

ASARECA/ECAPAPA

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3RD ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING OF THE EASTERN
AFRICA SEED COMMITTEE (EASCOM)**

29 – 30 NOVEMBER 2006

**IMPERIAL BOTANICAL BEACH HOTEL
ENTEBBE, UGANDA**

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Preamble and meeting objectives

The Secretary of the Eastern Africa Seed Committee (EASCOM) Mr Obongo Nyachae welcomed participants and presented the programme for the two-day meeting. He explained the objectives of the AGM were to review progress of harmonization in the ten ASARECA Member countries during 2006 and to develop strategies to address any emerging issues in 2007.

He then introduced Dr Jeremiah Haki, Director of Research and Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Tanzania, who is also a member of the Board of ASARECA, to Chair the 1st Session.

Participants to the meeting

The AGM was attended by representatives from the following countries/institutions:

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS)
- Plant Breeders Association of Kenya (PBAK)
- Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK)
- Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Uganda
- Uganda Seed Trade Association
- Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperation (MAFSC), Tanzania
- Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute (TOSCI)
- Clinton Foundation – Rwanda
- Rwanda Bureau of Standards
- Seed Trade Association of Rwanda (STAR)
- ISAR Rwanda
- Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research
- Arab Sudanese Seed Company Ltd
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Juba
- National Seed Trade Association, Democratic Republic of Congo
- COMESA
- Malagasy Seed Producers and Traders Association (AMPROSEM)
- Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)/Eastern and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis (ECAPAPA)

The full list of EASCOM members and other stakeholders who attended the meeting is appended to this report as Annex 4.

SESSION 1: OPENING CEREMONY

Chairperson: Dr Jeremiah Haki

Dr Jeremiah Haki, Chairperson for the session requested members to introduce themselves. He then gave a brief history of EASCOM, reiterating that it was operationalised in the first Annual General Meeting held in Kigali, Rwanda 29 - 30 November 2004, and that the second AGM was held in Mombasa, Kenya on 24 – 25 November 2005. He noted that this was the third AGM of the committee, and explained that the venue had changed to Entebbe from Madagascar as earlier agreed on, due to travel hitches.

Dr Haki then invited the Chairperson of EASCOM, Mr Innocent Uwimana, to address the meeting.

Welcome remarks by EASCOM Chairperson

Mr Uwimana welcomed all the participants to the 3rd AGM of EASCOM, and thanked ASARECA and ECAPAPA for facilitating the meeting. He highlighted some of the activities EASCOM had undertaken during the year:

- ✓ Seed certification standards for ten selected crops in East Africa and Rwanda were produced
- ✓ Quarantine pest list was produced for the same countries
- ✓ A review of the status of Plant Variety Protection in EAC and Rwanda was made

He informed members that country reports would give the other overviews. Mr Uwimana further noted that the participation of EASCOM members would get rid of hunger in the region, and wished the members success in their deliberations.

Dr Haki then invited Dr Waithaka, Programme Coordinator of ECAPAPA to address members.

Remarks by Dr Michael Waithaka, Programme Coordinator – ECAPAPA

Dr Waithaka welcomed the members and apologized for the hitches in travel arrangements and for the change of venue from Madagascar to Entebbe. He informed the meeting that ASARECA was going through restructuring changes hence some of the hiccups encountered.

He reiterated that the AGM of EASCOM was an important function for ECAPAPA as it sets pace for the next year's activities. He also noted that all the ASARECA countries would be represented in this meeting, and that some guest speakers from COMESA and from the African Agricultural Capital (AAC) were also expected. The AAC would discuss funding for the private sector.

He welcomed Dr Seyfu Ketema, Executive Director of ASARECA, to address the meeting.

Remarks by Dr Seyfu Ketema, Executive Director - ASARECA

Dr Ketema welcomed the participants to the meeting, and also reiterated on the changes in ASARECA structure, noting that it now has a Board of Directors, and that Dr Jeremiah Haki, who is also a member of EASCOM, was one of the board members in the new structure. He noted that the changes denoted growth in ASARECA, and explained that the changes were driven by the strategic plan that was developed, the main focus being on the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce hunger and poverty by 50% by 2015. ASARECA's new strategic plan was to see how they could contribute to the MDGs in 2005-2015. The MDGs are difficult to achieve but are achievable if all players in the seed industry played their role.

Dr Ketema noted that what EASCOM was doing was important as one of the several projects ASARECA is conducting towards reaching the MDGs. ECAPAPA would also evolve and would be called Policy and Advocacy Programme, making it bigger with an expanded scope of work.

Hunger and poverty are a big burden to all our countries, which are affected by climate change, HIV/Aids, etc. Dr Ketema said he was sure rationalization and harmonization of the seed laws, policies and regulations would help our ten countries to benefit from each other. He noted that a forum such as the EASCOM AGM encourages and facilitates interaction of professionals in the seed sector to address common issues. He said Africa has enormous resources and challenged scientists to increase production. He noted that the issues of distribution of food to deficit areas needed to be addressed.

Dr Haki then welcomed the chief guest, Mr James Bulegeya Komayombi, Commissioner for Crop Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries Uganda, to make the official opening remarks.

Official opening remarks by the Guest of Honour, Mr Komayombi Bulegeya

Mr Komayombi welcomed all members to Uganda for the EASCOM AGM. He invited them to explore the beauty of the country at their own leisure.

He noted that Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture was committed to the objectives and aspirations of EASCOM, which are there to harmonize the seed policies and ease trade of seed within the region, and also to appreciate the key actors and their roles in the industry, and to provide a forum for those actors to discuss how the seed industry can be developed within the region.

Mr Komayombi reiterated that as EASCOM we need to renew our objectives and to take stock of what we have achieved, consider the challenges we have met along the way and how to embrace them, and chart a way forward on how the seed industry can develop in an organized manner, while bringing on board the various actors. He stressed that EASCOM is about bringing on board ALL the actors.

As we take stock of the achievements and challenges, Mr Komayombi believes we should agree on a seed system that is appropriate in the region, and therefore the standards and procedures *i.e.* do we need to apply ISTA and OECD standards when trading amongst ourselves? We could have our own standards within the region. We should take deliberate action to secure recognition from international organizations *i.e.* FAO, which have activities on seed development. He noted that all this would be geared to seeing how we could avail to our farmers, seed of good quality which is affordable and better than the traditional farmer saved seed.

Mr Komayombi also reminded members that they should consider ways of putting in place sustainability of EASCOM without ASARECA support. He suggested that EASCOM should plug into regional economic blocs so that it could be recognized.

He once again thanked the participants for getting time to come to Uganda, and for showing the confidence they had in Uganda to host them. He asked members to renew their commitment and dedication to EASCOM, and urged them to carry out duties assigned to them, so that EASCOM is progressed to higher heights.

He wished all the participants good deliberations and declared the meeting officially open.
(Mr Komayombi's speech may be obtained from EASCOM secretariat: stak@kenyaweb.com)

Dr Haki thanked Mr Komayombi for addressing pertinent issues EASCOM needs to address *i.e.* the need to adhere to ISTA standards to facilitate intra-regional trade, and sustainability of EASCOM beyond ASARECA backing. He noted that these and more issues would be addressed during the AGM.

Dr Haki then welcomed Dr Michael Waithaka to present the challenges and opportunities from the seed policy rationalization and harmonization.

Rationalization and Harmonization of Seed Policy

Dr Waithaka made a presentation outlining the background to the harmonization process, challenges/opportunities, need for regional approach to harmonization issues, impact and achievements of harmonization and the constraints the programme faces.

He highlighted the recommendations of the Tripp Evaluation Report and presented a summary of the recommendations of the RABESA (Regional Approach to Biotechnology and Biosafety in Eastern and Southern Africa) meeting of stakeholders. He concluded with proposals for the way forward.

(Dr Waithaka's full presentation may be obtained from EASCOM secretariat: stak@kenyaweb.com)

Discussion of Session 1 presentations:

Q1: Is there any strategy for all the countries to benefit from sharing of experiences.

Dr Waithaka responded that for issues within the countries experiencing problems, EASCOM needs to find a balance as to how we move on regarding harmonization and rationalization so that individual difficulties in the countries are addressed even as we look across the borders. He realized the situation was not easy and should be debated to look for ways to support the different countries to move and be at par with each other. Other countries could also learn from the first tier countries.

Mr Komayombi reminded the meeting that a few years ago, EASCOM member countries had been grouped in tier countries in recognition of the level of development. It was felt that even as second and third tiers learnt from first tier, it would be accelerating them too fast if the programmes were the same. An assessment would be made to address the circumstances in the tier groups, and projects designed to deal with them until they caught up. The assessment needed to be done, to recognize what needs to be done in order of priority so that all can catch up and be at par.

Dr Waithaka responded that each country had a Seed Trade Association (STA), and that a number of them had sent business proposals, and from these, specific country requirements would be addressed.

Q2: Planned activities got delayed because of delays in disbursement of funds from ASARECA. What could ASARECA do about this? Members also wanted to hear ASARECA position on the future of EASCOM

Dr Waithaka assured members that EASCOM future was secure and that the current work plans cover up to 2008. He noted that financing had moved on well, but reiterated that across the board, the major problems were with signing of contracts and agreeing on the contract points. He noted that once the contracts were signed, the implementers still had to be reminded by ECAPAPA to send progress reports which had to be received before reimbursement could be made. This caused delays in disbursement.

Dr Ketema said he was grateful to USAID for giving extra funding to 2008 and operational plans were underway to get funding from other organizations. ASARECA was trying to foster relations with COMESA, AU and other organizations, and there was a plan to submit a joint project of COMESA/ASARECA to the EU.

Dr Ketema also confirmed that there was funding in ASARECA for about 17 networks. However, only 50% was utilized in the last year, and the problem came from ASARECA not receiving timely accountability reports to facilitate disbursement of the next tranche of cash. He reiterated that better communication should be fostered to avoid delays. He also informed members that ASARECA were now requesting the board of directors to nominate a national focal person for each country, to speed up this process.

Q3: There was concern that if the decision to plant and trade in GMOs should be left to individual countries, the GMOs would automatically find themselves in these countries through border infiltrations. This issue should be discussed at the region level.

It was noted that debate on GMOs is heated and passionate and it was explained that by the time individual states are left to make decisions on commercialization of GMOs, the pertinent GMO issues would have been exhaustively discussed at regional level.

The Secretary of EASCOM Mr Obongo Nyachae said he had participated in a discussion of experts on GMOs in a meeting organized by the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, in October 2006 and that the positions taken by AU's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were endorsed as the correct way to go.

The EASCOM members agreed that the compromise position would be for the RECs to give a broad guidance, and thereafter the national systems could come up with their decisions on handling GMOs.

Mr Haki thanked the participants for the first session and gave a 25 minute recess.

SESSION 2: COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORTS

Chair – Patrick Ngwediagi

The following country presentations were made: (Full reports may be obtained from EASCOM Secretariat, e-mail: stak@kenyaweb.com)

1. Report from the Democratic Republic of Congo by Mr Jean Pierre Anota

It was clarified that even though DRC was not a member of UPOV, its Plant Variety Protection Law was made in consultation with the SADC Plant Breeders Rights Draft Guidelines, which were compliant with UPOV 1991 Convention. It was also noted that SADC had agreed that if they were to join UPOV as a bloc, its members would thus meet the requirements of PVP

2. Report from Ethiopia by Mr Lemma Dessalegne

It was clarified that Ethiopia initially had a seed programme for the last six years, but it had not been implemented. They also hoped to revise and discuss the document to come up with the Act.

It was agreed that Ethiopia would send a copy of the Proclamation by Government to the other EASCOM members, to enable them understand it in terms of harmonization.

The Ethiopian representative also clarified that they used to have a national variety release committee (NVRC), but were now looking towards getting an independent NVRC. EASCOM Members felt that as long as the committee was all inclusive, even if it was not independent, it would undertake the mandate.

3. Report from Kenya by Mr Obongo Nyachae

It was noted that Kenya had developed a National Seed Policy Document and was reviewing the Seeds and Plant Varieties Act, together with the Seeds Regulations and Plant Breeders' Rights Regulations. The Draft had incorporated recommendations of EASCOM such as harmonized seed standards and classes. It had also included clauses to make Kenya compliant with UPOV 1991 Convention and to make seed trade business fully liberalized in Kenya.

4. Report from Rwanda by Mr Gafarasi Ngabo

The report focused on the current seed sector development activities in Rwanda. The country had established Rwanda Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) to replace the former Rwandan Seed Service, and is spear-heading seed sector reforms through the Seed Sector Development Project. During the year, Seed Trade Association of Rwanda (STAR) was established and provincial chairpersons were elected.
(The full report may be obtained from EASCOM secretariat)

5. Report from Northern Sudan by Dr Abdel Moneim B. Elahmadi

The report highlighted the following issues:

- The seed law was enacted in 1990 but is now obsolete because of seed production and current certification situations, *i.e.* there is no more public seed production. The old law is still valid although some aspects are not applicable
- The Plant Breeder's Rights are in the seed law, which contains conditions of protection, breeder's rights, exemption, *etc.* based on UPOV Convention
- The seed law will be revised by the Ministry of Justice
- The quarantine law: revision was made and submitted to the cabinet, and a list of pests and diseases is available
- The Variety Release Committee released a certain number of varieties
- Seed production and distribution in the private sector – sorghum is the most important crop
- Sudan is not a member of international seed organizations and has not participated in any meeting in regard to harmonization of seed policies
- A seed trade association is not yet established
- Sudan would also like to know the pros and cons of joining UPOV.

6. Report from Southern Sudan by Mr Cirino Oketayot Oyiki

The highlights of the report included:

- Maize is an important crop in southern Sudan

- There is a lot of seed in southern Sudan through relief institutions
- Several varieties from Eastern Africa are doing well in Southern Sudan, a pertinent question being would they continue buying the seeds from Eastern Africa or should they produce the seed, and if production was the case, what about Plant Breeder's Rights?
- There was good collaboration with other countries and institutions *i.e.* ISTA. Some members had also attended the ISTA Purity course in Nakuru, Kenya
- There was a decree on seed regulation but follow up is the problem

It was noted that because of the market gaps in the region, Southern Sudan should take advantage of the market by maintaining quality and being careful about fake seeds

7. Report from Uganda by Mr Joseph Bazaale

The report highlighted the activities undertaken during 2006:

- Indexing of plant varieties
- A survey was conducted resulting in five ecological zones, with 150 seed germplasms made, varietal protocol data sheets were produced for ten major crops. The exercise is still in progress
- Uganda Plant Breeders Association was operationalized
- Preparation of Draft National Seed Policy, hopefully to be concluded by the end of 2006
- PVP Bill to be sent to Parliament
- Uganda received a request from Burundi for one week training and field work.

8. Report from Tanzania by Mr Patrick Ngwediagi

- There is a new Seed Act in place, a Plant Protection Act and Regulations for the two acts
- TOSCI is now an independent body to also validate variety evaluation
- Twenty one (21) varieties released
- Plant Breeder's office is operational under the Ministry of Agriculture
- Two (2) PBRs were granted out of 71 applications
- Country activities were not realized because of lack of funding but indexing of local landraces, publishing of the Quarantine Pest list and expert meeting to review quality assurance draft manual were implemented.

The following issues were clarified to members on the report from Tanzania:

1. Landraces are not released varieties, but a long list of all major crops which already exist. This was being updated, and this was the same case with the quarantine risk list
2. The different bodies and institutions are somehow separated and somehow connected, like seed certification is under TOSCI (independent) though under Ministry of Agriculture; PBR is under Ministry of Agriculture while Plant Quarantine is under TPRI.
3. National Performance Technical Committee - at TOSCI there is the person in charge of Performance Trials who is the secretary of the committee while the Head of TOSCI is the Chairperson of the committee. The cost is met by the applicant for each entry

4. There was concern raised on sub-contracting parties, especially on guidelines and the sub-contracted parties are audited. It was clarified that TOSCI does the supervision, until it has the capacity to supervise everything. There is a mechanism for contracting.

9. Madagascar

There was no country report presented.

SEED TRADE REPORTS

Seed Trade Association of Kenya (STAK)

The report on seed trade was presented by the Executive Officer of STAK, Obongo Nyachae. He reported that the Association had lobbied Government for the finalization of the National Seed Policy Document and Draft Seed Bill and that these two documents had been submitted to the Minister for Agriculture, Kenya.

He also reported that STAK is a member of the Board of the International Seed Federation (ISF) and of the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC) of ISF. Mr Nyachae had participated in the ISF Committee meetings in Cape Town, South Africa on 30th October – 2nd November, 2006 during which the following issues were discussed:

- ✓ Co-existence of Plant Breeders' rights and patents;
- ✓ supplementary protection (to cater for delays in processing applications for grant of plant breeders' rights);
- ✓ enforcement of IPR's (political will is required for full enforcement);
- ✓ definition of hybrid (hybrid and their component inbreds are considered as varieties);
- ✓ reverse breeding using modern biotechnology (should this be considered as essential derivation?);
- ✓ ISF position on Standard Material Transfer Agreement under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and
- ✓ Re-use of denominations as requested by the international association of breeders of vegetatively propagated material (CIOPORA).

These issues are under discussion at relevant technical committees of ISF and industry positions would be reported during the next ISF Congress in Christchurch, New Zealand in May 2007.

The full presentation may be obtained from the EASCOM Secretariat.

Uganda Seed Trade Association (USTA)

Mr Emmanuel Gareeba Gaso highlighted the following:

- A consultancy to put up training manual for USTA members - capacity building – and eventually come up with a core-team to assist the certification team which cannot cope with certification work
- An Executive Secretary was recruited
- USTA now has an independent office and has developed a code of conduct for their members
- Development of Foundation Seed Unit: This was under discussion with SCOSA
- USTA now boasts 12 ordinary members and 5 associate members
- They hosted a successful AFSTA congress in March 2006. EASCOM congratulated Uganda through USTA on hosting this successful congress.

- PVP legislation in Uganda is taking too long to process - the draft is ready but there are some conflicts on community rights and plant breeder's rights which needed to be addressed

Tanzania Seed Trade Association (TASTA)

TASTA were not represented in the meeting.

Seed Trade Association of Rwanda (STAR)

During this year 2006, STAR had planned to realize three activities:

- To put in place Provincial, Districts and Sectors committees
- To prepare legal statute of STAR
- To train and to frame progressive producers and traders of seeds

Due to lack of funds disbursements from ASAREECA, only Provincial committees were put in place. He indicated that STAR would undertake the following activities in 2007:

1. Setting up of administrative committees
2. To prepare statutes of STAR
3. To train all committee members
4. Capacity building i.e. training and sensitization of seed traders in 30 already identified sites
5. Meet the requirements of joining AFSTA

SESSION 3: REPORTS

Chairperson – Mr Emmanuel Gareeba Gaso

EASCOM REPORT

The Secretary of EASCOM, Mr Obongo Nyachae, presented a list of the activities undertaken in 2006, which had been approved during the AGM of 2005, held in Mombasa Kenya as follows:

1. *Coordination of EASCOM Secretariat*
2. *Information/packages and dissemination*
3. *Facilitation of harmonized agreements*
4. *Strengthening of national seed trade associations*

Mr Nyachae reported that he had coordinated the EASCOM Secretariat for the second year and commended the progress made by Rwanda in developing a short but comprehensive seed law. He also commended Tanzania for the major strides it had made in restructuring TOSCI to oversee variety release and in operationalizing the Plant Breeders Rights Office.

He reported that EASCOM Secretariat facilitated two Technical Working Groups during the year: one comprising of heads of National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO's) of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, and the other comprising of heads of seed certification services from these four countries.

A Quarantine Pest List for EAC (including Rwanda) was developed by the NPPO's team, and this List had been sent to the Permanent Secretaries of the respective countries for validation.

A clarification was sought by members on how the number of quarantine pests in the summary table presented could be more than the total pests listed. Members also wanted to know how the original quarantine pests list of 33 pests reduced to only 3. The secretary would check the information and report to members..

Validation of the regional seed certification and seed testing standards for EAC member countries was also developed by the TWG on certification. The standards would now be published for reference by other EASCOM member countries.

The Secretariat also contracted two PVP experts to undertake a study of the status of plant variety protection systems in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

A report of this was to be presented to members by Mr Patrick Ngwediagi.

(The full EASCOM Secretariat Report may be obtained from: stak@kenyaweb.com)

Discussion of EASCOM Secretariat Report

The Secretariat was commended for the outputs so far made. However some areas that could have improved the secretariat performance were highlighted, *i.e.* coordination, funding and communication. It was also felt that it was the secretariat's role to ensure the country activities were undertaken, *i.e.* talking to country focal point persons and to ASARECA to find out what the problems were and to sort them out. For example, there were some meetings planned that never took place – NPPs, ASARECA and Secretary EASCOM.

Members felt that travel arrangements for this year's AGM were not well handled, and an example of one participant from Tanzania who got his travel documents late and had to cancel was given. Members expressed the opinion that the EASCOM secretariat should handle the travel arrangements rather than ASARECA, *i.e.* in the past there were no complaints when arrangements used to be made from the secretariat in Nairobi. Dr Waithaka explained that travel arrangements were disrupted when the meeting was rescheduled to Entebbe from Madagascar, when it was thought easier to handle them from ECAPAPA, but will not happen to other meetings.

It was agreed that this would now in future be handled from EASCOM Secretariat.

Members also felt that communication from the secretariat and to and from individual countries was vital – countries are supposed to report the activities to the secretariat, but the secretariat should also keep members informed of what has been going on. For example any technical working group reports and recommendations should be forwarded to the members, so that they can also inform their members and disperse the information.

It was agreed that improvement on communication from the secretariat should be made, and that the members should inform the secretariat what was happening in their individual countries, to enable the secretariat follow up.

Members noted that the percentage system of funding was not working well, and suggested that they should receive the funding in full. It was proposed that the AGM agrees on 100% funding for particular activities to enable them run to full completion.

Dr Ketema reiterated that ASARECA are quick with disbursements as long as there is timely reporting and accountability. He gave an example of the other programmes they are working with, and stated that disbursement could be done based on particular activities. However, full funding would be difficult because of the accountability problems they had encountered previously.

Dr Waithaka explained that the percentage of funding could be negotiated depending on the activities and commitment that work will be done and reporting would be done on time. However if there is poor history, then less percentage would be given.

SEED ACTIVITIES FOR 2007-2008

Mr Vincent Ekiyar, Programme Assistant at ECAPAPA, apologized for the delay in processing travel arrangements and clarified that when they sent out the invitations, there was slow response from members confirming their participation. Some people responded late, hence delaying the whole process. It was noted that there had been a communication breakdown.

Mr Ekiyar presented a work plan format that the country teams should use to come up with their workplans at the end of the discussions. He also gave a reporting format that shows outputs/results, the progress made towards achieving the planned output, the activities not implemented and the reasons for failure, time frame. He suggested that the reports should also include gender issues as this has become a donor requirement for most projects. The workplans should list seed project areas to be harmonized, seed projects planned and select priority activities for the year in tabular form. A sample form is attached as Annex 3.

It was noted that data was available in the different countries, but the issue has been how to sensitize the industry to appreciate that data is not a competition tool.

It was suggested that EASCOM consider having a programme that can take up all the data for seed from testing, certification, imports and exports, etc, to enable EASCOM activities go beyond and be appreciated beyond the committee.

It was also noted that when we look at the five focus areas of the harmonization project, some information has been lost along the way. It was felt that a Phytosanitary expert be included on the committee if funds allowed, so that their issues were incorporated in the committee reports.

The meeting noted that the data should not just remain in the seed sector, but should also get to the end user including people who want to invest in the seed sector. Information should be freed to people who want to use this information for planning, development of the sector and for investment. Information is important if agriculture is to be developed in the region.

Members suggested that the private sector should be informed on the meetings taking place through dissemination of minutes of these technical meetings and others. This will enable the seed industry open up to giving information, once they realize the data is for the growth of the industry and not for other intents.

Mr Ekiyar congratulated Kenya in the ODI report by Dr Tripps as the only country in the region with the best data, but sensitisation to the stakeholders was still lacking.

Mr Ekiyar expounded on policy briefs, saying that they are for giving out information to the public. If there was a two-page brief on each of the focus areas, this information gets to the people.

Dr Waithaka cautioned EASCOM to be conscious of rationalization of issues being in line with the harmonization issues.

The meeting was also informed that there is a new project looking at strategic management of knowledge systems, which helps people to identify and utilize the available data, by building data bases from existing information. The project is located in ILRI Nairobi

The meeting was further informed that impact assessment was one of ASARECA's activities undertaken by a team of experts and will be outsourced.

The meeting adjourned at 15:30 hours with country teams breaking out to prepare their country work plans.

SESSION 4: PRESENTATION OF WORK PLANS

Chairperson: Mr John Sigoria Shauri

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY WORK PLANS BY COUNTRY TEAMS

The meeting started at 8.30 am with country presentations for planned activities and work plans for 2007 and 2008. Presentations were made as follows:

Kenya by Ms Gladys Maina
Democratic Republic of Congo by Mr Anota Jean Pierre
Ethiopia by Mr Tafesse Gebru
Rwanda by Mr Gafarasi Ngabo
Tanzania by Mr Patrick Ngwediagi
Southern Sudan by Dr Abdelmonein B. Elahmadi
Northern Sudan by Mr Cirino Oketayot
Uganda by Mr Joseph Bazaale
Madagascar were represented but did not present a report

Format for work plans

Mr Vincent Ekiyar gave a presentation of common areas in the work plans and budgets presented. He noted that these common areas could be combined and made into regional activities.

Available budgets 2007 – 2008

Dr Waithaka gave a presentation on balancing of rationalization and harmonization; and the roles of EASCOM and the seed traders associations, implementation and sensitization additional funding. He also indicated the budget allocations for the years 2007 and 2008 (110,000 and 100,000 respectively) for all country activities and EASCOM Secretariat maintenance. He said that funding had traditionally been given from USAID, and as the project comes to a close, they had allowed ECAPAPA to use the funds remaining on no cost extension. Proposals could be put up to a number of donors for future funding. It was clarified that ECAPAPA does not restrict EASCOM to USAID funding alone.

It was agreed to consider using the two-year funds for one year, and seek funds for the next year. The future sustainability of EASCOM beyond USAID funding was considered critical and would be discussed as AOB in the AGM.

Members were requested to finalise their country work plans/budgets and submit them to the EASCOM Secretariat the following week, to facilitate early disbursement of funds.

PRESENTATION ON JOINT SEED CERTIFICATION

Mr Gafarasi reported on behalf of the Joint Inspection Team that three senior seed inspectors each from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and one from Rwanda had undertaken joint seed certification exercises on selected crops in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in 2005/2006. Reports of the field inspections were made by the lead persons from each country and submitted to EASCOM Secretariat, Laboratory analysis of samples submitted to the official

laboratories of the four participating countries had however, not been completed during the period. The laboratory reports were now ready.

The report of the Joint Certification was debated at length. It was finally decided that a meeting would be organized for the participating inspectors to finalise the report and present it to stakeholders for adoption and action.

PRESENTATION BY AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL CAPITAL

Ms Joyce Njoba, the Investment Manager of African Agricultural Capital Ltd (AAC) gave a presentation on areas for possible collaboration and funding to the private sector. She informed the meeting that AAC was a result of the green movement, where the Rockefeller Foundation and the Gatsby Trust conducted a study which showed that the problems in Africa are a result of lack of good quality seed and too much reliance on seed processing. AAC expends grants given by Rockefeller but the loans are given with an equity stake with minority shares in the company they invest in. Companies which should have been in operation for at least one year are expected to write proposals requesting for funds. AAC is in operation in East Africa but will soon be spreading to Rwanda, with a possibility to go to other countries as long as there was demand. The aim of AAC is to assist the small enterprises grow, while giving professional advice including financial and technical expertise.

Ms Njoba requested EASCOM members to introduce the concept to their members to enable them access loans of a minimum of US\$100,000 (One Hundred Thousand US Dollars). Being an agricultural based donor, they have instruments to cover bad years where they would charge 0% interest. The website for AAC is www.aac.co.ke

Ms Njoba informed EASCOM that AAC had a sister organization known as Kilimo Trust which could be considered for review by the Secretariat. Their website is www.kilimotrust.org/com

STATUS OF PVP IN EASTERN AFRICA

Mr Patrick Ngwediagi reported that he and Dr Francis Wachira of Egerton University Kenya had been contracted by EASCOM to undertake a study of the status of plant variety protection in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. A Report was prepared, which was sent to EASCOM Secretariat.

The report shows the status of plant variety protection legislation/implementation in these four EAC member countries and efforts being made to address any shortcomings.

He thanked the EASCOM Secretariat and ECAPAPA for showing confidence and using local expertise to conduct such a review.

(The full report may be obtained from EASCOM secretariat at e-mail: stak@kenyaweb.com)

WRAP UP AND WAY FORWARD

Dr Waithaka reiterated on impact of harmonization – has it impacted on farmers and food security? If not, what was the problem? He gave a list of issues that had come up in the deliberations and needed to be addressed before the end of the AGM *i.e.* UPOV issues, Quarantine Pest List, implementation, capacity building and inclusion of phytosanitary expert in EASCOM, better communication and dissemination of information, tapping current expertise as opposed to external consultants, involvement in the private sector, funding of essential activities and funding beyond 2008, and the future of EASCOM.

Members agreed that this be revisited during the EASCOM AGM in 2007.

SESSION 5: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: 30 November 2006

Agenda:

- 1) Reading of Minutes of the previous AGM
- 2) Confirmation of Minutes
- 3) Matters arising
- 4) Establishing Technical Working Groups for each Tier
- 5) Approval of EASCOM activities/workplans for 2006/2007
- 6) Election of office bearers
- 7) Date and venue of next AGM

The Chairman, Mr Uwimana Innocent, invited members to the meeting and declared the EASCOM AGM officially open.

1.0 Adoption of Agenda:

The Agenda was adopted for discussion in the 3rd Annual General Meeting of EASCOM.

2.0 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the AGM of 2005 held in Mombasa on 24 – 25 November, 2005, which had been circulated to members as proceedings, were read to members. The Proceedings were proposed by Mr Joseph Bazaale and seconded by Ms Gladys Maina and confirmed as a true record of deliberations of last year's Annual General Meeting.

3.0 Matters arising:

The Secretary of EASCOM, Mr Obongo Nyachae, gave a brief on the proceedings of the previous Annual General Meeting held in Mombasa on 24-25 November 2006.

- Activities relating to the 5 outputs were done and are reported.
- Elections were supervised by the Secretary General, AFSTA. Election procedures were based on agreements made during the Founding Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda and it was clarified that the Vice Chairman automatically took over the chair the following year.

4.0 Establishment of Technical Working Groups for each Tier

Members noted that in one of the previous meetings, the issue of tier grouping had been discussed, -and it was agreed that in some areas fast tracking would be used, to avoid repetition. This meant the second and third tier groups did not have to sit on round tables since the issues had been discussed in 1st tier – to save time and money. Therefore before we start these tier groups, the pros and cons should be thoroughly discussed.

It was agreed that the five member states of EAC within EASCOM should seek membership in the EAC Committee on Agriculture and Food security, while the greater EASCOM seeks observer status in the EAC.

5.0 Self sustainability of EASCOM

The issue was discussed at length with various options, and it was finally agreed that EASCOM administration should remain within ASARECA/ECAPAPA for now, but ASARECA would continue to source for funds through other organizations *e.g.* COMESA, ECA, *etc.* EASCOM should also look for ways of establishing its legal status.

6.0 Inclusion of Phytosanitary experts into EASCOM

This issue was deliberated on and it was resolved that EASCOM may use Technical Working Groups (TWG) for expertise instead of expanding its membership, since including one more person in the Committee would raise the membership of EASCOM to 50, thus considerably increase operational costs. Reports from the TWGs should be sent to EASCOM members and if there are any issues, they would be sent back to the TWGs to review and they could then be ratified by the EASCOM. The current Committee structure would therefore be maintained.

6.0 Election of office bearers

Mr Uwimana presented Mr Patrick Ngwediagi as the new Chair of the EASCOM for 2007, in accordance with the EASCOM constitution which states that the Vice Chairman automatically takes over from the outgoing Chairman.

Proposals for the post of Vice Chair were then requested for.

A proposal to have the Chair and Vice Chair positions to be extended to a two year term instead of the current one year term to enable the Chairman make an impact, was put up. The members deferred discussion of this to the next AGM.

Mr Cirino Oketayot Oyiki from Southern Sudan was proposed as Vice Chair by Gafarasi Ngabo and seconded by Mr Lemma Dessalegne from Ethiopia. There being no other contestant, Mr Oketayot was unanimously elected the new Vice Chairman of EASCOM for the year 2007.

7.0 Date and venue of the next AGM

Proposals were made for:

1. Madagascar: but they were not available to defend their position
2. Ethiopia: proposed by Mr Ngabo and seconded by Mr Komayombi
3. Tanzania: the Chairman invited members, seconded by Mr Gebru
4. Nairobi: proposed by Dr El Ahmadi and seconded by Mr Sigoria, but it was agreed that since the previous AGM was held in Mombasa, Kenya should not be in the race again

A secret ballot was therefore cast for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Arusha or Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Nine people voted for Addis while 8 people voted for Tanzania.

The next AGM of EASCOM would therefore be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the end of November 2007, preferably on a Thursday and Friday to allow travel arrangements for some countries.

8.0 Closing

8.1 *Remarks by outgoing Chairman*

The outgoing Chairman, Mr Innocent Uwimana thanked all the members for their cooperation, and for the work that had been done in the year.

He then handed the Chair officially to the new Chairman, Mr Patrick Ngwediagi, and wished him well in the forthcoming year and activities, and especially in completion of the joint certification work done.

8.2 *Remarks from new Chairman*

The new Chairperson thanked the outgoing Chairman, and invited the new Vice Chairperson to address the committee. Mr Cirino said he had accepted the invitation to serve as Vice Chairperson and assured them of his total support.

Mr Ngwediagi made a few remarks and thanked all for the confidence they had shown in him and electing him as Chair, and for keeping the agreement for the chair to rotate once per year in each country. He noted that there was the question where one year was found not to be sufficient for the Chair, and suggested that this be discussed in next year's AGM as it was an important change that needed serious deliberations.

He urged members to ensure that once the budgets and activities are approved and contracts signed, they should ensure they carry out the activities to avoid the bottlenecks that have been there before.

He also urged members and the countries to continue with implementation of the harmonized areas of the seed project i.e. seed policies, laws or regulations change should do so, so that EASCOM makes an impact.

With those remarks he declared the AGM of EASCOM for 2006 officially closed at 5.08 pm, wished members a safe journey home, and hoped that God willing, we would all meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November, 2007.

ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME

THE EASTERN AFRICA SEED COMMITTEE (EASCOM) 3rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

IMPERIAL RESORT - ENTEBBE, UGANDA 29 - 30 NOVEMBER 2006

Tuesday, 28 November 2006

Arrival of delegates

DAY I:

Wednesday, 29 November 2006

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

SESSION 1: *Chairperson: Dr Jeremiah Haki*

Rapporteur: Mr Joseph Bazaale

OPENING CEREMONY

09:00 – 10:00

Welcome remarks:

- Opening remarks by EASCOM Chairman: Mr. Innocent Uwimana
- ECAPAPA: Dr Michael Waithaka
- Executive Secretary of ASARECA – Dr Seyfu Ketema
- Official opening: Uganda Ministry of Agriculture representative Mr James Komayombi – Commissioner for Crop Protection

10:00 – 10:30

Seed policy rationalisation and harmonisation, challenges and opportunities –
Dr Michael Waithaka

10:30 – 11:00

Group Photograph/Coffee/Tea Break

SESSION 2:

Chairperson: Mr Patrick Ngwediagi

Rapporteur: Mr. Gafarasi Ngabo

11:00 – 12:40

- Country Reports by Focal Point Persons (10 minutes/country):
 1. Democratic Republic of Congo
 2. Ethiopia
 3. Kenya
 4. Madagascar
 5. Rwanda
 6. Sudan
 7. Tanzania
 8. Uganda
- Seed Trade Reports

12:40 – 13:00

Discussions

13:00 – 14:00

LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 3: Reports and work plans

Chairperson: Mr Emmanuel Gareeba- Gaso

Rapporteur: Mr Cirino Oketayot

- 14:00 – 14:20 EASCOM report – **Mr Obongo Nyachae**
14:20 – 14:50 Seed activities for 2007-2008 - **Mr Vincent Ekiyar**
14:50 – 15:00 Discussion
15:00 – 15:30 **TEA/COFFEE BREAK**
15:30 – 17:00 Preparation of work plans - **Country Teams**

DAY II: Thursday, 30 November 2006

SESSION 4

Chairperson: Mr Olivier Christian RAMANABOHITRA

Rapporteur: Mr Vincent Ekiyar

- 08:30 – 09:30 Presentation of Work plans – **Country Teams**
09:30 – 09:45 African Agricultural Capital - areas for possible collaboration
– **Mr Tom Adlam/Joice Njoba**
09:45 – 10:00 Collaboration with COMESA – **Dr Chris Muyunda**
10:00 – 10:30 Discussion
10:30 – 11:00 **COFFEE/TEA BREAK**
11:00 – 12:00 Presentation of EASCOM Work plans and Budgets for 2007/2008 - **Mr. Vincent Ekiyar**
12:00 – 12:45 Wrap up and way forward – **Dr Michael Waithaka**
12:45 – 14:00 **LUNCH**

SESSION 5: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 14:00 – 15:30 Opening of the Annual General Meeting – Mr. Innocent Uwimana **Chairperson**
Approval of Agenda items
Reading of Minutes of the previous AGM – **Obongo Nyachae**
Confirmation of Minutes
Matters Arising
Establishing Technical Working Group (TWG) for each Tier
15:30 – 16:00 TEA /COFFEE BREAK
16:00 – 17:00 Approval of EASCOM activities/work plans for 2006/2007
Election of office bearers
Date and venue of next AGM
17:15 **CLOSING**
18:00 -Open **Joint Cocktail Reception for EASCOM and Gender Groups**

Friday, 1st December 2006
DEPARTURE

EASCOM COMMON WORK PLANS AREAS 2006

1. Review of seed policy, laws and regulations (variety protection, release, PVP laws)
2. Develop harmonized plant variety descriptors == UPO compliant
3. Seed data base - documentation and management == information == collection, synthesis, dissemination/sharing == training on & use (manuals, briefs, reports)
4. Conclude joint seed certification work
5. Set up and strengthen relevant seed sector promotion institutions == associations == traders, breeders etc. (nationally and regionally) == rights
6. Capacity building == to enhance implementation of harmonized agreements
7. Seed variety regulation systems (strengthen legal and institutional framework)

ANNEX 3: FORMAT OF WORK PLANS

EXPECTED OUTPUT	ACTIVITY PLANNED	BUDGET	TIME FRAME
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
TOTAL US\$:			

ANNEX 4: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Kenya

Mr Francis M. Ndambuki
Chairman, PBAK
Plant Breeders Assoc. of Kenya
PO Box 553, Kitale
Tel: +254-54-31909 – 14
Fax: +254-54-30385; 20458
Email: info@kenyaseed.co.ke

Mr John Sigoria Shauri
Assistant Director
Ministry of Agriculture
Kilimo House, Cathedral Road
PO Box 30028, 00100 GPO
Nairobi
Tel: +254-20-2718870
Email: johnsigoriashauri@yahoo.com

Ms Gladys Njeri Maina
General Manager
KEPHIS
Oloolua Ridge, Ngong Road
PO Box 49592-00100
Nairobi
Tel: +254-20-884545
Fax: +254-20-882265
Email: gmaina@kephis.org

UGANDA

Mr Komayombi Bulegeya
Commissioner, Crop Protection
Min. of Agriculture Animal
Industry and Fisheries
PO Box 102
Entebbe
Tel: +256-41-320115
Fax: +256-41-320642
Email: kbulegeya@yahoo.co.uk

Mr Emmanuel Gareeba-Gaso
Chairman, USTA
Plot 41/43 MTK Bldg, Nassar Rd
PO Box 29726
Kampala
Tel: +256-77—2367772
Fax: +256-41-234803
Email: usta@infocom.co.ug

Mr Joseph Bazaale
Principal Agricultural Inspector
Min. of Agriculture Animal
Industry and Fisheries
Lugard Street
PO Box 102, Entebbe
Tel: +254-41-320115/+254-77-2405561
Fax: +254-41-320642
Email: joebazaale@yahoo.co.uk

Dr Beneth A. Tibajuka
Executive Secretary
Uganda Seed Trade Association
MTK bldg, Plot 41/43 Nassar Rd
PO Box 29726, Kampala
Tel: +254-41-234803
Fax: +254—41-234803
Email: usta@infocom.co.ug

TANZANIA

Dr Jeremiah Haki
Ministry of Agriculture
Kilimo II – Mandela/Kilimo Rd
PO Box 2066, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Tel: +255-22-2865313/+254—754-289228
Fax: +255-22-2865312
Email: jeremiah.haki@kilimo.go.tz/

Mrs Tasiana Z. Maingu
Tanzania Official Seed Certification
Institute (TOSCI)
Sokoine University Main Campus
PO Box 1056 Morogoro, Tanzania
Tel: +255-23-2600797
Fax: +255-23-2601587
Email: tosci.morogoro@iwayafrica.com

Mr Patrick Ngwediagi
Registrar of Plant Breeders Rights
Ministry of Agriculture Food
Security and Cooperation
PO Box 9192
Dar-es-Salaam
Tel: +255-22-2861404/+255-754-322206
Fax: +255-22-2861403
Email: ngwedi@yahoo.com

RWANDA

Mr Uwimana Innocent
Clinton Foundation
B.P. 402
Kigali, Rwanda
Tel: +250 503242
GSM: +250 08302301
Fax: +250 503243
Email: u_innocent2001@yahoo.fr/
iuwimana@clintonfoundation.org

Mr Bizimana Theobald
Researcher
ISAR/Rwanda
B.P. 138 Butare
Tel: +250 08449626/08657288
Email: theobiz@yahoo.fr

Mr Gafarasi Ngabo J. Baptiste
Head, Plant Products Certification Services
Rwanda Bureau of Standards
PO Box 7099
Tel: +250 08355392
Fax: +250 583305
Email: baptist_gafarasi@yahoo.com

Mr Munzuyarwo Denis
Agronomist (Farmers and Traders of
Seeds Representative)
Seed Trade Assoc. of Rwanda
PO Box 126
Musanze/c/o COODAF
Tel: +250 08527669
Email: denysmunzu@yahoo.fr

ETHIOPIA

Dr Lemma Dessalegne
Researcher, Committee Member
Ethiopian Agricultural Research
Melkusa Research Centre
PO Box 436, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-91-729546/+251-222112186
Email: lemmades@yahoo.com

Mr Tafesse Gebru
Researcher
Ethiopian Institute of Agric. Research
Kulumsa Agricultural Research Centre
Asela, PO Box 489, Ethiopia
Tel: +251-911405604
Fax: +251-22331508
Email: tafesseq002@yahoo.com

SUDAN

Dr Abdelmonein b. Elahmadi
Head, Research & Development
Arab Sudanese Seed Co. Ltd
Elzasem Bldg, Abdelmoneim Street
PO Box 2102, Khartoum
Tel: 83 780110/09-121-75424 (cel)
Fax: 83 780439
Email: asscoseed@hotmail.com

Mr Cirino Oketayot Oyiki
Executive Director
South Sudan Agriculture Research &
Technology Organization
Ministry of Agri. & Forestry, Juba
PO Box Juba
Tel: +256-477107212/+249811820590
Email: oketayot@yahoo.co.uk

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr Anota Jean Pierre
Association Interprofessionnelle des
Semenciers du Congo (National Seed
Trade Association)
A. Mutombo Kachi, 69 Residence Savoy 2eme etage
Appartement No. 7 Kinshasa/Gombe (DRC)
Tel: +243 81 2846231
Email: aajohnpeter@yahoo.com

MADAGASCAR

Lalanekenarisoa Nenee Johojanahary
AMPROSEM (Malagasy Seed Producers and
Traders Association)
Lot 17-K-210 Ivory CFAMA Antsirabe 110
PO Box 109 Antsirabe 110 Madagascar
Tel: +33 12 708 38/020 4494583
Email: Intolotra@wanadoo.mg

INVITED GUEST

Ms Joyce W. Njoba
Investment Manager
African Agricultural Capital Ltd
Plot 2 Serunkuma Rd, Mbuya
PO Box 71782 Kampala
Tel: +256-312-264980/1
Fax: +256-312-264985
joyce.njoba@kilimo.co.ug

ASARECA/ECAPAPA

Dr Seyfu Ketema
Executive Director ASARECA
Mpigi road
PO Box
Entebbe
Tel:
Fax:
Email:

Dr Michael Waitthaka
Coordinator
ECAPAPA
Plot 13, John Babiha Road
PO Box 765, Entebbe
Tel: +254-41-321780/321751
Fax: +254-41-321777
Email: m.waitthaka@asareca.org

Mr Vincent Ekiyar
Programme Assistant
ECAPAPA/ASARECA
Plot 13, John Babiha Road
Tel: +254-41-321751/321752
Fax: +254-41-321777
Email: v.ekiyar@asareca.org

EASCOM SECRETARIAT

Mr Obongo Nyachae
Secretary – EASCOM
Executive Officer – STAK
Utumishi Hse, Mamlaka Rd 1st floor
PO Box 2581, 00202
Nairobi
Tel: +254-20-2713619
Fax: +254-20-2713671
Email: stak@kenyaweb.com

Ms Jane W. Mwangi
Executive Assistant
Seed Trade Association of Kenya
Utumishi Hse, Mamlaka Rd 1st floor
PO Box 2581, 00202
Nairobi
Tel: +254-20-2713619
Fax: +254-20-2713671
Email: stak@kenyaweb.com