

# African seed sector: Key issues to note

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# Building up a case for African farmers.....

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- African farmers need quality seeds. And Africa needs to increase its share of the global seed trade. The current contribution of less than 2 per cent only **presents an opportunity**.
- A major hindrance to seed trade in Africa is inadequate information flow. We have too much information that **we do not need**, and we need too much information that we do not have.



# Minor seed sector globally

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- Africa is a minor player in the **global seed trade (contributes only 2%)**, and approximately 80% of the farmers in the region save seeds for replantation. The seed is one of the most basic and important agricultural inputs. It forms the third-largest inputs market after agrochemicals and farm machinery, globally.
- The global seed market is expected to grow at a rate of 6.8% by 2021 to USD73 billion.
- Uptake of high yielding varieties and hybrids is as low as 8% in some countries.

# Segmentation of the African seed sector

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- The African seed market is segmented into seed type (non-GM/hybrid seeds, GM seeds, and varietal seeds) and crop type (grains and cereals, oilseeds, vegetables, and other crop types). By geography, the market is segmented into South Africa and Rest of Africa.
- But now we are talking about gene editing
- Where genome editing (also called gene editing) is **a group of technologies that give scientists the ability to change an organism's DNA**. These technologies allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome



# Challenges caused by lack of PVP laws in Africa

- The Plant Variety Protection (PVP) Act provides patent-like rights to Breeders, Developers and Owners of plant varieties. Few countries have signed it.
- The International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants established in 1961 The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants.
- Low investment in production of new high-yielding varieties
  - Africa yields still 1,5tons/ha, lowest in the world (these were the maize yields in the USA when hybrids were introduced in 1926!)
  - USA 2017 maize yield record (David Hula) = 34 tons/ha
- Land area under production is not increasing, but food demand is increasing, thus higher yields required
- Many SSA countries have weak or NO PVP laws
- Major argument: Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) trials take too long, and are costly

# Countries with PVP laws in Africa





# What journalists need to interrogate.....

- The benefits of PVP implementation are:
  - Improved high-yielding varieties
  - Food security and increased income
  - Climate change adaptable varieties
- Judiciary must be trained in enforcement of PVP laws (ARIPO collaboration, AU involvement, RECs involvement)
- Harmonization of DUS and PVP laws in Africa is critical for successful enforcement of PVP laws
- In 2016, OAPI members states through the Bangui declaration joined UPOV as a bloc.
- 17 Countries in OAPI – is mandatory for them.....Arusha protocol by ARIPO (also needs to be understood by journalists)
- UPOV91 – Captures the farmers – look at farmers rights – growth for use of domestic use but for commercial use you need to pay for the royalty.
- The ugly head of fake seeds. Regional seed harmonization in Africa.
- Follow closely the annual TASAI reports on the status of seed production and trade in Africa.