enhancing Africa's Capacity for Global Engagement in International BioSafety Negotiations

2015 Calendar - Genetically Modified Crops in African Farmer's Hands



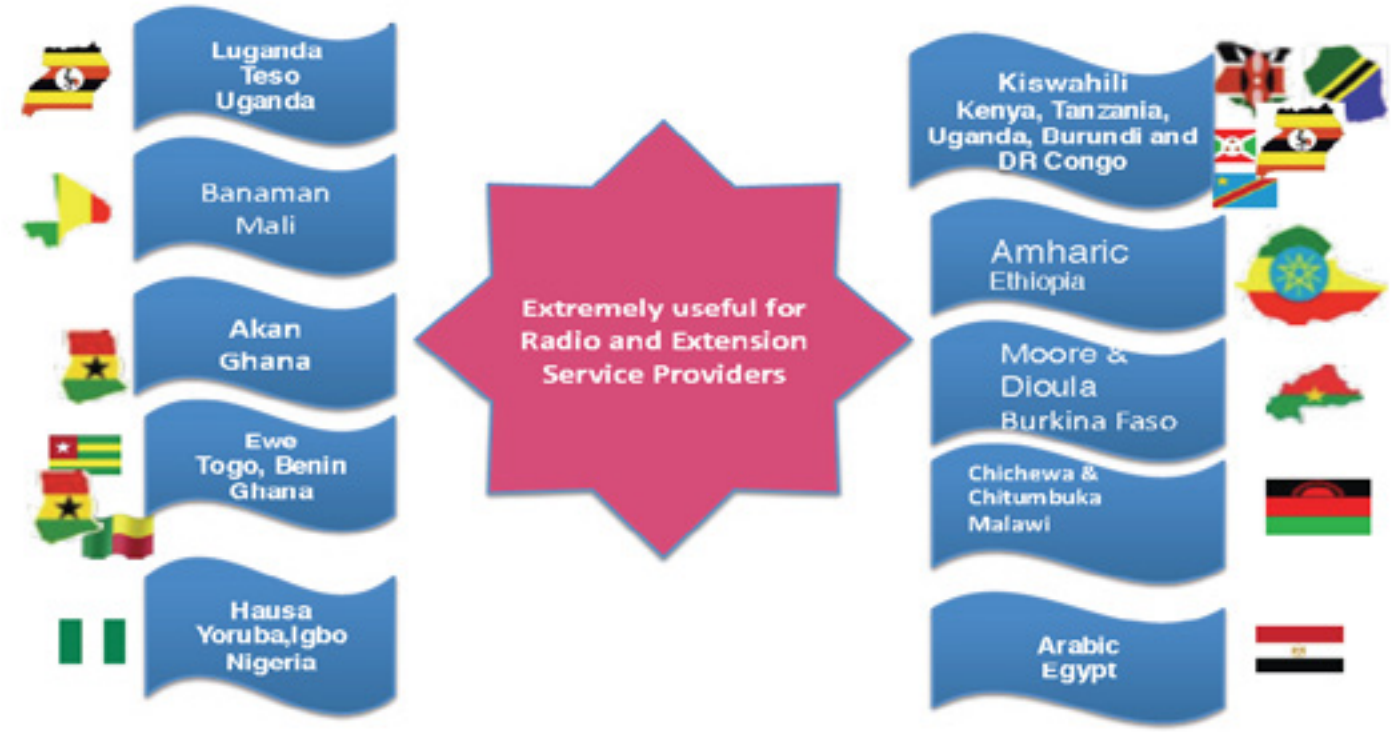
Voices and Views of Local Experts about Agricultural Biotechnology

OFAB Kenya Strategic Plan 2013-2022

OFAB Annual Report 2014

Global Status & Economic Benefits of Biotech Maize Production

Translation of Brief 49's Top Ten Facts



20 : Number of Translation in 2015

Translations : Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Amharic, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Ateso, Luganda, Chichewa, Chitumbuka, Arabic, Dioula, Moore, Bemba, Tonga, Fon, Dendi, Kabye, Ewe and Akan.

International Conference on Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communication ABBC-2015

*Afri*Center in collaboration with several partners successfully organized the International Conference on Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communications (ABBC 2015) in Nairobi, Kenya. The 2-day April conference brought together 157 delegates from 30 countries from around the world. The participants comprised of farmers, scientists, policy makers, private sector representatives, media and science communicators. The goal of the conference was to provide a platform for agricultural biotechnology communication stakeholders to actively exchange experiences and identify best practices towards improving agri-biotech and biosafety communications. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue among the global citizenry.

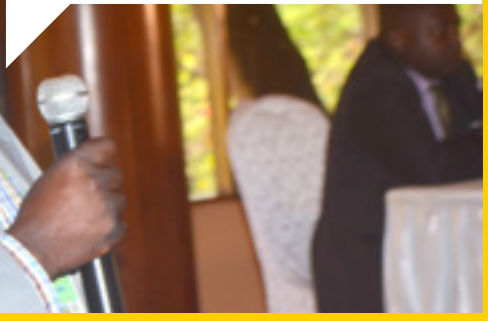
Keynote addresses by select guest speakers and presentations under the following themes were made:

- Stakeholder information needs, engagement strategies and messaging for agri-biotech and biosafety communications.
- Assessing impact in agri-biotech communication.
- The use of new media and campaigns in agri-biotech and biosafety communications.
- The evolving nature of "balance" and "evidence" in agri-biotech and biosafety communications.

Some of the ABBC 2015 participants in a group photo.

"We have the capacity, technology and science to produce adequate food for our people through biotechnology "

Hon. Dr Ottichilo,
Kenyan Parliamentarian during ABBC 2015



Some best practices proposed

- Effective use of mass media
- Simplifying language to reduce jargon
- Use of storytelling techniques
- Integrating social media with traditional media
- Basing messaging on human values and beliefs

The ISAAA BICs team had an opportunity to team up with the OFAB Africa chapters for a visit to the Maize Lethal Necrosis Screening Facility in Naivasha, Kenya where research on this disease is being conducted. This was followed by a team building exercise at Lake Nakuru National Park.

ISAAA BICs Annual Networking Meeting

*Afri*Center hosted the 2015 Annual ISAAA BICs meeting on 15th and 16th April for the first time since establishment of the BICs network. The meeting was graced by Prof. Paul Teng, the ISAAA Board Chair and ISAAA's Global Coordinator Dr. Randy Hautea.

Thirty two members drawn from ISAAA *Ameri*Center (1), *Afri*Center (4), *SEAsia*Center (2), and Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology (3), as well as its network of Biotechnology Information Centers (BICs) from Burkina Faso (1), East and Central Africa (5), Egypt (2), India (2), Indonesia (2), Iran (1), Malaysia (4), Pakistan (1), Philippines (2), and Uganda (2) participated. It also had three observers from the Philippines, Bangladesh and Singapore.

Prof. Teng facilitated the discussion and workshop on how to "amplify" and sustain the messages in ISAAA's Annual Brief in the media and with the public. He reminded the participants that the main comparative advantage of the team was communication based on science and evidence. Amplifying and sustaining the messages may be achieved by increasing media attention on the launch events and working with national partners to enable a positive landscape for agri-biotech in the countries.

ISAAA Africa BICs: Informed and Pro-active Stakeholders at the Top of the Agenda

The heart and soul of the Global Knowledge Center on crop biotechnology is its growing network of Biotechnology Information Centers (BICs) or country nodes. Generally, BICs are at the forefront of responding to scientific information needs and in promoting and advancing a broader public understanding of crop biotechnology in their respective countries. They are recognized in their respective countries as a major source of crop biotechnology information. Depending on specific country conditions such as level of awareness and status of biotechnology activities, each BIC conducts the best combination of communication activities to promote a broader public understanding and balanced perspectives of the attributes of agricultural biotechnology and biosafety. *Afri*Center coordinates the BICs in Africa which comprise of the following:

Burkina Faso BIC-(WABIC): Serving the French-speaking West African Countries

In 2015, WABIC facilitated the launching of the annual report on the global status of commercialized biotech crops and distribution of the French version of the Executive Summary of the report.

Egypt BIC (EBIC): Serving the Arab-speaking African Countries

In 2015, EBIC organized a study tour to Bt cotton fields trials and participated in the formation of a network-Middle East and North Africa Network of GMO laboratories (MENANGL). EBIC also visited the Gemiza wheat filed trails.

The Eastern and Central Africa BIC (ECABIC)

The Center, in collaboration with various national and international biotechnology stakeholders, supported capacity building efforts on biotechnology, exhibitions, communication and legislative processes to encourage governments to enact enabling policies. ECABIC also hosted for the 1st time ISAAA BICs Annual Network meeting in Nairobi.

Uganda BIC (UBIC)

UBIC conducted a number of high impact outreach sessions in support of the passage of the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill. In collaboration with local partners, they conducted sensitization meetings for at least 100 Members of Parliament. They also reached out to the youth in schools and conducted training for extension service providers among other activities.

Participants going through the AfriCenter exhibition stand during the Annual science week

Uganda BIC during Extension Service Providers Training in October 2015

WABIC's Dr. Roger Zangré participates in a media interview on Bt cotton in Burkina Faso

EBIC Director, Prof. Naglaa Abdallah with stakeholders at the Gemiza Wheat Confined field trials in Egypt

Social Media Platforms

Social media is increasingly becoming very powerful in development communication hence the need for scientists to utilize the platform in giving factual agri-biotechnology information. *Afri*Center has taken an active role in using social media to communicate agri-biotech information and in 2015 recorded an increased presence on Twitter, Facebook and Youtube.

Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) - Kenya Chapter

"The best way to have a good idea is to have alot of ideas"
Linus Pauling (1901-1994, American chemist, author and educator)

Some of the key OFAB-Kenya outcomes were:

- Amplified policy pronouncements
- Boosted farmers voices in demanding for the biotech products
- Increased and sustained media engagement throughout the year.

An OFAB sensitization meeting in Coast Region, Kilifi County, Kenya

*Afri*Center continued playing the facilitative and coordinative role of the OFAB-Kenya chapter through regular engagement of different stakeholders. The Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) aims to bring together stakeholders in biotechnology and enables interactions between scientists, journalists, the civil society, industrialists, farmers and policy makers. OFAB – Kenya chapter is organized under a collaborative agreement between the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the *Afri*Center. It aims to enhance knowledge-sharing and awareness that will raise understanding and appreciation of agricultural biotechnology and contribute to building an enabling environment for decision making.


TUESDAY, FEBRAURY 10, 2015

DAILY NATION

Cotton farmers ask President to lift ban on GM crops

Current knowledge is disseminated through the flow of factual information from the scientific community to various stakeholders such as farmers, members of parliament, academicians, media, the youth and other decision makers through open discussions. This contributes to increased awareness on how biotechnology can contribute to food security and economic developmental goals.

Key sessions in the year focused on engagements towards lifting of the temporary ban on importation of GM foods in the country. In light of the devolvement of agriculture functions to the county level, there was a shift towards sensitizing key stakeholders in the County Governments to reach out to the grassroots community. These included enlightening farmers and county staff on the opportunities provided by agri-biotechnology in tackling some of the agricultural production challenges. The activities amplified voices in calling for the lifting of the import ban to enable farmers access upcoming biotech crops being developed in the country. As well, OFAB Kenya provided a platform for delegates who had participated in various study tours to share their experiences with a wider audience.

OFAB Annual Planning and Review Meeting

As the Secretariat for OFAB Kenya chapter, *Afri*Center hosted the 2015/2016 OFAB-Africa review and planning meeting in Nairobi, Kenya on 15th and 16th April 2015. The meeting brought together 8 OFAB chapters from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In attendance were Dr. Dennis Kyetere, the Executive Director, AATF, Mr. Brantley Browning of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and Prof. Sarah Davidson from Cornell Alliance for Science. The meeting is held each year to review OFAB's activities in the different countries, derive impacts, lessons and also share experiences.

All the chapters reported the activities undertaken in the year, lessons learned, and the way forward. They also agreed on the themes for the third phase of OFAB as: Improving policy environment; increasing product demand; and better issues' management. The chapters were called upon to reach out to the grassroots through a model presented by Cornell Alliance for Science, referred to as the 'Snowflake' model. This ensures that information trickles down to the grassroots through volunteer informants' mobilization strategy.

OFAB Africa planning meeting participants in a group photo, in Nairobi, Kenya.

Commemorating World Environment Day

Every year on June 5, the world celebrates World Environment Day (WED). The day was set by the United Nations to encourage global awareness and action for the environment. It serves as the 'people's day' for doing something positive for the environment, galvanizing individual actions into a collective power that generates an exponential positive impact on the planet. The 2015 WED theme was *"Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care."* It reminds humanity that their well-being, that of environment and functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. OFAB Kenya marked this day with the youth, encouraging them to actively participate in conserving the environment. The youth called on the Government to support bio enterprises, which would lead to reduction of use of harmful pesticides into the environment, less fuel usage and ultimately a cleaner environment.

" I laud the efforts by OFAB-Kenya Chapter and partners in sensitizing youths on agricultural biotechnology. I request scientists to hold similar forums in other counties in Kenya"

Hon. Florence Mutua, Kenyan Parliamentarian

Hon. Florence Mutua, (center, in orange)- member of the Departmental Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Cooperatives

ISAAA AfriCenter's Director Dr. Margaret Karembu gives certificate to a participant after completion of a biosafety communication course. The objective of the course was to train East African scientists engaged in potato improvement programs to communicate their scientific results to a non-scientific audience and the public at large. The International Potato Center is collaborating with the Kachwekano Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (KaZARDI) of Uganda's National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) to develop and test a new type of blight-resistant potato. This potato could help protect farming families in Uganda and possibly elsewhere in East Africa from losing their crops to blight without having to apply expensive and potentially hazardous pesticides.

Capacity Building

"We owe almost all our knowledge not to those who have agreed but to those that have differed"

Charles Caleb Colton (1780-1832, English cleric, writer and collector)

*Afri*Center conducts capacity strengthening activities on science communication for a wide variety of stakeholders (media, scientists and regulators). At the beginning of each training, participants share their expectations from the training, but more specifically, a pre-workshop questionnaire is filled to determine the level of awareness on GM crops research, adoption and commercialization, especially in their country of origin. *Afri*Center has deviced a pentagon which is used to measure key communication and messaging skills before and after the training.

The mode of training is participatory and comprises of various topics including principles of effective science communication, message development, responding to challenging issues (risk communication), effective media relations, communicating science through new media and stakeholder mapping. An overview of research and commercialization at country level and globally are also included as part of the training package.

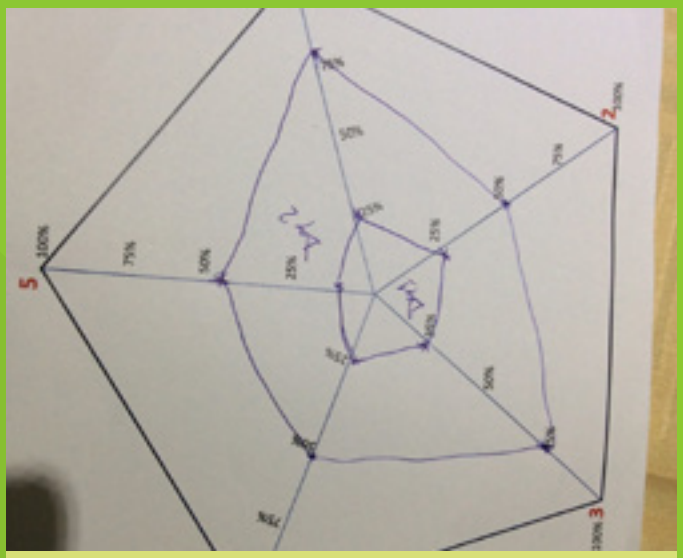
Some of the practical sessions of the training involve mock media interviews and DNA extraction.

Importantly, a number of *Afri*Center staff are certified to facilitate netmapping sessions, which is used during the training sessions as appropriate. Netmapping is a tool for advanced problem solving and stakeholder outreach. It defines how stakeholders are connected, identifies influencers of the decision, clearly defining coalitions, sets priorities and helps categorize where resources are best invested. It is very effective for analysing complex networks and handling sensitive and/or controversial topics. The tool helps in identifying possible conflicting goals and visually sets priorities/strategies on how to achieve your defined goal.

In 2015, we conducted science communication trainings in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Brazil. Close to 250 participants were trained.

Participants taking part in a net-mapping session during a science communication training in Brazil in March 2015.

"All knowledge is connected to all other knowledge. The fun is in making the connections"
Arthur Aufderheide (Palaeopathologist and expert on dissecting mummies)



The pentagon used to measure communication and messaging skills development

Participants being trained on extraction of DNA

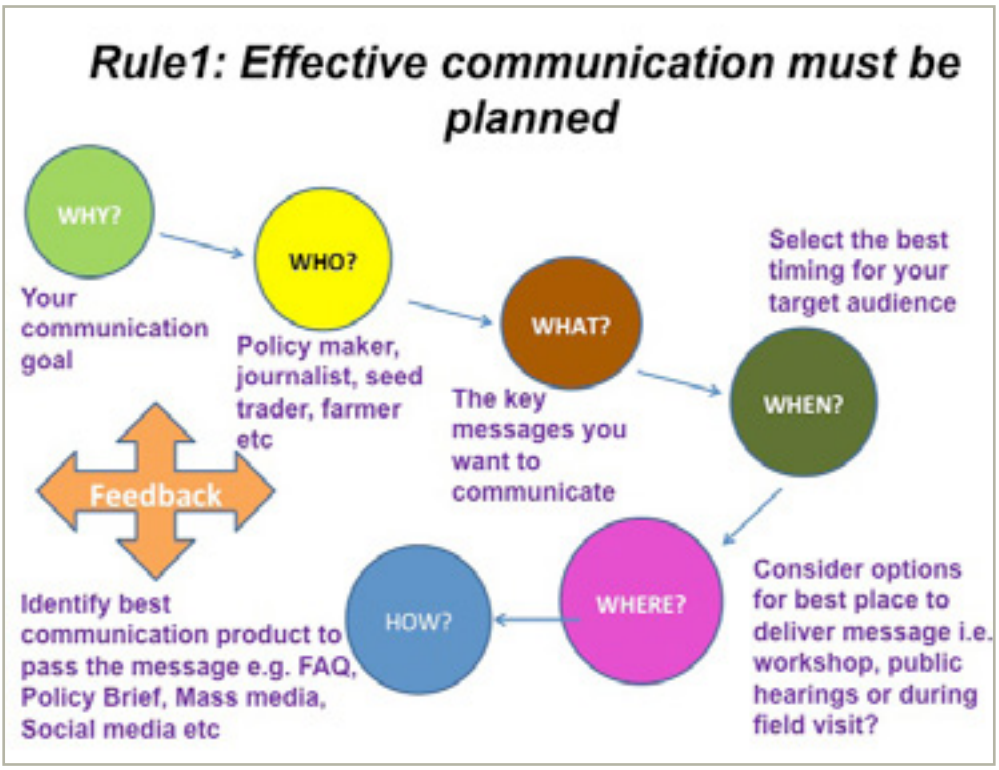
Participants role playing in a mock media interview during a communicatiion training in Uganda

"I am writting to express my gratitude on the media training workshop. it was timely and very enlightening. I have since held two major interviews with film crews from National Geographic and Czech Republic who were interested in coverage of the conservancy's community conservation education program. After the training, preparing for the interviews was very easy- knowledge of key messages, choice of words, how to behave infront of the camera and responding to sensitive topics like poaching.....I have no idea how it would have been if it weren't for the training. I utilized most if not all of the techniques I learnt during the workshop. I am indeed greatful. Thank you ISAAA staff!"

Mercy Njeri, a KUBICO Fellow and beneficiary of *Afri*Center's communication training in 2015

Scientists-Journalists Pairing Program

The pairing program aims to establish relationships between scientists and journalists for the purpose of enhancing factual media reporting of agri- biotechnology and biosafety processes. The set up involves a series of meetings attended by scientists and journalists from TV, radio and print media. Scientists learn tips on effective communication and how the media works, while journalists get acquainted to the scientific processes.



In 2015, the pairing program involved:

- One-on-one meeting where journalists and scientists established a working relationship based on their individual needs.
- Organizing visits for the journalists to biotech labs, research trial sites and farmers fields.
- Scientists visiting media houses to meet with editors and understand how the media work.
- Hosting of scientists on radio and TV programs.

Dr. Douglas Miano (L) a Kenyan scientist, during a scientists-journalists pairing session.

Dr. Douglas Miano on Citizen TV's Power Breakfast Show after linkages with the media.

Cornell Alliance for Science Leadership Course

Topics discussed included: Theory of change, developing strategic framework, structuring grassroots empowerment using the snowflake model and ladders of engagement, on the ground campaigns, and building a robust culture of volunteerism.

The Cornell Alliance for Science Leadership course participants in a group photo

*Afri*Center hosted a Biotechnology Leadership Course organized by the Cornell Alliance for Science on 10th and 11th April 2015. The two-day intensive training course was attended by forty eight (48) participants comprising mainly of staff of the ISAAA BICs and OFAB chapters from 16 countries, including Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, USA and Zimbabwe. The interactive training course facilitated by the consultancy group *270 Strategies* enabled participants to exchange ideas and get new tools on how to run successful science education campaigns. It also enhanced their skills on grassroots organizing principles and strategies to respond to local contexts in agri-biotech communication.

Most of those trained signed in as Alliance for Science allies and have been participating in various online discussions in support of science and biotechnology.

In 2015, Kenya's National Biosafety Authority received an application for open field cultivation for insect resistant (Bt) cotton. Five other African countries, namely Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Sudan continued to conduct confined field trials (CFTs) on biotech cotton. Sudan and Malawi conducted trials of insect resistant (Bt) cotton, whereas Ghana and Cameroon tested insect resistant (Bt) and herbicide tolerant (HT) varieties. South Africa tested the stacked insect resistance/herbicide tolerance (Bt/HT) varieties.

Seeing-is-believing Biotech Study Tours

"Hearing a hundred times is not as good as seeing once"

Chinese Proverb

Every year since 2006, ISAAA *Afri*Center in partnership with research institutions and other partner organisations in Africa have been organizing seeing-is-believing agri-biotechnology study tours to countries growing biotech crops in different parts of the world. These visits have provided experiential learning opportunities for a wide range of stakeholders. Participants get an opportunity to interact with farmers who share their practical experiences with biotech crops as well as with policy makers, regulators, the media and consumers at large. The tours have proved a highly valuable and effective tool in awareness creation on all aspects of crop biotechnology and biosafety.

In 2015, four such study tours were conducted in partnership with various stakeholders in Brazil, India, South Africa and Sudan.

South Afrcia - March 2015

The objective of the study tour was to expose participants to biotech crops and build farmer confidence by sensitizing them about adoption of GM crops by small scale farmers in South Africa. Participants visited various farms and held discussions with farmers, government officials, biosafety officers and technology developers. From these engagements it emerged that adoption of GM crops in South Africa was farmer driven. They were impressed at how the youth and women have embraced biotech crops and were increasingly allocating more land for the crops.

"I have always heard negative stories about the GM technology, but now I have seen the insect resistant and herbicide tolerant maize and gotten to know the truth. I have witnessed farmers with the same conditions just as me, realizing profits from this technology because of reduced cost of inputs. I have also seen the quality of the yield, which not only enables the farmers here to have more harvests but also to have quality food for their families with a higher degree of assurance of not having fungal infections. I urge our government to avail this technology to Kenyan farmers who have similar circumstances with their South African counterparts."

Mr. Titus Ndelamea, Kenyan farmer in a Bt maize field in South Africa

"Kenya and the larger Eastern Africa region have never reached half of the soybean yield that Brazil is getting"

John Kariuki, BIDCO Africa group

Mr. John Kariuki from Kenya interacting with a Brazilian farmer during a mentorship exchange study tour.

Brazil-March 2015

A mentorship exchange study tour to Brazil was conducted involving policy makers, media editors, private-sector players, regulators and farmer leaders.

Participants who came from 6 countries-Argentina, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda visited both large- and small-scale biotech soybean and maize farmers in Londrina County and held exhaustive discussions with farmers who clearly enumerated the benefits of biotech crops. They visited EMBRAPA Soybean research center and interacted with biotech crop researchers who elaborately elucidated and show-cased the state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment. A visit was also made to a Cooperative society (Cocamer) that processes and markets GM maize and soyabean.

Sudan-November 2015

Sudan commercialized the planting of Bt cotton in 2012 and became the first country in Eastern Africa to grow a GM crop. 2015 was her third year of commercialization. The country boasts increased cotton yield by more than double, reduced cost of production and decreased environmental hazards by a drastic reduction in aerial spraying of cotton fields. The three years of commercial planting has resulted in success stories as well as lessons that provide good experiential learning ground for COMESA and other countries in Africa. This is more so important in view of the recently developed COMESA Biosafety Policy intended to provide an enabling scientific regional risk assessment of GMOs for commercial planting, trade and access to emergency food aid for COMESA Member States.

"The study tour was informative and from what we saw and heard, the farmers have been able to transform their livelihoods by adoption of the technology. This should be emulated by farmers in other Africa countries as well. Journalists in subsequent visits need to go to farmers' households to see the transformed livelihoods"

Chris Kakunta, Journalist, National Agricultural Information Services (NAIS), Zambia

India-August/September 2015

*Afri*Center in collaboration with the South Asia Biotechnology Center organised the study tour for 30 participants including policy makers, regulators, government officials, researchers and consumers. The officials were from six cotton growing countries in Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Swaziland and Zambia.

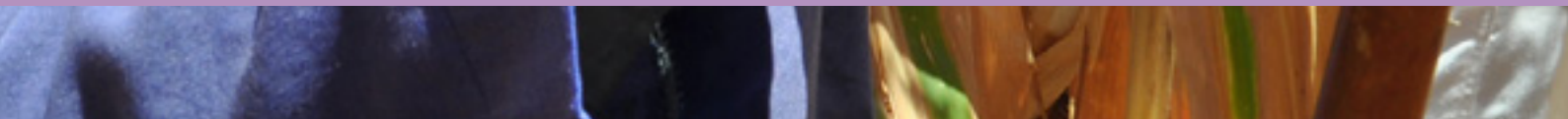
The visit allowed the delegates to witness first hand the performance of Bt cotton hybrids in farmers' fields. They also interacted with officials of both public and private sector institutions to learn about the benefits and risks of approving and adopting Bt cotton.

"I have seen that Indian farmers are producing a lot of cotton. One thing I have learnt is the importance of public-private partnerships in delivering the technology to farmers. The strong co-operation among the researchers, farmers, the government, seed producers and the private sector is amazing. This assures the necessary capacity for research and monitoring to support quality cotton production by farmers and would recommend the same for my country"

Enock Dlamini – National Director of ACAT (African Cooperative Action Trust of Swaziland)

Policy makers, regulators, government officials and researchers from Africa during the Indian Bt cotton fields study tour - October 2015

In 2015, Kenya's National Biosafety Authority received an application for open field cultivation of insect resistant (Bt) maize. South Africa approved a drought tolerant maize trait for conditional general release. Uganda continued with confined field trials on insect resistant (Bt) and drought tolerant (DT) maize varieties.



Policy Engagement

Engaging Key Players in the Fight Against Hunger and Poverty

Effective adoption and application of crop biotechnology tools hinges on knowledgeable policy makers armed with factual, timely and accurate information for informed policy choices. In this regard, *Afri*Center works closely with parliamentarians and decision makers to ensure they are well-versed with the advancements of biotechnology both locally and globally. In 2015, the Center engaged the decision makers through various ways:

- Round table meetings that enabled scientists and policy makers to hold extensive discussions and feedback.
- One-on-one meetings with specific policy makers creating opportunities for the Center to deliver messages effectively.
- Reaching out to key parliamentary committees such as the Agriculture, Health, Environment, Finance, Education among other committees.
- Seeing-is-believing study tours that enable policy makers to experience a first-hand encounter with biotech crops.
- Populating 'Biotech Corners' within parliamentary libraries that enabled the Center to distribute factual information, education and communication (IEC) material on agri-biotechnology and biosafety.
- Participation in relevant fora presenting additional opportunities to meet up with policymakers.

Parliamentarians on a biotech study tour of a maize confined field trial.

Political Outreach Activities

These activities which include presentations and study tours stimulate engaging discussions with the policy makers that reveal the high level of misconceptions among the group. In 2015, parliamentarians appreciated the opportunity to interact with scientists and acknowledged that Kenya has the requisite capacity for GM crops research. The law makers encouraged regular interaction between them and scientists in order to increase their competence in advocating for a conducive policy environment for genetically modified crops from an informed perspective.

"I have never had a chance like this to interact with so many scientists and get the right information on GMOs. I call on the scientists to organize more of such events to equip the legislators with vital pieces of information on the subject, to see our scientific capacity and enable them to make informed decisions in parliament. This would also help in disseminating the right information to their electorate and fellow parliamentarians"

Hon. Sabina Chege - Chair of the Education and Research Committee - Kenyan Parliament.

The Chair of the Education and Research Committee, Hon. Sabina Chege (in blue) and other Kenyan Parliamentarians being briefed on the activities conducted at the Biosciences eastern and central Africa-ILRI (BecA Hub) during a study tour.

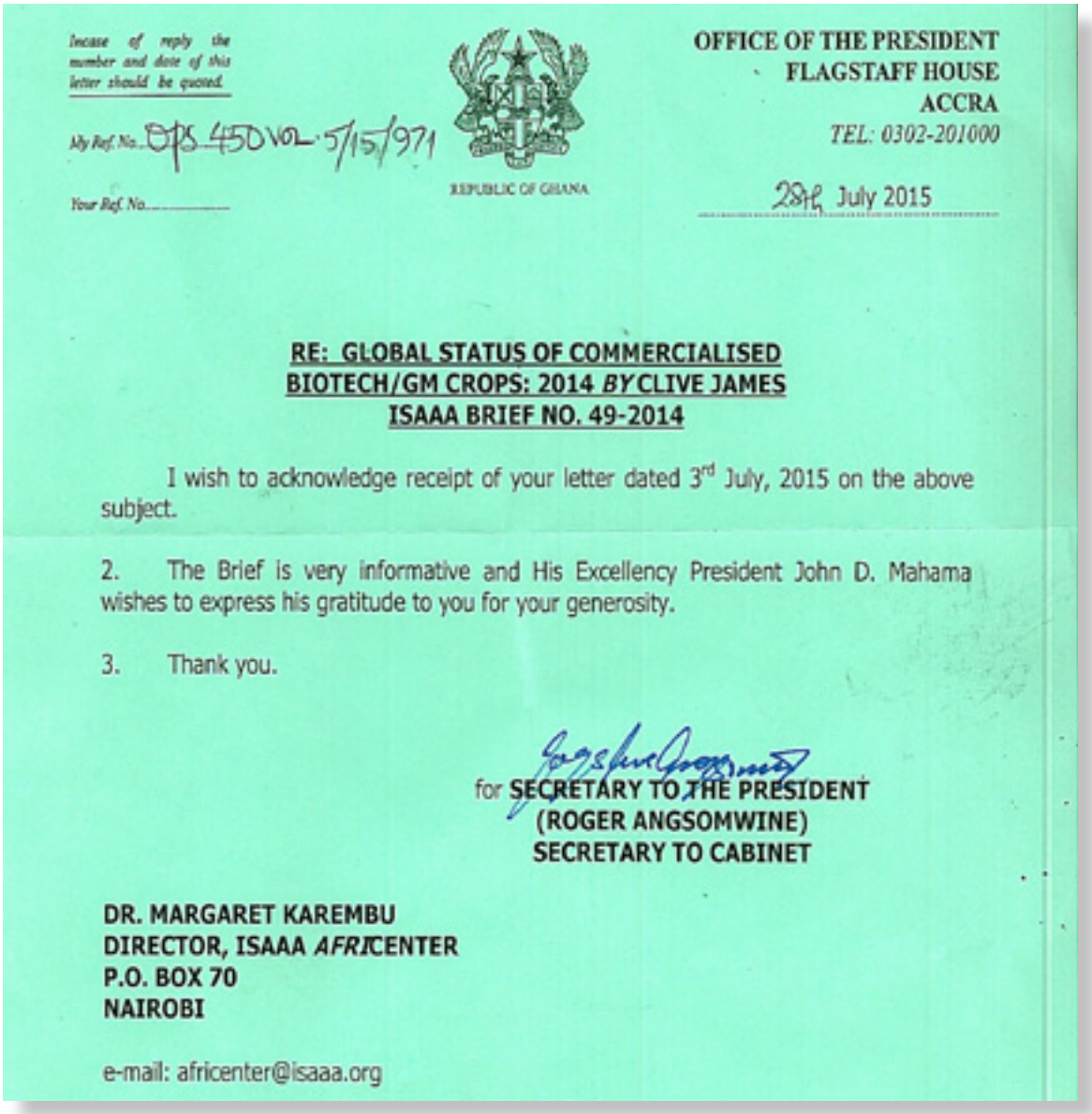
Voices from the Policy Implementers

"The Malawian government recognizes the possibility of increasing agricultural productivity through biotechnology. Challenges faced by the country such as recent floods and chronic dry spells will be tackled by use of multiple tools in agriculture, including the best of conventional technologies as well as modern biotechnology. Malawi farmers should be allowed to enjoy the benefits of modern agricultural technology like their counterparts elsewhere in the world."

Mr. Alik Manda Office of the Director General of the National Commission for Science and Technology, Malawi - June 2015

"There is positive progress in the review of the biosafety law, I am optimistic that the changes will be approved by the government in the coming weeks to pave way for trials on biotech crops, and subsequently their commercialization"

Dr. Carlos Santana , Ministry of Science and Technology, Mozambique-June 2015



In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted.

My Ref. No. OPS 450 VOL 5/15/971

Your Ref. No.

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
FLAGSTAFF HOUSE
ACCRA
TEL: 0302-201000

28th July 2015

RE: GLOBAL STATUS OF COMMERCIALISED BIOTECH/GM CROPS: 2014 *BY* CLIVE JAMES ISAAA BRIEF NO. 49-2014

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 3rd July, 2015 on the above subject.

2. The Brief is very informative and His Excellency President John D. Mahama wishes to express his gratitude to you for your generosity.

3. Thank you.

for SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT
(ROGER ANGSOMWINE)
SECRETARY TO CABINET

DR. MARGARET KAREMBU
DIRECTOR, ISAAA *AFRI*CENTER
P.O. BOX 70
NAIROBI

e-mail: africenter@isaaa.org

A letter from the Office of the Ghanaian President appreciating receipt of Brief 49-July 2015

Three African countries, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda continued to conduct confined field trials on genetically modified cassava.

Policy and Communication Support Services

Owing to the *Afri*Center's Policy Engagement and Communications (PEC) track record, partners frequently contract the Center to undertake communications and policy engagement activities in support of their projects. The PEC support offered by the Center is aimed at creating a facilitative policy environment for safe and responsible use of the products.

The activities undertaken include: outreach to policy makers and media practitioners through presentations and dissemination of the project's IEC material to parliamentarians and journalists; capacity building workshops for journalists and scientists on effective science communication, as well as pairing of scientists with journalists to ensure accurate and balanced reporting of the project. Essentially, the AfriCenter assists in developing a communications strategy for the project that serves as a blueprint for the project's PEC goals.

In 2015, *Afri*Center offered PEC services to various projects key among them:

- The Virus Resistant Cassava for Africa project (VIRCA)
- The Water Efficient Maize for Africa project (WEMA)
- Political outreach for Bt maize and Bt cotton
- The blight resistant potato project with the International Potato Center and Ghent University VIB
- COMESA/ACTESA Biotechnology and Biosafety Program

Communications Support Services for VIRCA Project

The Virus Resistant Cassava for Africa (VIRCA) is a collaborative project with the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), Uganda's National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) and the Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development (SCIFODE). The main objective of the project is to support development of genetically enhanced virus resistant cassava varieties for small-scale farmers in the region who face the challenge of cassava viral diseases.

*Afri*Center has been contracted to assist with planning and execution of communication and outreach activities in collaboration with VIRCA project teams in Kenya and Uganda. In 2015, *Afri*Center conducted the following communications support activities for the project:

- Social media training for scientists
- Scientists/Journalists pairing program
- Process documentation of the various project events
- Field visits for journalists

Journalists interview a cassava farmer during a field visit.

Communication Support and Policy Outreach for WEMA Bt maize and Bt cotton

ISAAA *Afri*Center together with partners undertook a series of outreach activities for parliamentarians, senators and county governments. This was prompted by a request by the National Biosafety Authority (NBA) for public comments on an applications for environmental release (open field cultivation) of genetically engineered maize and cotton. It was imperative that political leaders be well equipped with factual information on the crops and related issues concerning eventual commercialization to enable factual and accurate contribution to the process. In-country study tours to various biotech laboratories and presentations were made on the country's capacity for biotech, biosafety and human resource preparedness.

Members of Parliament during a visit to the KALRO's biosafety level II greenhouse in Kenya.

Communication Support Services for Blight Resistant Potato Project

ISAAA AfriCenter together with the International Potato Center and International Plant Biotechnology Outreach of VIB and Ghent University, trained East African scientists and regulators on effective science communication. The two day training course, held in November 2015, was structured to inspire participants on discovering the art of communicating scientific research to the general public. To achieve this, the different sessions followed a mix of lectures and group exercises. Participants also took part in mock media interviews to practice the skills gained throughout the training.

Communication Support to COMESA/ACTESA

ISAAA *Afri*Center provided expertise during the drafting of the COMESA Regional Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy Implementation Plan (COMBIP) that was validated in March 2015 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia by Member States' delegates. The COMESA regional policy provides member states with a mechanism for scientific regional risk assessment of GMOs intended for commercial planting, trade and food aid. ISAAA AfriCenter also participated in the ACTESA key alliance partners and advisory committee meeting in November 2015.

*Afri*Center/ EMBRAPA/SCIFODE Partnership Project

Confidence-Building in Modern Biotechnology: Optimizing Best Communication Practices and Policies to Guide Deployment of Biotech/GM Crops in African Countries and Brazil

This was a two year project under the Agricultural Innovation MKTPlace program, an international initiative supported by different partners aiming to link Brazilian, African and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) experts and institutions to develop cooperative research projects for development.

2015 was the final year of the ISAAA-EMBRAPA-SCIFODE partnership project. The project assessed barriers to access, adoption and acceptance of genetically modified (GM/biotech) crops in Brazil, Kenya and Uganda through comparative analysis of policies, institutional frameworks and communication modalities under which these crops are developed, regulated and communicated.

Desk reviews of policies, institutional and regulatory environment for biotech research and development revealed some similarities and differences. Brazil and Kenya have policies and institutional frameworks to govern GM crops. However, Kenya is yet to commercialize GM crops. Brazil commands a big share of GM crops cultivation globally.

Uganda has a biotech and biosafety policy but no legislation. A Biosafety Bill has been under parliamentary debate since 2012. Like Kenya, no GM crops have been commercialized.

Reciprocal peer-to-peer mentorship 'seeing-is-believing' visits to Brazil, Kenya and Uganda accompanied by Netmapping and communications training were acknowledged as some best practices to build confidence with the technology and regulatory process.

Negative perceptions changed and new partnerships were formed. A Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) to deploy GM soybean in Uganda was initiated in 2015 after this reciprocal visit. African farmers urged their governments to allow growing of GM crops while policy makers committed to fast-track favourable policies. In Brazil, risk communication and media training resulted in more accurate reporting of biotech issues with EMBRAPA communication staff requesting for more net-mapping sessions to improve their stakeholder engagement strategies.

Outcomes:

- Change in perceptions
- Call for policy change
- Confidence in engaging policy makers and the media
- New partnerships formed with ABNE and Michigan State University
- A Material Transfer Agreement entered between Makerere University and Michigan State University

Participants of the Brazil biotech study tour in March 2015

In 2015, the confined field trials on banana in Uganda provided opportunities for journalists to interact with scientists during seeing-is-believing study tours. The traits under experimentation are: bacterial wilt disease, banana parasitic nematode, and nutrition enhancement with iron and pro-vitamin A.

Strategic Partnerships

The *Afri*Center partners with like-minded credible institutions in the agricultural biotechnology sector. These partnerships seek to ensure a coordinated approach to optimize resources and synergies expertise.

Our accomplishments in 2015 were enabled through collaboration with the following partners to whom we are most grateful.

The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)
www.aatf-africa.org

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA)
www.comesa.int

Kenya University Biotech Consortium (KUBICO)
www.kubico.ac.ke

Cornell Alliance for Science
www.allianceforscience.cornell.edu

CropLife International
www.croplife.org

Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
www.danforthcenter.org

The International Food Information Council (IFIC)
www.foodinsight.org

The Brazilian Agricultural Research Coorporation (EMBRAPA)
www.embrapa.br

Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development
www.scifode-foundation.org

Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)
www.kalro.org

The Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS) of IFPRI
www.ifpri.org

Michigan State University (MSU)
www.research.msu.edu

The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
www.nacosti.go.ke

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
www.usda.gov

Ghent University's VIB-International Plant Biotechnology Outreach (IPBO)
www.ipbo.vib-ugent.be

African Biosafety Network of Expertise
www.nepadbiosafety.net

International Potato Center
www.cipotato.org

Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa
www.ofabafrica.org

We also worked with government institutions in different African countries, technology developers in both public and private sectors, as well as various media houses.

In 2015, three African countries namely Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria continued to conduct confined field trials on insect resistant (Bt) cowpea.

Challenges and Cause for Optimism

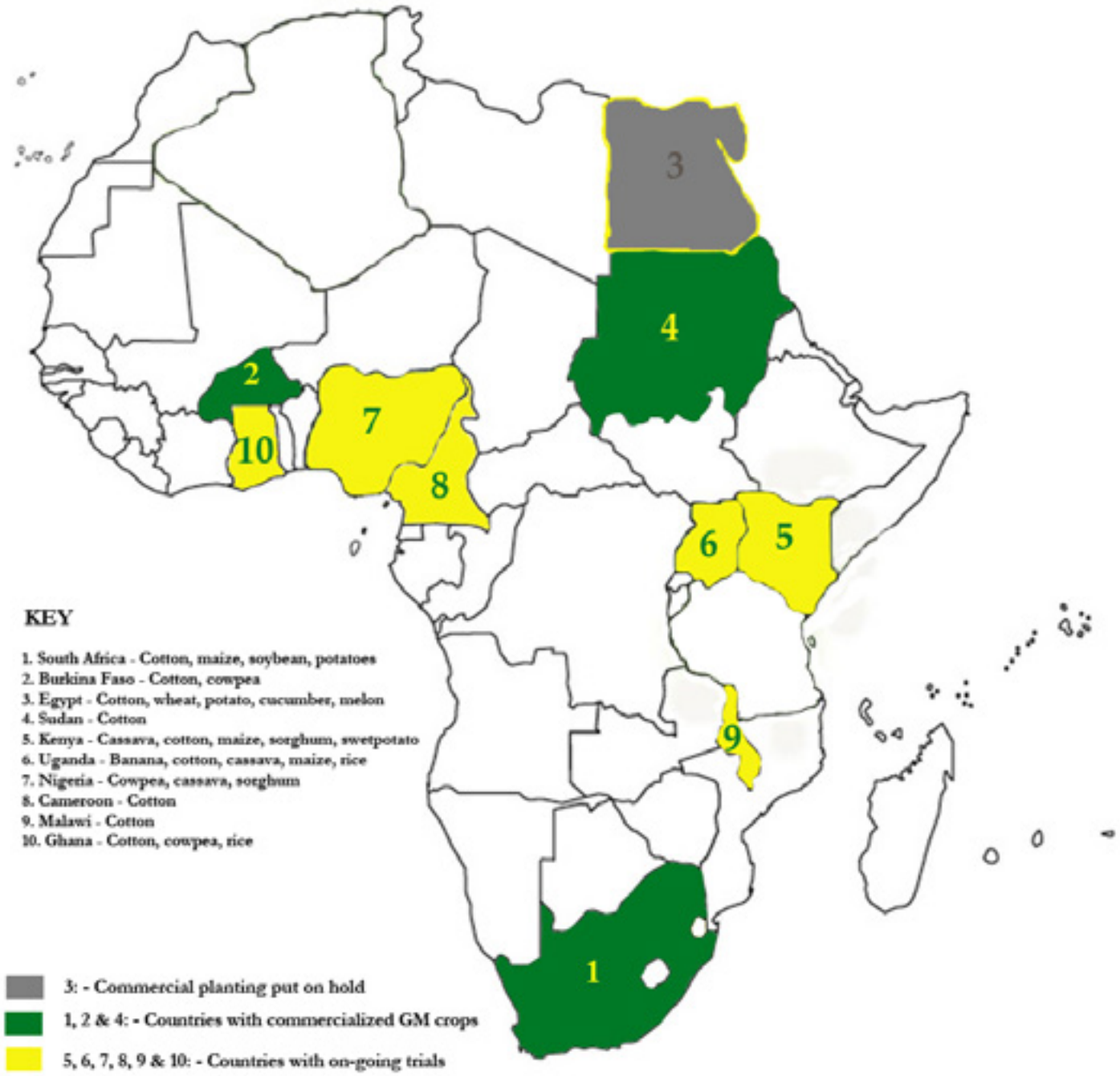
In the period under review, *Afri*Center encountered several challenges in fulfilling her mandate of policy outreach, communication and knowledge sharing. Key among them included the following:

- Emergence of very strong & well-funded anti-GM lobby groups currently making strong waves in countries where progress is being made e.g. Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania.
- Emerging court cases challenging existing policies and research on GM/biotech crops.
- Protracted policy and regulatory processes.
- Overlapping mandates of regulatory and policy agencies.

Despite the challenges, there is still cause for optimism

- So far, three countries in Africa have sustained growing GM crops; South Africa, Burkina Faso and Sudan. Eight others are at advanced stages with trials on important food security crops.
- Two applications for environmental releases (open cultivation) have been made for WEMA Bt maize and Bt cotton in Kenya.
- Policy pronouncements have increased-during the National Biosafety conference in Nairobi in August 2015 for example, Kenya's Deputy President promised that his government would lift the ban on GMOs in two months
- There have been more supportive voices from County Governors in Kenya. Members of Parliament have also supported the lifting of the ban.
- There is growing media engagement on agricultural biotechnology and biosafety as a public agenda item. More balanced articles are being written and discussions on radio, television and social media are increasing.
- Heightened awareness among farmers on the benefits of GM foods.
- Growing number of champions- this has been achieved through trainings and grassroots community outreach. Farmers are also more aware of myths, misconceptions and are able to distinguish the facts.

Map of Africa Showing Countries Growing and/or Conducting Research on GM Crops - by 2014

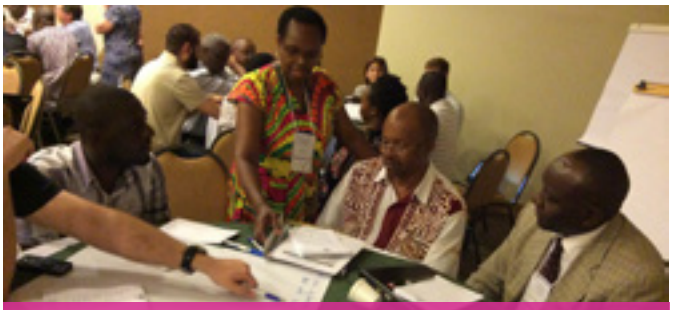


*Afri*Center Staff 2015

"AfriCenter has a team of multidisciplinary experts who develop and implement strategic development communication programs that are well focused for maximum impact"

In 2015, *Afri*Center supported and organized over 50 events

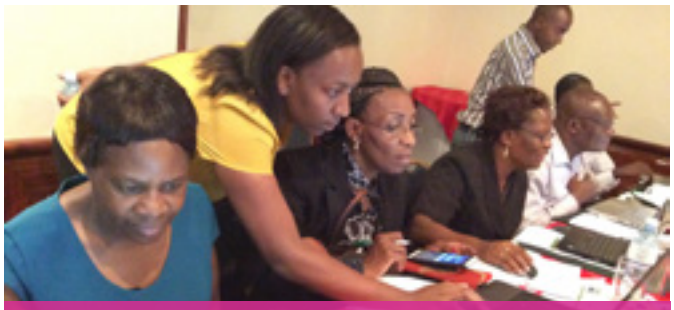
Dr. Margaret Karembu,(2nd R) with Kenyan MPs during their visit to the BecA ILRI Laboratories in Nairobi - Kenya



Dr. Faith Nguthi, during a net-mapping workshop in Brazil

Brigitte Bitta (R) in an exhibition during the national science week

Paul Chege, in an OFAB Kenya event



Bibiana Iraki,(in yellow) during a social media training for scientists

Anne Mukuna, (2nd Left) assisting workshop participants

Anthony Nderitu, (L) with Mayhco team during the seeing-is-believing biotech study tour in India

Doris Wangari (PBS - Kenya Coordinator) during a stakeholders meeting

Appendix

Crop Biotech Update
Special Edition (April 16, 2015)
www.isaaa.org/kc/cropbiotechupdate

Nairobi ABBC-2015 Declaration: Lift Ban on GMO Imports in Kenya

Delegates from 30 countries from around the world, attending an international Agri-biotech and Biosafety Communication conference in Nairobi have called on the Kenya Government to lift a 2-year ban on GMO imports. Addressing the delegates comprising of farmers, scientists, policy makers, private sector, the media and science communicators, the Principal Secretary in Kenya's Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development, Dr, Wilson Songa emphasized the role of agricultural biotechnology in propelling the country towards prosperity. "To harness this potential the GMO import ban must be lifted," he said. In addition, he said that Kenya has adequate capacity to develop and ensure safety of GMO products. Members of Parliament present, called upon the government to release a report by a taskforce constituted after the ban by the ministry of health to look into the safety of GM foods.

The ABBC conference brought together organizations and networks involved in agri-biotech and biosafety communication across the world to take stock of the progress and dynamics of biotech communication over the past two decades. It was organized by ISAAA, African Agricultural Technology Foundation, National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation and partners.

One of the key lessons was that agri-biotech and biosafety communications must be simplified and messages delivered in appropriate languages for different stakeholders to make impact.

The delegates came up with the Nairobi Declaration 2015, which reads as follows:

We, the participants of the International Conference on Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communication, held on 12-14 April 2015 in Nairobi, representing the academic and research community, civil society, law makers and policy advisors, the media, farmers and other stakeholders drawn from 30 countries across the world, collectively issue the following statement resulting from this conference:

Whereas:

1. The world faces unique and particular food security challenges in future, as the human population increases towards a likely 9.6 billion by 2050 and climate change raises additional problems for agriculture in terms of water and temperature stress, increased disasters and extreme weather;
2. Some progress has been made in meeting the Millennium Development Goals on extreme poverty, malnutrition, infant mortality and food security. Much work remains to be done to ensure that citizens of all countries enjoy the full opportunity of healthy and sustainable access to food;
3. Biotechnology and genetic engineering, while not being the only solution to these challenges, offers great potential in addressing many specific concerns in food production, including micro-nutrient deficiencies, productivity and yield gaps, pest and disease problems;
4. There exists an international scientific consensus that the "genetic modification" process itself does not raise any risks over conventional breeding approaches
5. The debate around genetically modified products continues and is often characterized by emotive and misleading information about purported dangers that are not supported by any scientific evidence;
6. Highly restrictive policy and regulatory environments exist in parts of the world, greatly hampering the capacity of farmers to access innovations that will improve farm productivity, household incomes and food security;

Hereby declare our commitment and determination:

i. To work collectively to improve the communications environment, including the use of the latest as well as traditional communication strategies to ensure effectiveness.
ii. To work inclusively, with all stakeholders, including those opposed to this technology, in an effort to build consensus and common understanding.
iii. To promote choice, so that farmers, consumers, and other end-users can make informed decisions that reflect their best interests .
iv. To address the concerns of people at all levels, to ensure the widest participation possible.
v. To demonstrate how agricultural production challenges can be tackled using biotechnology, and how it can directly contribute to food and nutrition security, poverty alleviation, job creation and sustainable economic development.
vi. To support credible scientists who are most trusted by the public and governments, to be effective communicators and to have a closer relationship with media and policymakers to ensure that scientifically-informed messages reach target audiences.

In particular, we gratefully acknowledge the active participation of Members of the Kenya National Assembly (KNA), and many senior government representatives who participated in this conference, and welcome their invaluable inputs to ensure the current ban on importation and consumption of GM foods in Kenya is lifted.

Acronyms

AATF	Africa Agricultural Technology Foundation
ABBC	Agri-Biotechnology and Biosafety Communications Conference
ABNE	African Biosafety Network of Expertise
ACTESA	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa
BICs	Biotechnology Information Centers
CFT	Confined Field Trials
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EMBRAPA	The Brazilian Agricultural Research Coorporation
EU	European Union
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ISAAA	International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
KUBICO	Kenya University Biotechnology Consortium
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
OFAB	Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology
SCIFODE	Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development
VIRCA	Virus Resistant Cassava for Africa
WEMA	Water Efficient Maize for Africa

When the sun rises, you had better be running

Every morning in Africa, a gazelle awakens knowing it must today run faster than the fastest lion or it will be eaten. Every morning, a lion awakens knowing it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve. It matters not whether you are a gazelle or a lion, when the sun rises you had better be running

African Proverb

ISAAA
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR THE ACQUISITION OF AGRI-BIOTECH APPLICATIONS

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