

## AATF to lead African Seed and Biotechnology Platform of the African Union

By George Achia



The African Union Commission (AUC) has nominated the AATF to lead the Commission's Working Group on Research, Variety Development and Seed Production of the African Seed and Biotechnology Platform (ASB Platform).

The Platform is a strategic tool to coordinate the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) geared towards establishment of effective and efficient seed systems and enhanced application of biotechnologies and methodologies within the seed sector.

It is to be recalled that in 2007, the ASBP was endorsed by the AU Assembly as a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa. The Platform will foster debate and interaction among stakeholders at national, regional and continental levels to identify trends, challenges and emerging issues as well as provide support for policy formulation, strategy analysis, implementation and monitoring.

ASB Platform brings together a wide range of actors critical in improving the design, resourcing and implementation of policies, research and initiatives in seed development in Africa. The Platform recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach which brings

on board the traditionally neglected sub-sector: animal seed. This unique role and the value that it adds are articulated in ASB Platform's Value Proposition which is "to provide a platform for facilitating discussion, advocacy for resource mobilization, advancing policy advice and accessing global knowledge for stakeholders in African seed systems to support national and regional actions, and programs in advancing Agricultural transformation in Africa.

In welcoming the nomination, Dr. Denis T. Kyetere, the Executive Director of AATF noted that the organisation is looking forward to active participation in the Platform to steer the development of seed sector in Africa. "AATF would like to express its gratitude on the nomination by the AUC to lead the Working Group (WG) on Research, Variety Development and Seed Production of the ASBP. AATF expresses its willingness to lead this Working Group and to support high level engagement on the seed sector development in the continent," said Dr. Kyetere.

He stated that AATF works across many areas to ensure innovations can ultimately reach farmers. "From regulatory approval, licensing agreements and product commercialisation, we have a proven track record of connecting African farmers with advanced technology that addresses their specific challenges and opportunities," he added.

While announcing the nomination, Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, the Director, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture at the AUC said that AATF has been recognised for its key role in facilitating and promoting public-private partnerships to access, develop, adapt and deliver appropriate agricultural technologies in Africa.

He pointed out that the governance of the ASBP Platform will have three key elements including a Steering Group, five Working Group and the General Assembly which, together, will act as a policy Think Tank to advance the framework for seed sector development.

"Among other roles, the Steering Group will coordinate the activities of the Working Groups and translate outcomes of debates or recommendations of published research and dialogue from high level meetings into policy options for consideration by AUC policy processes," said Dr. Bahiigwa.

The core functions of the Platform will include improve decision making and policy formulation; support evidence-based advocacy and enhance knowledge sharing.