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# Malawi hosts SADC harmonised Seed Regulations workshop in Lilongwe

February 20, 2019 Watipaso Mzungu Jnr -Nyasa Times [Be the first to comment](#)

Over 40 seed experts from 21 countries on Monday gathered in Lilongwe to share their experience implementing national and regional seed regulations and addressing key industry challenges such as counterfeit seed.

The African Seed Access Index (TASAI)



Seed experts discussing challenges affecting the industry

organised the workshop in collaboration with Market Matters Inc. of the United States of America (USA), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Alliance for Green Revolution (AGRA) and Seed Trade Association of Malawi (STAM) with funding from USAID.

TASAI programme coordinator Mainza Mugoya said: "The workshop has come at the right time when Malawi was intending to align the national seed legislation to the regional seed regulations. The sector is currently facing several constraints which affect performance of seed suppliers.

"This workshop seeks energise member countries, including Malawi, to promote the creation and maintenance of enabling environments for competitive seed systems serving smallholder farmers. It is this enabling environment that TASAI seeks to measure, track, and compare across African countries."

The experts were drawn from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among others.

The workshop also provided a platform for seed industry players to get a briefing from Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS) on the status of The SADC Harmonization of Seed Regulations and current Challenges affecting the Malawi seed industry.

Acting Director for the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Dr. Thabbie Chilongwe said the workshop had stimulated debate on how the players can fill the existing knowledge gaps on seed policy and regulatory issues in Malawi and Africa in general.



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“This workshop is coming at the right time when there is high demand for evidence-based policy formulation. It is through fora like these where the evidence is presented and put to test if it is worthy the salt,” Chilongo said.

The Senior Deputy Director of Department of Agricultural Research Services, David Kamangira, said strong seed systems also register good performance in agricultural outputs.

Kamangira said that is why government came up with Seed Bill, which proposes several structural changes to the seed industry landscape, including the transformation of the Seed Services Unit into the National Seed Commission.

“After the law has been passed, we will also update the Seed Regulations. Our intention is to ensure that the Seed Regulations are in harmony with the regional instruments, namely the SADC Harmonized Regulations and the COMESA Harmonized Seed Regulations.

“It is against this background that we are very keen to participate in this meeting. As a ministry, we would like to be informed of the progress, at every stage. We are especially keen to ensure that the TASAI research informs the on-going seed industry reforms in the country,” he said.

At the same workshop, TASAI, which is a seed industry joint research initiative of MM Inc. and the Emerging Markets Programme and Cornell University, presented findings of a comprehensive study of the seed industry in Malawi, covering five components, which include research and development, seed industry competitiveness, policy and regulations, institutional support and services to small-holder farmers.

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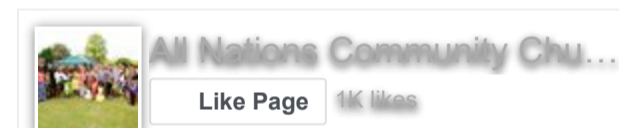
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