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# Press Release

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## **REPRESENTATIVES FROM 35 COUNTRIES ATTENDED THE 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AFRICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION (AFSTA) CONGRESS**

**NAIROBI, KENYA, MARCH 12, 2008** – The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, representing Mr. Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco opened the eighth Congress of the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) held from 26 to 29th February 2008 in Casablanca, Morocco.

“The seed sector plays a fundamental role for the development of Agriculture ...” stated the Permanent Secretary of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco in his speech.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress attracted 250 delegates from 35 countries. Delegates included representatives from regional and international bodies such as the International Seed Federation (ISF), The International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the African Regional Intellectual Property Right Organization (ARIPO), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Of keen interest to the group was a half-day ISTA/OECD workshop on seed certification. Representative of these two organizations did presentations allowing the participants to deepen their knowledge about seed certification. Discussions centered on the practical aspects of the seed certification.

The ISTA/OECD workshop was followed by a half-day seminar on seed treatment during which experts in seed treatment presented various interesting topics such as “Seed Care Machinery, Status and Innovative New Developments, Operator Safety and Stewardship, and The Global Seed Care Market – Today and Tomorrow” among others.

The following topics were discussed at the congress:

- Overview of seed regulations in the Northern Africa countries and its impacts on seed trade;
- The African seed industry facing the challenges of the globalization, Experiences and recommendations for the implementation of milestones reached on the harmonization of seed regulations: the case of Eastern Africa;
- Latest development on Plant Variety Protection in Africa;
- “Seed Alliances” and role of AFSTA in developing a competitive seed industry in Africa;
- Strengthening the link between research on vegetable crop varieties and the private seed companies for a better vegetable production and marketing in Africa;
- Information on the current situation of the implementation of Biosafety Regulations in Africa

The General Assembly elected a new Board (see [www.afsta.org](http://www.afsta.org)) and confirmed that the 9<sup>th</sup> AFSTA Annual Congress 2009 will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

AFSTA continues to organize technical training related to seeds to build capacity of its members and dissemination of information on the progress in harmonization with a view to promoting seed trade.

AFSTA is a non-profit, non-political association with a mission to promote development of seed industries and national seed associations to facilitate farmers’ access to improved varieties. AFSTA represents the African seed industry with 71 members in 34 countries.

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Note to editors: All the papers of AFSTA Congress 2008 are available on request from the AFSTA Secretariat ([afsta@afsta.org](mailto:afsta@afsta.org)).