

## Side event to the 38<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Conference 'Introducing the Access to Seeds Index Initiative'

Rome, FAO Headquarters, Tuesday 18 June 2013, 12:30-14:30 (Iran Room)

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### Programme

- 12:30 – 13:00** Lunch and refreshments are provided in front of the Iran Room
- 13:00 - 13:05** Word of welcome by Clayton Campanhola, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division and Coordinator of SO 2.  
Introductory Remarks by the Moderator, Her Excellency Gerda Verburg  
Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organisations for Food- and Agriculture in Rome.
- 13:05 - 13:15** Involvement of Dutch Government and the role of the private sector in the context of the Access to Seeds Index, by Her Excellency Sharon Dijksma – Minister for Agriculture of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- 13:15 - 13:25** Introduction to the Access to Seeds Index, by Mr. Ido Verhagen – project manager of the Access to Seeds Foundation.
- 13:25 – 13:35** First appreciation of the Access to Seeds Index, by Hon. Clement Kofi Humado, Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana
- 13:35 - 13:45** A private sector perspective, by Mr. John Atkin – Chief Operating Officer of Syngenta.
- 13:45 - 14:25** Discussion with participants.
- 14:25 - 14:30** Wrap-up and Closing Remarks, by the Moderator.

## **Background note**

### **Background to the Access to Seeds Index**

Some 90% of the farmers in developing and emerging countries operate on a small scale and do not benefit from the decades of crop improvement that have taken place around the world. The Access to Seeds Index is an initiative encouraging global seed companies to bridge the gap with the small scale farmer. By doing so, it aims to contribute to food security, poverty reduction and rural development. These farmers generally face no lack of seeds as such, but a lack of quality seeds. Informal seed systems may struggle to produce high quality seeds, or to provide farmers with new varieties to grow market-quality crops harnessed against climate change.

According to the World Bank the global seed industry has unique assets to contribute to agricultural development. Nevertheless, UN Rapporteur on the Right to Food noted that current business models leave out exactly those farmers who need most to be supported. Can we bridge this gap?

Through multi-stakeholder dialogue, the Index defines a balanced stakeholder agenda providing clarity and guidance to the industry on society's expectations. It measures and monitors performance of seed companies on these expectations, resulting in a biennial Index.

### **Inspired by the success of the Access to Medicine Index**

The Access to Medicine Index successfully leveraged the contribution of pharmaceutical sector to health sectors in developing countries. The big idea is simple (1) create an index indicators based on on-going stakeholder dialogue, providing companies with a common view on the direction of their access activities (2) give credit to access behaviour of companies, whilst creating transparency on best practices and raising awareness on corporate contributions; (3) rank companies in a comparable and quantitative way to encourage positive competition to take an extra step stimulated by investor appreciation, media attention and public opinion.

### **Access to Seeds Foundation**

The Access to Seeds Index is currently being developed by an independent foundation, the Access to Seeds Foundation, based in Haarlem, The Netherlands. Chairman is Wim Leereveld, also founder of the Access to Medicine Foundation. An international board of ambassadors is currently being formed.

### **Involvement of the Dutch government**

The Dutch government (Ministries of Economic Affairs and Foreign Affairs) supports the development of the Access to Seed Index. It sees this initiative in creating an enabling environment to unleash the potential of the rural economy and improve food security in developing countries. The Dutch government takes the view that the private sector has the potential and responsibility to play an import role in unleashing this potential.

More information: [www.accesstoseeds.org](http://www.accesstoseeds.org)

## Panel

### **Sharon Dijksma - Minister for Agriculture of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Sharon Dijksma was a member of the House of Representatives of the States General for the Labour Party (PvdA) from 1994 to 2007. Her portfolio included education, transport, public works & water management and development cooperation. On 22 February 2007 she was appointed State Secretary for Education, Culture & Science in the fourth Balkenende government. From 17 June 2010 to 20 September 2012 Ms Dijksma was a member of the House of Representatives for the PvdA, with responsibility for general economic policy and spatial planning & infrastructure. On 17 December 2012, she was appointed Minister for Agriculture in the Rutte-Asscher government.  
Representative Developing/Emerging Country

### **Hon. Clement Kofi Humado, Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana**

Hon. Clement Kofi Humado was sworn in as the 30th Minister for Food and Agriculture of Ghana on 30th January 2013. Prior to his becoming the Minister of Food and Agriculture, Hon. Humado served as a Minister of Youth and Sports (2011-2013) and Member of Parliament for the Anlo Constituency, from 2005-to date. Prior to his time in parliament, Hon. Humado served in various capacities in public service and as consultant in several agricultural related issues. Among which: consultant to USAID-West Africa Trade Hub (2002-2005), Project coordinator of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on Smallholder Credit and Input Supply and Marketing (1991-1999), National Officer of the United Nations World Food Program (1990-1991). He started his career as a teacher in Agricultural Science and Head of Department of Agriculture of Mawuli Secondary School.

### **Gerda Verburg - Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organisations for Food- and Agriculture in Rome**

Gerda Verburg (1957) is the Ambassador of the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the UN agencies for Food and Agriculture since the first of July 2011. From February 22nd 2007 until October 14th 2010 Ms Verburg was the Dutch Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Gerda Verburg was member of the House of Representatives for the Christian Democratic Party (CDA) in 1998-2007 and 2010-2011. From 2002-2004 Ms Verburg was the first vice-chair of the House of Representatives and from 2003-2007 Ms Verburg was the vice-speaker of the CDA in the House of Representatives. Before her political career Ms Verburg has been an executive board member for The National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands (CNV) from 1990-1997.

### **John Atkin - Chief Operating Officer Syngenta**

Prior to his current role as Chief Operating Officer Syngenta, John Atkin was Chief Operating Officer for Syngenta Crop Protection, from the foundation of the Company in 2000 until February 2011. Before that, he was Chief Executive Officer (1999–2000), Chief Operating Officer (1999), Head of Product Portfolio Management (1998), and Head of Insecticides and Patron for Asia (1997–1998) of Novartis Crop Protection. Prior to 1998, he was General Manager of Sandoz Agro France (1995–1997) and Head of Sandoz Agro Northern Europe (1993–1995). In 2008 he was appointed Visiting Professor at the Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability (IRES) at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. He was appointed as a non-executive Director of Driscoll's in 2011. He graduated from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne with a PhD and a BSc degree in agricultural zoology.

**Ido Verhagen - Project Manager Access to Seeds Foundation**

Ido Verhagen is project manager of the Access to Seeds Index and associate partner at the Dutch consultancy firm BoerCroon. After starting his career in journalism at Dutch Radio 1, he was responsible for programmes on corporate social responsibility and sustainable development at the Dutch think-tank De Balie (1995-2001). To work on the business side of these themes, he started at BoerCroon in 2001 and assisted companies like KLM, Heineken, Philips and TNT on their sustainability policies, practices and partnerships. Prior to starting up the Access to Seeds Index, he worked as a consultant for the Access to Medicine Index.