Dear Members and Stakeholders,

Greetings from the EAGC Secretariat.

We are glad to share with you the EAGC Monthly Members’ Update, for the month of March 2017.

In the month of March, EAGC was involved in several activities, key being a successful regional trade facilitation between EAGC members and Ethiopian traders. The forum led to the signing of 60 trade contracts amounting to 275,000 MT valued at USD 55,000,000.

On staple foods standards harmonisation process, EAGC and East Africa Community (EAC) held a regional harmonisation meeting for Cereals and Pulses. The meeting was meant to consider inclusion of the comments from the public on the East African Standards for Cereals and Pulses draft.

This month, EAGC was privileged to host the first All Africa Postharvest Congress in Nairobi. The congress was held in collaboration with the University of Nairobi and Rockefeller among other supporting partners.

Other key activities included warehouse operators training in Uganda, successful national B2B in Meru, Kenya, Beans Health and Wealth workshop in Malawi and

This could not have happened without the support of our esteemed members, partners and the entire secretariat.

In the coming months, we look forward to working with you towards realization of the council’s mandate.

Enjoy the reading.
Trade deals of over 60 contracts amounting to 275,000 MT estimated at USD, 55,000,000 were signed for export of grains (maize and pulses) from Ethiopia to Eastern and the southern Africa. This took place at a Regional Grain Trade Facilitation Forum hosted by the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) in partnership with the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations (AACC SA) on 7th March 2017.

The first multilateral grain trade facilitation forum was supported by USAID's East Africa Trade and Investment Hub.

The forum brought together over 40 sellers of maize and other commodities from Ethiopia and over 50 buyers of grain from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The sellers comprised of cooperative unions, commercial farmers and grain exporters. Buyers included maize millers, grain trading companies and national food reserve agencies.

The forum also created a platform for knowledge sharing and networking among the participants on trade and investment program with a focus on increasing regional trade.

Presently, the eastern and southern Africa region is experiencing a scarcity of rainfall and drought conditions leading to a shortage of maize and pulses. The situation has concerned the authorities to the extent that some have initiated interventions restricting exports. Some grain traders and processors have also had their operations affected due to the shortage of grains. In the recent harvest season, Ethiopia experienced a bumper harvest estimated at over 4,000,000 MT of maize in addition to beans and other pulses.

“EAGC is gunning her efforts to ensure efficient and sustained trade amongst grain players within the eastern and southern Africa. This is through corporate engagement and facilitation of collaborative platforms of both governments and the private sector, which include Business-to-Business (B2B), Government to Government (G2G) and Business to Government (B2G) linkages,” said EAGC Executive Director, Gerald Masila.

"I am a trader and farmer from Kenya's largest grain producing region. We currently do not have any cereals; I'm buying,” said John Kandila, Chief Executive Officer of Zero to Heros, a member of EAGC.

The forum is expected to open doors to future events that link food grain buyers to sellers and remove barriers to cross-border trade, further enabling East Africa's private sector to meet public demand for food grain at a reasonable price.
The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) and the East African Community (EAC) hosted the Regional Standards Harmonisation Meeting to consider Public Review comments on the East African Standards for Cereals and Pulses draft from 27th February to 3rd March 2017 at Nobleza Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda.

The meeting, held with the support of the USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (EATIH), brought together technical experts on Quality Assurance and Standards representing both the public and private sectors from all East African Community Partner States. The purpose of the Meeting was to consider and incorporate feedback received from the general public on the draft of East African Standards for cereals and pulses as part of the process towards gazetting the revised East African standards for staple foods.

Standards experts from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda as well as the representatives from USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub, the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), Kilimo Trust, Eastern Africa Farmers Federation and the United Nations World Food Programme attended the meeting.

In his welcome remarks, Gerald Masila, Executive Director of EAGC acknowledged the support of the USAID/East Africa Trade and Investment Hub throughout the process of reviewing the staple foods standards. He further highlighted the role being played by the Council to facilitate structured grain trade in the region, and emphasised the role of Standards in promoting intra-regional trade in staple foods. He underscored EAGC’s recent investments in facilitating compliance with Standards through the recently established Interfield Laboratory which serves as a Regional Reference Laboratory and capacity building centre.

The Director General of the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB), represented by Antoine Bukunzi, recognised the commitment of EAC Partner States towards the process of reviewing the standards. He further under-scored the importance of harmonised standards in reducing compliance and verification costs, reducing trade barriers and making cross-border trade more efficient.

Speaking on behalf of the Director General for Customs and Trade at the EAC Secretariat, Willy Musinguzi noted that the harmonised standards will complement existing efforts in the EAC to eliminate Non-Tariff Barriers to trade. “They will help to ensure the policy and regulatory framework keeps pace with dynamics in intra-regional food trade”. He added.

The meeting recommended that EAGC should consider supporting review of other priority standards for cereals and pulses. These included the standards for sorghum grains, finger millet grains, green grams, composite flour and soy flour.
Experts calls on stakeholders to implement Post Harvest Food Loss recommendations

The Eastern Africa Grain Council through the Kenya country office held a successful postharvest congress from 28th to 31st March 2017 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

The congress hosted in collaboration with the University of Nairobi, the World Food Preservation Center® LLC (WFPC), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishers and Rockefeller Foundation. Among other partners.

The First Africa-wide Postharvest Loss Reduction Congress themed; Reducing Food Losses and Waste: Sustainable Solutions for Africa is the first of its kind to be held in Africa. The congress provided an excellent platform for researchers, academics, farmers, industry, development agencies, civil society and policy makers to learn, share information, build networks and partnerships with the overall objective of identifying effective interventions to reduce food loss and waste on the continent. The specific objectives of the conference were:

- To raise awareness on food losses and waste through data and information sharing.
- To document the impact of postharvest food loss and waste on food and nutrition in Africa.
- To identify and disseminate effective and appropriate technologies and practices for FLW reduction in the African context.
- To identify postharvest “Skill Gaps” and “Technology Gaps” in Africa’s higher education and extension systems
- To identify effective multi-stakeholder strategies and policy interventions for food loss and waste reduction
- To provide a platform for participants to build networks and partnerships for resource mobilization and other activities geared towards FLW reduction

The Eastern Africa Grain Council, demonstrated her commitment to addressing postharvest losses in the grain sector. Represented by the Executive Director, Mr Gerald Masila, EAGC showcased G-Soko platform which is an automated process of warehouse receipt system, specifically addressing postharvest losses by ensuring efficient flow of grains from the farm to the market.

During the official launch of the congress, the Cabinet Minister in charge of the Ministry of Agriculture, Hon. Willy Bett, acknowledged the role of EAGC in warehouse certification, ensuring that farmers and traders aggregate their produce in certified warehouses.

EAGC, as a lead player in the grain sector had been tasked to coordinate symposium on post-harvest technologies and storage management systems in the grain sector. Over 10 papers on post harvest handling were presented during the symposium.

The four-day congress concluded by calling all stakeholders to collaborate on financing post harvest innovations as a way of fighting food losses and wastes in the continent.
EAGC Uganda Facilitated a Successful Warehouse Operators Training

EAGC country office team and Structured Trading Systems (STS) program officer, Fred Simon facilitated a five-day training for the warehouse operators in Teso Sub-region in eastern Uganda.

The training organized by Farm Africa took place from 13th to 17th March 2017 at Paxland Hotel Soroti and attracted 43 warehouse operators; 10 females and 33 males.

It training involved both theory and practical sessions that were conducted at Soroti Grain Millers; one of the EAGC certified warehouses. The training also involved popularization of EAGC Certification Protocol and the EAGC GSoko platform.

The warehouse operators learnt on warehouse management skills with a view of improving the warehouse management activities and improved post-harvest practices in the region.

RATIN and G-Soko Sensitization Activity

The Uganda office conducted a successful farmer-group sensitization exercise in Eastern Uganda organized by VECO East Africa; Uganda office. The sensitization workshop was in line with the on-going Food Trade project implemented by VECO.

As the leading partner, EAGC was given the opportunity to detail her programs to the selected farmer groups. As a result, over 1,000 farmers from a total membership of 8,490 from six farmer groups were reached in districts of Pallisa, Butaleja, Bulambuli, Budaka and Bugiri.

All the participating farmers from Namubuka ACE, Manafwa basin Rice Farmers Association, Agule Farmers Group, Self Help progressive Association, Apo pong Development Farmers Group, Iki Iki Marketing Farmers Group, and Bunambute ACE were trained on access to Market Information and Regional markets through RATIN, and G-Soko respectively.

Uganda Country Program Members Meeting

EAGC Uganda office organized a successful members meeting on 1st March, held at Imperial Hotel Kampala. The meeting was attended by 22 members of EAGC in Uganda.

The meeting was organized with the aim of discussing the status of membership, EAGC Programs, linking together members and nominating a Uganda Country Director to represent the members in council’s board.

While officiating the opening of the meeting; the EAGC Chairman Dr. Bernard Otim indicated that “the meeting was one of the new ventures that was aimed at linking members, staff and executive staff. The chair illustrated that it’s good to link up in order to run businesses successfully. He further highlighted that members needed to meet up to develop partnerships and provide facilitations to their companies.

He further informed the meeting of the importance of nominating a candidate who would represent all the members as a Country Director.

The meeting was climaxed with the voting of a new Country Director. Dr. Rose Omaria, the Director Soroti Grain Millers was elected as the new Country Director, Uganda.
Rooting for a Successful 7th Africa Grain Summit in Tanzania

EAGC Tanzania team met with Daima Associates to discuss a way forward in supporting the grain sectoral actors to produce policy approach laden papers to be presented at the Africa Grain Summit scheduled for 5th-7th October 2017 in Da es Salaam.

Daima Associate will be of ideal support to producers, processors, traders and exporters in articulation of the policy constraints that affect their economic activities. Through these reports EAGC will be able to present the issues to the relevant delegates during the grain summit.

This year, the summit anticipates to address most crucial barriers to pave way for more structured and improved value chain from producers to the final consumer.

During the meeting, the team discussed on finalizing the ToRs for the proposed research. Policy issues that hinder agricultural stakeholders from realizing their potential income and economic growth were identified. The research will be well timed to put forth substantial recommendations.

EAGC participates in the Policy Research for Development (REPOA) workshop

REPOA organized a two day workshop in Dar es Salaam on 29th and 30th March to discuss the roadmap toward achieving the national agenda of industrialization. It brought together several agricultural stakeholders and sub-sectors such as textiles, leather, chemicals and iron-steel and machinery.

The discussion was on how to enhance the understanding of the roles of institutions, agencies and individuals in shaping the growth and socio-economic transformation in Tanzania. The main focus was on industrialization. It was determined that through the sustainable growth of the industrial sector Tanzania will be able to realize more employment, economic transformation, equitable development and import substitutions.

EAGC as a key player in the agricultural sector was asked to support processors to put effort towards the trade of processed products instead of the raw agricultural commodities. It was agreed that the private sector will take lead of the initiative as the government puts up conducive policies. This includes the ease of business, encouraging foreign investors to construct industries in the country instead of exporting the raw material and promoting the importance of grades and standards to ensure that products are acceptable and competitive in the market.

EAGC Facilitates an Efficient, Structured, Inclusive and Profitable Grain Trade in the Region
We are pleased to announce the 7th African Grain Trade Summit which will be held from 5th-7th October 2017 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The Africa Grain Trade Summit (AGTS) is a biennial, continentally recognized grain industry conference that attracts stakeholders along the grain value chain from around the Africa continent and beyond, to discuss and develop a regionally focused strategy for grain trade market development.

More information on Call for Papers, Sponsorship Opportunities, Registration & Logistical arrangements to follow!
EAGC team participated in the Beans for Health and Wealth Conference which was organised by the consortium of Grain Legume Association, WASSA, Afriseed, Kansas State University in United States and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Nature Resources (LUANAR).

The conference aimed at developing strategic alliances, marketing and financing production, health and economic benefits of beans.

The conference recommended diversification of recipes to increase bean consumption; explore more markets for beans in the region; demand driven varieties and need for consumers feedback to researchers.

EAGC in Malawi is playing a key role in the grain sector industry and therefore this conference was one of the key platforms for the grain producers and traders to interact and initiate partnerships.

EAGC Participates in the Beans for Health and Wealth National Conference

Participants at the Beans for Health and Wealth conference

EAGC South Sudan Office held a meeting at South Sudan Agricultural Producers Union (SSAPU) office with the Netherlands Embassy and other organizations to discuss synergy development to easily coordinate and work collaboratively in future activities to avoid duplication.

The meeting discussed areas of collaboration in awareness creation and trainings, trade and market linkages, market information, linkage of financial institutions to support farmers and policy advocacy.

It was agreed that monthly coordination meetings will be held to receive updates on the progress, challenges on partners’ activities.

Recently, EAGC expressed interest in partnering with the Netherlands Embassy. The proposal is at discussions and approval stage.

Institutional Partnership Meeting

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Malawi

EAGC Participates in the Beans for Health and Wealth National Conference

EAGC, represented by Taziona Mchira attended a 2 day work-shop organized by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Farm Concern from Tuesday 28th and Wednesday 29th March 2017 at Crossroads Hotel.

The workshop was organized to create dialogue between financing institutions and other stakeholders. During the workshop, different financing models were critiqued to assess their viability (For those that have never been tried) and performance (For those that have been tried).

This workshop was very key for EAGC considering that one of the key interventions within the sub-sector is to facilitate increased access to agricultural financing which will consequently stimulate agricultural investments.

Agricultural Value Chain Financing Training
Impact Assessment activity in Lower Eastern Region

The EAGC M&E team and Kenya country office conducted a one week impact assessment activity in lower eastern region. They visited 15 FBOs including; Kyambeke, Kyang, Muvau, Kiuuku, Mbuvo, Kinze, Mwakika, Muthoonzwe, Kitise, Mutula, Wamunyu, Yatta, Ndaki 2, Kwinengane and Maiuni.

During the exercise the team noted several challenges;

- The aggregation process was greatly affected by the rains this season. Most of the FBOs have aggregated very little and others expect to aggregate zero volumes.
- The lack of funds to advance group members during aggregation has greatly affected the aggregation process. Most of the farmers require immediate capital for aggregation to meet their needs.

The impact assessment activity presented an opportunity to monitor aggregated volumes in the various FBOs visited. Muthoonzwe cluster has aggregated 26 90kg additional bags of green grams while Mutula CBO has aggregated additional 5 90kg bags of sorghum.

Muvau farmers group during the week also aggregated 2 90kg bags of sorghum while Kwinengane CBO aggregated 10 90kg bags of pigeon peas. A comprehensive report will be prepared and shared by the M&E team.

EAGC on Media

EAGC Highlights Food Security Challenges in Africa

The EAGC Executive Director, Mr Gerald Masila was hosted on Television talk show on food security in Kenya at Nation Television (NTV). Mr. Masila underscored post harvest losses and waste as a key issue in food security quagmire in the country and Africa at large.

It is estimated that one third (30%) of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted along the supply chains globally. Proportionately this translates into 1.3 billion metric tons of the total volume of the food produced. Food Losses and Waste (FLW) negatively impact food security, nutrition and economic stability (Food Import bill).

In this regard, reduction of food loss and waste is an important and viable strategy to ensure food and nutritional security in efficient and sustainable food systems.

Mr. Masila argued that proper utilization of the many proven technologies and strategies can effectively reduce the postharvest losses in Africa. He also highlighted lack of awareness; unaffordability; and lack of access due to limited distribution and emergent policy constraints to underutilization of the technologies.

On 28th March 2017, the EAGC executive director, Mr. Gerald Masila was hosted at Kenya Television Network (KTN) to discuss anticipations of the grain stakeholders in the 2017/2018 Kenya Budget estimations.

Mr. Masila highlighted investment on irrigation schemes and increased incentives on agricultural inputs as key anticipation in the budget allocation. He argued that this will increase land under production for increased food availability in the country.
EAGC Kenya Office in partnership with Global Communities held a trade linkage meeting in Meru and in partnership with Global Communities. The main agenda was to improve the existing trade system and expand trade volumes between the active stakeholders of the grain value chain.

Currently, farmers, processors and traders are selling and buying grains after aggregation, which was relatively low for the period ended. There is an existing demand for grains, especially for maize at a market price of Kes 4000 per 90kg bag. This can be attributed to:

- Brokers who buy farmers’ harvest at a low price, by approaching individuals from the groups.
- Farmers basic financing needs e.g. school fees, e.t.c.
- Lack of market information and linkages

Global communities made a presentation on partnership activities with EAGC sensitizing farmers on the need for increasing farmer linkages to value chain stakeholders to empower farmers in their production process.

EAGC made a presentation on programs i.e. STS & GSoko, MIS/RATIN, EAGI & Policy Advocacy. Through farmers’ feedback, the arising opportunities for EAGC included; Training of farmers in aggregation, post harvest handling and creation of increased market linkages. It was highly recommended by traders with regard to the challenges they faced in acquiring quality grain from farmers.

Other stakeholders present included Food and Agriculture Organization, who outlined their capacity building activities for farmers that revolved around increasing the production potential for farmers in the pulses value chain in addition to linking them with other partners. It was agreed that FAO will link with EAGC and other partners in capacity building for farmers.

The National Cereal Board, who participated in the session encouraged farmers to adopt aggregation within groups as a strategy in overcoming their market based challenges. The farmer representatives were encouraged to practice aggregation within NCPB’s warehouses to benefit from WRS. This will increase channels for storage and trade opportunities for farmer groups.

Representatives from Agricultural Sector Development Support Program also voiced their approval of EAGC’s initiatives within the value chain as a way of supporting private sector activities in trainings for farmers.

**B2B Trade Linkage**

In total, 58 participants attended the B2B linkage session (19M, 39 F). Among them, 31 farmer groups were represented in the meeting, 17 traders and processors, 6 other value chain stakeholders.

Nine, 9, contracts amounting to 132.5 MT at a value of 6,724 USD were signed. Commodities committed for trade included: maize, pigeon peas, soya beans, beans, sorghum, black beans.
The Eastern Africa Grain Council held a meeting with the World Food Programme (WFP) with a view seeking possible partnership opportunity. Mrs Saori Kitajima, the Project Coordinator informed the team that currently, there exists a formal public private partnership which can be ideal partnership opportunity for EAGC to leverage on.

Mr Gerald Masila, the EAGC Executive Director who was accompanied by the country team, had an opportunity to present EAGC activities and interventions in Rwanda. He made a call on possible leveraging point where EAGC can address current major challenges in Rwanda.

The meeting agreed that follow-up meetings will be held in the near future especially on G-Soko trading platform, MIS and RATIN. It was also agreed that the partners will seek more opportunities for fundraising.

**EAGC hosts Rules of Origin meeting Rwanda**

The first Rules of Origin meeting was held on 14th October 2016, participants noticed that they need a deep understanding of Rules of Origin in the eye of TFTA to be able to take the Country position. It was then decided that another meeting will bring together farmers, traders and processors for deep discussions.

In this regards, EAGC Rwanda office in partnership with Ministry of East Africa Community (MINAEC) and Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) hosted a stakeholders meeting on 31st March 2017 to discuss deeply the particulars of the Rules of Origin. The purpose of the workshop was to convene grain sector stakeholders in Rwanda to review the existing COMESA, EAC and SADC Rules of Origin for grain related products and develop a National Grain Sector Position on the harmonisation of the Rules of Origin for the proposed TFTA.

During the meeting several participants expressed displeasure arguing that the local farmers are not benefitting from regional rules of origin. This was attributed to high costs of production and low agricultural productivity, according to agricultural sector players. The regional rules of origin prioritise agricultural commodities wholly produced within the region mainly by removing import taxes.

The intended benefits of the TFTA include boosting regional trade through lower transaction costs, promoting economic growth and improving food security, among others.

The council will host another meeting to immerse stakeholders into finer details of the Rules of Origin in order to formulate a national position.
Celebrating a Decade of Achievement as the Voice for the Grain Sector in the Region.

KEY OUTLOOK OF 2017

Annual General Meeting: The Regional AGM will be held on 20th April 2017.

Trade Facilitation / Business to Business Linkage: EAGC will host various trade focuses business to business meetings in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi and Burundi. For the first time, we will also include stakeholders from DRC Congo. A schedule of the B2Bs will be shared and can also be accessed from the EAGC Website www.eagc.org.

EAGC Strategic Plan 2018 -2022: EAGC will embark on reviewing its previous strategic plan and developing a new, focused strategic direction for EAGC through the EAGC Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022. All the members will be involved in this exercise. We look forward to your continued support.

EAGC@10 Celebrations: The EAGC@10 – A Decade Stronger, celebrations will continue in 2017 which will culminate to the final celebrations during the 7th AGTS.

7th Africa Grain Trade Summit: EAGC will host the 7th African Grain Trade Summit from 5th -7th October in Dar es Salaam Tanzania. Please plan to participate.

EAGC Scholarships and Agrihack Programme: EAGC in partnership with the Technical Centre for Rural Corporation (CTA) and the Universities in the region will launch a scholarship programme to support students at post graduate level who are focusing on structured trade related studies. The partners will also work with IT students at the universities to support Apps or IT products that will assist in the improvement of the functionalities of RATIN. We shall keep you updated on this.

EAGC Training – Eastern Africa Grain Institute: EAGI will continue to offer competency based courses for the grain industry in 2017. Some of the courses will include: Warehouse operations; Warehouse Receipt Finance, Web 2.0, Structured Commodity Financing, Agribusiness Financing Opportunities and Risk Management, SME training International Trade Meetings:

EAGC International trade events. The first one will be the NAMPO Expo on 16th - 19th May in Bothaville South Africa and Business to Business Linkages meeting on 24th to 29th August in INDO India. If you are interested in participating in this event, kindly get in touch with the secretariat on grains@eagc.org, or +254 733 444035.

Expansion of GSoko: EAGC will expand GSoko to reach as many beneficiaries as possible. This will focus on getting more farmers to participate in GSoko. Opening avenues for more traders to transact through GSoko and getting many processors to procure through the platform. This will expand the GSoko certified warehouses and GSoko aggregation centres.
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<td>Warehouse Receipt Bill Regulation workshop</td>
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<td>7th – OCTOBER</td>
<td>LAUNCH OF EAGC STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022</td>
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<td>1-3rd November</td>
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**EAGC G-SOKO BUSINESS TRADE DIRECTORY, 2ND EDITION COMING SOON!**

The G-Soko Business Trade Directory offers advertising opportunity for the members and stakeholders to advertise and create visibility for their products. Last year we published the 1st Edition and circulated to members and stakeholders. From the feedback, many stakeholders have found the Directory to be very useful in their business and others have created wide awareness of their organizations.

The 2nd Edition is here! To take up the opportunity to advertise on the this Edition,

**kindly contact us via:**
- Eastern Africa Grain Council, Mbaazi Avenue, Off Kingara Road
- P.O. Box 218 - 00606 Nairobi, Kenya
- G-Soko Hotline +254 790 950 000
- Tel: +254 733 444 035
- Email: gsoko@eagc.org, grains@eagc.org, Website: www.eagc.org
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