HARMONIZATION OF SEED REGULATIONS TO PROMOTE SEED TRADE IN THE SADC REGION:

- With focus on Seed Certification; Crop Variety Release and Phytosanitary for seed systems.

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INTRODUCTION

♦ Introduction
♦ Variety Release
♦ Seed Certification
♦ Phytosanitary Issues
♦ Other relevant issues
♦ Progress made in harmonization
♦ Advantages of harmonization
♦ Conclusion
Introduction

- Agriculture remains the most important sector for economic development.
  - livelihoods and employment to majority;
  - distressing that agricultural production continues to lag population;
  - Most countries in the SADC region remain food insecure;
  - A concern of most leaders in the SADC region;
  - Region's food production has not improved due to:
    - Drought
    - Flooding
    - Other
  - Food shortages
Introduction (continued)

- Achieving Productivity

Availability and access to agricultural inputs especially seed is important.

Seed determine the potential for yield as well as the productivity of other inputs.

However, access and availability of quality seed continue to be a problem in the SADC region.
Seed supply systems are weak;

Disasters;

Movement of seed from one country to another a problem due to regulatory frame
Introduction
(continued)

♦ Varied levels development Seed industry
  - Seed industry – well developed industrialized to non-existent
  - Seed production – completely private to state controlled
  - Seed legislation – all-encompassing to no legislation
  - Only 4 ISTA Laboratories, 2 participating in OECD seed schemes, 1 UPOV member
  - Seed certification – voluntary to compulsory
## BACKGROUND

(continued)

### SEED CONTROL IN SADC COUNTRIES

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SADC Variety Release System

- no recognition of crop varieties already proven and released
- all varieties are subjected to a further re-testing, registration and release
- VRC’s do not meet regularly
- VCR’s have members that is involved in breeding themselves - objectivity
SADC Variety Release System

- over emphasis on VCU data
- no clear guidelines or consistency in release of varieties
- not taken advantage of advances in science (GIS) in which mega environments could be applied in the testing
SADC Variety Release System

♦ The problem

- current national systems delay and even prevent release of new crop varieties.
- denying farmers opportunity to access new varieties and restricting choices
- System expensive and cannot be sustained
- duplication of testing
SADC Variety Release System

♦ The problem

- return on investment in crop development; and improvement delayed;
- large seed market is fragmented;
- relocating of companies - expensive and
- Discourages investment in seed industry development
SADC Variety Release System

♦ The Challenge

SADC must move towards a regional system of variety testing, registration and release that would enable new varieties be available to farmers in the shortest possible time in all the countries where it is adapted.
CIMMYT Maize Mega-Environment classification based on day length, mean temperature, and rainfall

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<td>≥ 24°C</td>
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<td>Subtropical Midaltitudes</td>
<td>12.5 ≤ d &lt; 13.4 hrs</td>
<td>18°C ≤ T &lt; 24°C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highlands/Temperate</td>
<td>d ≥ 13.4 hrs</td>
<td>or T &lt; 18°C</td>
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The problem

- There are differences in certification systems, standards and procedures being applied in the SADC Member States.
- Diminished trust among seed certification authorities.
- Differences in seed standards, including seed certification classes.
- Over insistence for seed to move on OIC.
SADC Seed Certification System

♦ The problem
  - Only ISTA-accredited laboratories may issue OIC’s.
  - Only 4 SADC countries have accredited ISTA labs
  - ISTA accreditation, membership & certificates very expensive, adding to cost of seed
SADC Seed Certification System

♦ The Problem

- Seed moving without an OIC requires retesting and until the results are known, the seed cannot be sold or distributed.
- This affects timely access of seed to farmers that may be restricted to a very limited planting window, owing to climatic conditions.
- If the seed is not available at planting time, the season would have been lost.
SADC Seed Certification System

♦ The opportunities
  - create trust in the regional seed industry by recognizing & accepting standards of each other;
  - adopt common seed certification classes & standards;
  - Adopt common testing methods, based on ISTA;
  - run a proficiency program that keeps participating laboratories on standard
SADC Seed Certification System

♦ The opportunities
  - Organize an efficient and transparent system, which makes better use of resources available in the Region and takes into account the practical realities on the ground.
  - Adopt & implement the proposed harmonized SADC Seed Certification System which will allow efficient movement of seed in the region, resulting in improved regional trade of seed of a known and consistent high quality.
SADC Phytosanitary Issues

♦ The problem
  - Phytosanitary issues add to problems of delays of seed movements. Inspectors have to check for too many pests, some of which are not of economic importance or seed borne;
  
  - Delays in the issuance of Phytosanitary Certificates, as well as import and export permits.
SADC Phytosanitary Issues

♦ Opportunity
- Need to rationalize pest list based on science;
- The shorter list will reduce the time and costs for inspecting imports and export consignments at entry and exit points respectively, as well as field inspections and/or laboratory tests. This will lead to a speedy clearance and release of consignments.
Other relevant issues

- Export Permits
- Export Quotas
- Import Permit
- OECD Certification
- ISTA Orange International Certificate
- Import Tariffs
- GMO Certificates
Progress made on harmonization of seed regulations

Developed technical procedures for:

- Regional Seed Variety Release,
- Regional Seed Certification and Quality Assurance and
- Regional Phytosanitary for seed.
Progress made on harmonization of seed regulations

Planned to take the draft technical procedures through:

♦ Consultations of member states at higher levels;
♦ Workshop for Permanent Secretaries of Agriculture;
♦ Presentation to Council of Ministers.
Consultations at Policy and Political levels
Consultations at Policy and Political levels
Advantages of harmonization

✓ Wide range of varieties for farmers to choose from.
✓ Lower costs for dealing with seed regulations
✓ Faster releases of varieties
✓ Better cooperation in seeds among Member States
✓ A more competitive seed market
CONCLUSION

- multinational and local seed companies in a relatively free movement of seed and varieties
- Environment - continuous stream of new varieties for major and minor crops to the benefit of farmers;
- Small farmers would gain access to improved varieties
CONCLUSION

- Companies competing for market share would reach out to expand sales and services to small farmers.
- In the end, farmers throughout the region will be able to walk into seed stores in small market towns near their homes and find a selection of seeds of improved varieties.
CONCLUSION

♦ Harmonization essential
♦ Progress should be accelerated
♦ Full commitment needed

THANKS