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# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
9 A.M., March 16, 2009

## **REPRESENTATIVES FROM 35 COUNTRIES ATTEND THE 9<sup>TH</sup> AFRICAN SEED TRADE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONGRESS**

**NAIROBI, KENYA, MARCH 16, 2009** – The Chairman of the South African National Seed Organization (SANSOR), Mr. Paul Marais, opened the ninth annual Congress of the African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009 in Cape Town, South Africa. Mr. Clem Sunter gave an interesting key note address talking about “looking at future” for the delegates to AFSTA congress 2009.

Focused on the main topic of this ninth annual congress 2009, which is “seed trade”, the delegates had the opportunity to expand their seed business and to strengthen their knowledge on various topics related to seed trade. Considering the important role and the benefits of a better seed trade in getting seeds of good varieties, this topic on “seed trade” has been selected for the congress 2009.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress attracted 230 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 Asia and Pacific Seed Association (APSA), the African Organization for Intellectual Property (OAPI), the African Regional Intellectual Property Right Organization (ARIPO), the Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV), and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Of keen interest to the group was a half-day workshop on Plant Variety Protection facilitated by UPOV. The presentations followed by a question and answer session allowed the delegates to deepen their knowledge about the subject.

The UPOV workshop was followed by a half-day seminar on seed care during which experts in seed treatment presented various interesting topics such as “seed care application machinery,

seed safety and carryover of treated seeds, operator safety and stewardship, and the global seed care market” among others.

The following topics were discussed at the congress:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the seed trade in Africa vis-à-vis the world seed trade;
- Promoting seed trade in Africa;
- Key seed trade statistics in Africa;
- Opportunities, constraints and latest development on seed trade in Africa;
- Seed Health: Challenges Facing the Vegetable Seed Industry and ISHI-Veg;
- The African seed industry in the face of the food crisis;
- Strategy for the implementation of the harmonized seed regulations to become a reality for the promotion of the seed trade;
- Analysis of the status of the Commercialization and the use of Genetically Modified Crops in Africa vis-à-vis the rest of the world – The South African case.

The General Assembly elected a new Board (see [www.afsta.org](http://www.afsta.org)) and confirmed that the 10<sup>th</sup> AFSTA Annual Congress 2010 will be held in Bamako, Mali from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

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 80 members in 34 countries.

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Note to editors: All the papers of AFSTA Congress 2010 are available on request from the AFSTA Secretariat ([afsta@afsta.org](mailto:afsta@afsta.org)).