



**Dr. Eliud Kireger, Director General  
Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization**

- Thank you all for joining us this morning to celebrate this historic moment when scientists in Kenya mark great strides in agricultural innovation.
- First and foremost, I will briefly take you through what we do at Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO)
- KALRO is a corporate body created under the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Act of 2013 to establish suitable legal and institutional framework for coordination of agricultural research by coordinating and regulating research in crops, livestock, genetic resources and biotechnology in Kenya
- As you may be aware, the national blue print Vision 2030 recognizes the role of research in technology generation and creation of new knowledge; all of which are vital in national development and raising rural household incomes as captured by the sector's driving strategy, the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010–2020.
- In delivering on its mandate, KALRO works in partnership with local, regional and international organizations to develop appropriate agricultural technologies to respond/address different challenges affecting our agricultural system.
- With this in mind, KALRO has partnered with AATF and other organizations through the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) Project to develop *Bt* maize which has been undergoing a series of trials for the last three years with promising results that will make a difference to farmers who are currently battling with stem borers' attack on their maize crop.

**KALRO'S role in WEMA *Bt* maize development**

- As you know, Kenyans depend on maize for their daily food and are too often threatened by hunger due to a number of constraints including insects-pests.
- In Kenya, stem borer insect-pests are known to reduce maize yield by an average of 13 per cent or 400,000 tonnes of maize, equivalent to the yearly amount of maize imported by Kenya, amounting to Ksh. 7.2 billion.
- *Globally*, *Bt* maize has been proven to effectively control stem borer and improve maize grain yield and quality due to reduced stem borer insect-pests damage.
- The WEMA *Bt* maize trial results have shown control of the two major stem borer pests of maize in Kenya – the spotted stem borer (*Chilo partellus*) and the African stem borer (*Busseola fusca*) . We also recorded a yield increase of 3.7

tonnes per hectare above the best commercial hybrid used in the trials and better grain quality due to reduced damage by the stem borers

- Following these results, KALRO and AATF have made an application to the National Biosafety Authority (NBA), for commercial release of the WEMA *Bt* maize to the farming communities and consumers to contribute to enhancing food security in the country.
- This WEMA *Bt* maize variety which has been developed through biotechnology, will directly contribute to Kenya's national aspirations and goals of improving the agricultural sector through the use and adoption of appropriate technologies.
- Our top priority as an institution is to see continued growth of the agriculture sector that is a key contributor to the national vision of a food-secured nation.
- I am confident that NBA will approve the application for the environmental release of the *Bt* Maize, subsequently paving the way for commercial release. The approval of this *Bt* maize for release to farmers will reaffirm Kenya's and in particular, KALRO's regional leadership on use of Science Technology and Innovation as a driver for socio-economic development.
- The commercial release of this *Bt* maize will contribute to Kenya's vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals as outlined in our Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010–2020.
- To fight hunger in Kenya, farmers need better technologies - and seed choices - to improve productivity.