

**PROCEEDINGS OF EASTERN AFRICA SEED COMMITTEE
2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 24-25TH NOVEMBER 2005,
MOMBASA KENYA**

Preamble

The Eastern Africa Seed Committee (EASCOM) was inaugurated in a regional meeting held on 28-29 June 2004 in Arusha, Tanzania, and officially operationalised in a meeting held on 2 November 2004 in Kigali Rwanda. During this meeting, the committee elected its office bearers and agreed to hold its second Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Antananarivo, Madagascar in November 2005. The meeting was later rescheduled for Mombasa, Kenya. Each country is represented by four members who represent both the public and the private sectors as follows:

- A representative of the National Certification Agency.
- A representative of National Seed Association
- A representative of National Breeders Association
- A representative of policy in the respective Ministries of Agriculture

Meeting Objectives

The EASCOM meeting had the following objectives:

- To receive, discuss and assess progress of the seed trade harmonization process in the region (and within the countries) and agree on the way forward
- To evaluate the performance of the seed harmonization process
- To hold the first Annual General Meeting of EASCOM after its successful launching in Kigali in November 2005
- To plan for the future activities and the work plans for the 2006

Participants to the Meeting

The list EASCOM members and other stakeholders who attended the meeting is appended to this report.

SESSION 1: OPENING REMARKS

Welcome Remarks by EASCOM Chairperson

Mr. J. Komayombi Bulegeya, EASCOM Chairman, welcomed all participants by reminding them of the Mission of EASCOM.

He asked members to actively participate in the meeting and make contributions to enable the region to make proper decisions to some of the important issues which are facing us. He cited examples of the need for the region to decide whether we need to continue paying for millions of dollars to some of the international organizations such as OECD and ISTA as individual members or should we join as one block. He suggested that we should start thinking of joining as EAC, EASCOM or Africa.

The Chairperson also asked members to deliberate and decide what should be done to assist countries of Tier II and III to benefit from the outcome of the on-going seed policy harmonization process. He also challenged participants to think of what should be done to sustain EASCOM.

He finally invited the Guest of Honour to officially open the meeting at 9.25 am.

Official Opening Remarks by the Guest of Honour

The Guest of Honour Mr David Kitivo, who is a Director of Agriculture, said that he was representing Dr Romano Kiome, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture Kenya, who could not come in person because he was attending to other pressing issues. He welcomed all participants to Kenya and Mombasa in particular and thanked the organizers for choosing Kenya as a venue. He stressed the importance of harmonized seed regulations and reiterated Kenya's commitment to EASCOM objectives.

He urged EASCOM members to speed up the process of establishing a common seed market for the benefit of farmers in the region. Our initiatives must help farmers to get access to good inputs particularly the seeds of improved varieties. He reminded participants that the seed industry is very dynamic, hence the need for dynamic seed laws that are reviewed from time to time. This includes streamlining procedures for variety evaluation and release. He said he was glad to note that EASCOM is rightly moving towards that direction.

The guest of honour wished the EASCOM a very successful meeting with well documented deliberations, and declared the meeting officially open.

Remarks by Dr. Isaac Minde, ECAPAPA Coordinator

Dr. Isaac Minde, Regional Coordinator for ECAPAPA, on his behalf and of the entire ECAPAPA fraternity warmly welcomed all participants to the meeting. He thanked all for finding time to attend this event and for the near 100% attendance. He said that the objectives of the meeting included receiving progress reports and approving work plans.

He then gave a summary of the process of seed policy harmonization indicating strengths, weaknesses, challenges, opportunities and threats.

SOME REFLECTIONS

Strengths

- We have known each other
- We have a platform/forum for exchanging views and experiences
- We have a structure i.e. ESACOM is in place

Weaknesses

- The speed of implementation of the harmonized areas is not good enough
- Information sharing across the stakeholders is too weak
- Implementation of work plans is too slow
- There is backsliding on agreements

Challenges

- Hastening of activities beyond pilot phase countries
- Need for improving performance monitoring
- Assurance of institutional memory when EASCOM members leave expectedly or unexpectedly (making sure that data and information is well kept)

- Strengthening of strategic partnership

Opportunities

- Regional bodies such as ASARECA, EAC, COMESA, IGAD, SADC, NARIs & NARS are in place
- Liberalized markets
- Diverse requirements in the regions- seeds etc

Threats

- Sustainability of EASCOM is an issue.
 - o We must ask ourselves: If a need is there, why can't private sector come in more strongly
 - o We should remember that the first Grain Summit on 13-14th October 2005 held in Nairobi was financed by the private sector! Why can't this happen in the seed sector? And if not possible what can we do?

Remarks by Dr. Peter Ewell, USAID/REDSO/ESA

Dr. Ewell reminded participants of the need to make sure that farmers are provided with good seeds of improved varieties. We must also answer a question that after harmonization and reformation of seed policies and regulations, can we point out cases where seed trade/seed markets have improved as the result of such initiatives in the region.

He looked forward to hastened discussions and concrete achievements in the future.

Confirmation of Proceedings of the Previous S-RWG/EASCOM Meeting held on 29th -30th November 2004 in Kigali, Rwanda

The following matters arose from the minutes of the last R-SWG held in Kigali Rwanda:

- ***Harmonization of variety evaluation and release procedures***
It was noted that in some countries breeders are still responsible for variety evaluation process. This matter will be further clarified by each country when presenting their country reports
- ***Representation of member countries in the EASCOM***
Some countries have changed their representatives for a number of reasons. For example in Madagascar representation of the private sector changed with the change of leadership in AMPROSEM. In Uganda Mr. Mulumba Waswa replaced Dr. Denis T. Kyetere who became the Acting Director General of the National Research Organization (NARO). In Kenya a new member replaced an officer who retired from civil service. It was agreed that any change should be made through the right channels and that EASCOM secretariat must be informed of the change
- ***Ownership of National EASCOM Working Teams***
It was noted that the ownership of national working groups is not sufficiently felt by individual countries
- ***Review and approval of work plans***
It was reported that EASCOM secretariat could not call a meeting of country representatives to review and approve the proposed country work plans for 2006 due to budgetary constraints. Instead the Secretariat and ECAPAPA reviewed the work plans and made final decisions

- ***Delayed implementation of the work plans***
ASARECA/ECAPAPA would like to know the reasons for delayed implementation of the country work plans. It was agreed that each country will give sufficient explanations in their country reports

SESSION TWO: PAPER PRESENTATIONS

The following presentations were made:

- 1) Report from the EASCOM Secretariat by Mr. Obongo Nyachae, EASCOM Secretary
- 2) Review of the ASARECA/ECAPAPA Seed Harmonization Project
- 3) *Sui Generis* system of Plant Variety Protection
- 4) Harmonization of Seed Certification and Trade Systems (OECD, ISTA Examples)
- 5) Reports of Joint Seed Certification in Three EASCOM countries.

The above presentations are annexed at the end of this proceeding.

SESSION THREE: COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORTS

UGANDA

Mr. Joseph Bazaale presented his country report by saying that only one set of activities out of the four which were approved was implemented. This was the establishment of the national seed data base.

The work plan also included the following activities:

- 1) Indexing of Uganda's plant varieties
- 2) Development of variety protocols
- 3) Development of USTA business plan
- 4) Formation of Plant Breeders' Association

Mr. Bazaale reported that EASCOM funds were transferred through USTA and not through National Focal Point and that this had affected the smooth implementation of the activities. He pointed out that the remaining activities will be implemented as soon as funds were received and that this will take place before new activities are initiated.

TANZANIA

Mr. Patrick Ngwediagi reported that his country had managed to implement half of the planned activities for both public and private sectors due to the fact that funds were transferred very late as ASARECA wanted pending issues with the former National Seed Working Group (N-SWG) to be sorted out first.

Implemented activities were:

- 1) Preparation of TASTA Business Plan
- 2) Stakeholders workshop/National EASCOM Working Group meeting
- 3) Visit Research Stations/Seed Companies to sensitize on PBR and discuss/sign agreements on NPT with selected institutions

He reported that the remaining activities will be implemented as soon as the second installment funds are received.

Mr Ngwediagi recommended that ASARECA should send funds sufficient to implement each activity instead of transferring in three installments. He also requested ASARECA to allow EASCOM secretariat to take charge of the process of implementing the work plans including disbursement of funds.

The list of planned activities for 2006 is attached in the appended country report.

KENYA

Mrs Gladys Maina, the national focal point, presented Kenya's country report by pointing out that all planned activities were implemented through EASCOM/STAK office. The planned activities included a stakeholders' workshop to review the country's seed policy. The workshop was held and its recommendations forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture. Other activities which were accomplished during the reporting period included:

- 1) Preparation of draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in certification
- 2) Preparation of Phytosanitary risk pest analysis procedures
- 3) Updating variety registration procedures

The National Focal Point highlighted other achievements made in the implementation of harmonized seed regulations. She said that the country has liberalized its seed trade. In addition the country succeeded to re-accredit KEPHIS Nakuru Seed Testing Laboratory. She also informed the participants that Kenya is hosting two international events in 2006 which are the ISTA Purity Workshop and UPOV Technical Working Group meeting. She invited all EASCOM members to take note of the events and try to benefit from them.

ETHIOPIA

The country representative reported that Ethiopia did not have specific EASCOM activities because they did not participate in the previous EASCOM meeting held in Kigali. However he reported that the country has a seed policy and a seed strategy. He also informed the meeting that a number of varieties have been released in the country making a total of 300 varieties to date. He also reported that variety development and the seed trade are still dominated by the public sector.

SUDAN

The country representative reported that Sudan did not have specific EASCOM activities to report on. He however reported that the country does not have an independent variety evaluation system which is urgently needed. Currently seed certification is carried out by Seed Administration Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and that AOSCA system is used to classify seed grades. He said that Sudan intends to collaborate with its neighbours to benefit from what has already been achieved in the process of harmonization of seed regulations in the region.

RWANDA

The country representative reported that the main activity that was done was to follow up implementation of previous plans. He also reported that the plant protection bill had been presented to the Cabinet for approval before it is tabled in Parliament for enactment.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The country representative reported that the country did not have much to report after Kigali meeting. He said that the country was still organizing itself after many years of war. There is no seed law in the country but there is a need to enact such a law. The National Seed Association is currently organizing seed producers, with support from the African Development Bank, to produce good seeds. The country is also planning to establish a National Seed Committee.

MADAGASCAR

The country representative reported that a national stakeholders' workshop was held four months ago to revitalize AMPROSEM, the country's seed association.

DISCUSSIONS:

- Dr Ewell: Need for a standard template on country reports
- Madagascar: Next AGM should be held in Madagascar as there is no reason for changing the earlier agreed decision
- Dr Minde: ASARECA mode of operation is strict but right
- Mr Komayombi: Need for institutional accountability of EASCOM activities
- AFSTA: Announced its congress to be held in Entebbe, Uganda 28-31/3/2006, all welcome

Sustainability of Eascom

By J.B. Komayombi, EASCOM Chair

In his presentation Mr. Komayombi pointed out the need to strengthen EASCOM by taking necessary measures to sustain it. He advised all member countries to have strong national working groups which are well supported by all stakeholders including government. He also suggested the need for regrouping the regional working groups based on the tier groups whereby the first tier group would become an EAC committee. During the general discussions it was agreed that the present structure of EASCOM should be maintained, that is, it should remain to be a sub committee of ASARECA. Mr. Komayombi also recommended that EASCOM should prepare a strategic plan to be supported by ASARECA. He also encouraged the EASCOM to collaborate with other development partners.

Guidelines for Eascom Budget and Work Plans

By Isaac Minde, ECAPAPA Coordinator

Dr. Minde pointed out that ASARECA will support EASCOM workplans/activities leading to five outputs/deliverables which are:-

1. Information packages generated and disseminated
2. Harmonized agreements facilitated
3. National Seed Trade Associations strengthened
4. National Institutional Legal Frameworks strengthened
5. Coordination Secretariat supported (Includes National Focal Points)

SESSION FOUR: EASCOM 2nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Agenda:

1. Matters Arising
2. Considerations for Establishment of Regional Working Group for each tier group
3. Approval of EASCOM Activities/work plans
4. Election of Office bearers for the next one year
5. Venue and Dates for the next AGM
6. Closing

1.0 Matters Arising from the previous Meeting

All matters which arose in the previous meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda, were discussed on the first day of the AGM (See Confirmation of Proceedings of the previous meeting)

2.0 Establishment of Regional Working Groups for Each Tier Group

The EASCOM Secretary reported the outcome of a meeting held between the Secretariats of EASCOM and the EAC. He said that EAC did not support the idea of making EASCOM as one of its Sub-Committees because they cannot handle matters of countries which are not EAC members. For this reason the Secretariat suggests that there is a need to establish a Regional Working Group for each Tier Group so as to enable the Regional Working Group for the First Tier to become an EAC Sub-Committee.

After a long discussion, the AGM finally decided as follows:

- (a) EASCOM must continue to be one in order to tap a bigger market as well as allowing other tier groups who did not have regional groupings like the EAC to continue benefiting from EASCOM experiences
- (b) Tier groups should be *ad hoc* and for specific technical issues
- (c) The EASCOM Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary in collaboration with ECAPAPA Coordinator should discuss any matter whenever it arises and establish an *ad hoc* committee comprising of competent people to discuss it and make necessary recommendations

3.0 Approval of EASCOM Activities/work plans

It was agreed that any country which has not submitted its activities and work plans to EASCOM Secretariat, should do so in the next three weeks. The activities should be based on the agreed five outputs and should have a budget for national activities not exceeding US\$ 10,000.

4.0 Election of Office bearers for the next one year

The elections were held under the leadership of Mr Justin Rakotoarisaona, the Secretary General of AFSTA. Before the proper election of office bearers was held the meeting made the following resolutions:-

- (i) The election procedures and terms should be as agreed in Kigali in November 2004
- (ii) Any suggestion for changing the agreed election procedures and terms should be brought for discussion in the next AGM
- (iii) The Minutes/proceedings of Kigali meeting erroneously omitted the issue of automatic promotion of the Vice-Chair to Chairmanship position. The Meeting resolved that the outgoing Chair should automatically hand over to his Vice-Chair at the end of his/her one year term.

The out come of the elections was as follows:

Chair: Mr. Innocent Uwimana (Rwanda) automatically took over from Mr. J. Komayombi (Uganda).

Vice Chair: Mr. Patrick Ngwediagi (Tanzania) was elected unopposed to become the Vice Chair for the next one year.

Secretary: Mr obongo Nyachae, would continue serving the Secretariat for the second year of the three year term.

5.0 Venue and Dates for the next AGM

The next AGM will be held in Antananarivo, Madagascar at the end of November 2006.

6.0 Closing

Remarks from the Outgoing Chairperson

Mr. Komayombi thanked all members for their cooperation. He urged members to continue with the same spirit in the future. He challenged EASCOM members to think bigger and aim at uniting the whole of Africa as a public and private forum. He pointed out the following challenges facing the committee:

- (i) Need for development of a regional quality assurance system before joining the international systems
- (ii) How to sustain the Committee bearing in mind that funding is temporary but EASCOM is not
- (iii) How to secure commitment of every one in the implementation of EASCOM activities
- (iv) How to reduce differences in levels of seed industry development between member states

He finally assured the committee of his continued commitment and promised to be available for advice whenever needed to do so.

Remarks from the new Chairperson

Mr. Innocent Uwimana thanked all EASCOM members for the trust they had put in him for the last year. He promised to serve the committee as per expectations and requested support from all members.

The new Chairperson requested all members to show a high level of commitment particularly in finding solutions to the challenges raised by the outgoing Chairperson.

Remarks from the ECAPAPA Coordinator, Dr. Isaac Minde

He thanked all members for the achievements made so far. He said although a lot has been done there are still some areas which need fixing and improvement. Dr. Minde thanked the outgoing Chairperson who has done a lot including putting a lot of good ideas and for his promise to continue supporting EASCOM. He hailed the new office bearers for being elected to their respective positions.

Dr. Minde finally used the opportunity to inform EASCOM members and other supporters that his time at ECAPAPA/ASARECA will soon come to an end as he is joining ICRISAT as a Senior Programme Officer in February 2006. He thanked all and promised to be available for advice and support whenever needed.

Remarks from Dr. Peter Ewell

Dr. Ewell thanked all for attending and congratulated the outgoing and incoming leaders of EASCOM. He said that the Seed Harmonization project has been one of the best success stories in a number of publications. He however stressed the need for improving the process so that there is a clear increase in seed trade and good movement of improved varieties of plants pointing out that a good progress in these areas will justify the need for continued commitment in supporting EASCOM. He also promised to continue working with EASCOM.

Closing Remarks from the Senior Deputy Director, Research and Extension Linkages, Kenya

Mr. Peter Ibeere Thurania, the Kenyan Senior Deputy Director for Research and Extension Linkages thanked the organizers for giving him the opportunity to attend the EASCOM AGM and for closing the meeting. He expressed his satisfaction in the way the meeting was conducted where he observed frank discussions. He however challenged the organizers to consider facilitating simultaneous translations to enable full participation of non-English speakers. He also suggested to the organizers that in the future meetings they should consider to include a day of viewing the host country.

The Deputy Director congratulated the outgoing Chairperson for good leadership and expressed his trust in the new team.

He finally wished all participants a safe journey back home and declared the meeting officially closed on 25th November, 2005 at **19.30 hrs**