Regional Updates

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Executive Director’s Message

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

Welcome to the October Members’ Update!

Key focus in this month was the 7th African Grain Trade Summit that took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 5th to 7th October 2017 which facilitated a high-level policy dialogue between key grain sector stakeholders. The summit addressed matters affecting growth and development of Intra-Africa grain trade and the place of Africa’s grain sector with respect to the rest of the world. This enabled the Council to unlock new business and investment opportunities for grain sector stakeholders through the Business-to-Business side event and Investment Matchmaking Sessions. Other key activities held within the month included the Tanzania G2B meeting with the Oman business community, Trade and Policy meetings.

Our focus for the next two months before the end of the year will be on Regional Trade Facilitation as well as policy work to review the Grain sector Common External Tariffs. On membership engagement, we purpose to convene EAGC Members at Country level to take stock of 2017 achievements and challenges in the sector which will shape our focus for 2018 to serve you better as we continue to facilitate structured Grain Trade. We appreciate your continuous support towards the realization of our goals.

Enjoy the reading!

Inefficient post-harvest management and post-harvest losses contribute heavily to food insecurity, causing economic stresses and a negative carbon footprint.

This was noted at the Postharvest Management Workshop by organized by the Hervetas Swiss Inter cooperation in September 12th to 15th at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center.

EAGC Executive Director, Gerald Masila represented the Council at the workshop where discussions were advanced on the State-of-the-art post-harvest management innovations, with key focus on grains and pulses value chains, Key “push and pull factors” to bring effective PHM solutions and business models to scale.

Systemic market approaches were discussed to integrate postharvest management along entire commodity value chains, with a key emphasis on private sector collaboration. Suitable financing models were proposed to invest in improved postharvest management of smallholder value chains.

The high-level workshop brought together 20 senior scholars, thought leaders, policymakers, and practitioners from the Global North and South dedicated to leveraging the vast potential for greater effectiveness in reducing food losses.

Mr Masila contributed to the discussions on the interventions made by EAGC so far on addressing postharvest losses in the grain sector.
Over 300 key players in the international grain industry committed to support Governments within the ESA region through agricultural trade policy advisory to develop and implement sound and supportive policies for grain trade to promote food security and agro-industry development.

This was during the 7th African Grain Trade Summit (AGTS) which was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania where the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Livestock of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon Dr. Charles Tizeba officially opened the event on behalf of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania. In his speech, Hon. Charles Tizeba noted that Tanzanians were privileged to host the historical summit noting the importance of the grain sector in Tanzania. He recognized the President’s appreciation for the country’s agricultural sector which contributes approximately 65% of inputs to the industrial sector, constitutes 23% of the country’s GDP employing approximately two-thirds of Tanzania’s workforce. “We have great investment opportunities in Tanzania in value addition, particularly in processing and milling industries for grains,” said Hon Tizeba. “In line with the 2025 Vision, the Ministry of Agriculture is keen to promote food security within the country and the region at large with plans to export value added grains, for instance rice and not paddy,” he added while inviting both local and international investors to consider investing their resources in the agro-processing sector in Tanzania.

African economies heavily rely on agriculture as a major source of income, but untapped potential has resulted in persistent poverty and limited wealth creation. The continent’s food security has declined over the past five decades despite interventions from governments, the private sector and development partners. “Africa has a rapid population growth of which 60% are under the age of 25 with higher preference for rice consumption than maize,” commented Mr. Alehandro Terminel, the Chairman of the board of the Terra Wealth Trader Company, Mexico. “This calls for crop diversification to meet consumer needs within and outside the continent.”

Infrastructure remains a top issue in the region with some agricultural areas with high potential of agricultural production still inaccessible. “In the Great Horn of Africa, some states are still volatile and this has hampered development and social well-being of the grain sector in the region “expressed Yohannes Assefa, the Director of Agriculture and Agribusiness at the USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub.

The summit was a great milestone as EAGC celebrated 10 years plus of operation in creating an enabling environment for grain trade.
“While the importance of managing risks in agriculture is now widely recognized and various initiatives at different levels have recently been designed and implemented with the technical support of international financial institutions, there is a need to learn from those experiences,” highlighted Gerald Masila, the Executive Director at EAGC.

This was at a discussion held during the Knowledge learning and sharing workshop held on 25th October at the IFAD HQ offices in Italy where the EAGC Executive Director participated as a discussant in the workshop session focusing on Agricultural risks in Marketing and pricing of produce. The Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM) is a G20 initiative led by IFAD and supported by the European Commission (EC), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Italian and German cooperation focused on enhancing agricultural risk management in developing countries. PARM works in Africa in strategic partnership with NEPAD at a regional and national level. PARM in collaboration with its partners raised the need to foster the exchange of knowledge and bring together the experience available on Agri Risk Management (ARM) in developing countries, with the objective to identify and develop practices and lessons learned as guidance for policy makers and rural development practitioners to strategically design, implement and mainstream ARM in their activities. Before the workshop on 25th October consultations had been conducted to obtain contributions from development partners, stakeholders, experts and institutions, which have actively participated in the different phases and aspects of the workshop preparatory process. EAGC was also actively involved in the last panel discussion whose objective was to provide experiences and discuss what is needed to mainstream ARM into policy, to encourage investments into agriculture and to engage the private sector and other stakeholders. For a sustainable integration of ARM into policy, it was noted that it is essential to ensure the engagement of all stakeholders at the different levels (country, regional and global) for the complementarity of capacities and responsibilities among the actors. Strengths and weaknesses in existing partnerships and processes, in order to foster better collaboration among the key stakeholders. EAGC will keenly follow up on the way forward to build the capacity of farmers in managing risks to improve their livelihoods.

As the leading private sector organization in the grain sector, EAGC was accorded the opportunity by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment Mr Charles Mwijage to be part of Tanzania-Oman Government to Business (G2B) Forum held at the Port of Dar es Salaam offices.

The G2B meeting was presided by the Sultan of Oman, Minister of Industry and Trade, Minister of Oil and Gas and the Minister of Tourism.15 EAGC member organisations of participated in the event.

The minister, promised to meet with Oman Business Counterparts through the Oman Chamber of Commerce to fast track trade between Tanzania and Oman and strengthen economic ties for long time relations.

This opportunity was a clear show that EAGC is playing key role in the grain industry in the country and raised the credibility of the EAGC members, giving them and added advantage to be recognized in the trade affairs of the country.
Kenyan Grain Farmer Organizations boost their income from EAGC interventions.

EAGC has been supporting farmer groups in the country to boost their income by provision of post-harvest handling equipment, Tarpaulins, market linkages as well as training and capacity building programs.

A team from EAGC secretariat comprising of the M&E Officer, Lower Eastern Field Officer and AGRA the Program Officer visited different Village Aggregation Centres in Lower Eastern region within the month, to assess the project impact.

Five farmer groups in Machakos, Makueni and Kitui counties have benefitted exemplary from the Alliance for Green Revolution for Agriculture (AGRA) project. The groups have received moisture metres, Digital weighing scale which has improved their grain handling techniques; and

Several agribusiness fairs organized by EAGC in Kenya at the Kabarak University and Machakos have further exposed grain farmers and farmers groups to conservation agriculture and dryland farming from the showcased by EAGC partners through crop demonstration plots. Grain farmers as a result have now shifted the main focus on production while cooperatives handle produce aggregation and marketing. Several grain farmer groups have signed contracts with organizations and traders for supply of their produce which has increased their income.

Even though farmers income, independence and skills in farming have increased, they are also faced with challenges. Poor weather conditions in the Eastern region led to reduced production while management of the groups, inadequate working capital and market interference by brokers have also been a limiting factor to their farming practices. EAGC seeks to address these challenges in the next phase of the project, being the organization that promotes Grain Trade within the entire grain value chain.

EAGC Contributes to the efforts to End Hunger in the Horn of Africa.

The need to improve partnerships and to coordinate action on ending hunger, malnutrition and poverty led to the organization of the High Level Validation workshop for efforts to End Hunger in the Horn of Africa in Addis Ababa. The major aim of the project will be to provide a forum for Governments, development partners and stakeholders to come together to discuss and come up with effective strategies to eradicate hunger in the region.

EAGC was represented by the Kenya Country Program Manager, Davine Minayo at the meeting which was convened by FAO under the FAO-AU Technical co-operation project on ending hunger in the horn of Africa.

In his opening remarks, the AU director for Rural Economy noted that African countries had committed to the CAADP and Malabo declaration. He noted that there is need for the all African states to follow through the Paris agreement on climate change.

IGAD Representative also noted that partnership and co-ordination was key in achieving the efforts towards ending hunger. “This would only be possible if we promote regional integration and promote use of technology in agriculture,” he further emphasized.

Participants drawn from Africa, noted that to end hunger, focus on agricultural transformation through the implementation of special programs such as use technology will promote value addition and processing, reduction of post-harvest losses, agricultural mechanization, market development through logistics and market linkages and as well as programs focusing on embracing nutrition issues and social protection.
The EAGC Malawi country office team and the Regional Programs Coordinator, Janet Ngombalu, conducted several membership engagement meetings with existing members and potential partners on for possible collaborations in the implementation of EAGC program interventions at the country level. Fruiful discussions were held with Tradeline Cooperation Ltd, an associate member of EAGC and a potential partner for Nacala project proposal, Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Grain Traders and Processors Association (GTPA) and Export Development Fund (EDF).

The exercise facilitated direct engagement with the members to air challenges that EAGC can address to foster a better grain trade and policy environment.

These efforts have increased EAGC footprint, impact and membership base in Malawi. EDF will be the newest EAGC associate member in Malawi following discussions held at their offices on EAGC membership benefits.

Malawi country program team facilitated a meeting for EAGC members with the SATIH and the Agriculture Diversification Activity (Ag-Div) to explore possible areas of partnership.

The Agriculture Diversification Activity is partnering with the USAID-funded Southern Africa Trade and Investment Hub in engaging private sector in various sectors of the agriculture industry in Malawi, ranging from access to finance to market access and/or value addition.

EAGC Members also held stakeholder consultations on partnership with SATIH in its processes. In attendance were Shelix unthali Ag-Div Value Chain Lead, Temwa Gondwe of SAHIT and Esther Kawale of ACE representing the EAGC-Country Director.

International Financial Cooperation (IFC), a subsidiary arm of the World Bank and other representatives from Ministry of Trade, Tourism and industry held a discussion about the bank's plan to roll out various trainings to prepare the stakeholders on the implementation of the Warehouse Receipt Act.

The bank expressed interest to engage EAGC to roll out a series of capacity building initiatives for various stakeholders including Farmers, Traders, Warehouse operators and Banks.

This will be done under EAGC’s Training Institute, EAGI in the country. EAGC was represented in the discussion by the Malawi country program officer.
EAGC Uganda country program, participated in a consultative meeting to implement the National Grain Trade Policy strategy to increase competitiveness of grains and pulses for purposes of food security, household income and Industrialization.

Themed, "Roadmap to Accelerating quantity and quality of traded grain," the strategy laid down the implementation framework for the national grain trade policy. The implementation strategy is developed by a technical working group that brings together agencies including Government Ministries Departments and Agencies led by the Ministry of Trade, the private sector led by EAGC and civil society organizations.

The implementation strategy will be private--sector led, with a pronounced role accorded to the private sector while the Government’s role will mainly be policy direction and regulatory to improve the grain operating environment.

Since the Grain sector occupies a strategic position in ensuring the country’s food security, it provides producers, produce buyers, transporters, processors and exporters with income from business transactions undertaken along the grain sub-sector value chain.

Uganda Warehouse Receipt Systems Authority and Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) with support from USAID Feed the Future organized a workshop on the Awareness materials on Warehousing and Warehouse Standard for bagged cereals and pulses.

EAGC as a key player in the system, participated in the workshop where key topics covered included background to development of the warehousing and warehouse standard materials.

The review focused on the awareness materials booklets chronologically guided by the warehouse standards gazetted in 2016. Key parameters discussed included, location, requirements, structural, facility, and safety and management requirements.

EAGC has been supporting warehousing in the region whose efforts have been embraced by the government of Uganda.
EAGC Activities in Pictorial

Stakeholder meeting to address current pigeon pea marketing in Dar es Salaam

Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) engagement meeting, Lilongwe, Malawi

Grain trade policy strategy meeting at Ministry of trade industry and Cooperatives in Kampala, Uganda

Warehousing and Warehouse Standard for Storage of Bagged Cereals and Pulses Awareness Materials pretesting meeting at Silver Springs

Buhler Pulses Open Day: CPM Kenya sensitizing participants on EAGC initiatives in supporting the SITA project

Stakeholders in the KCEP Market Linkages #BungomaCounty

EAGC Tanzania at the world food day celebrations

AGRA grantees training in Mbeya, Tanzania
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>31st October - 3rd November</td>
<td>Regional Meeting on the EASC/TC/018 On food for special dietary uses</td>
<td>Kigali, Rwanda</td>
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<td>2nd November</td>
<td>Kenya Field Officers Training on Gsoko</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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<td>6th – 7th November</td>
<td>Graders Training</td>
<td>Kampala, Uganda</td>
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<td>8th - 9th November</td>
<td>EAGC GSoko Technical Consultations with DFID</td>
<td>London</td>
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<td>14th – 17th November</td>
<td>Retreat - Long Term Strategy For Food Security &amp; Maize Sub Sector Management</td>
<td>Naivasha, Kenya</td>
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<td>13th – 18th November</td>
<td>RATIN Data Quality Management and new Markets and border Profiling</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>15th – 16th November</td>
<td>Strategy Session &amp; General Assembly for the IGTC</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>20th – 21st November</td>
<td>ITC meeting on Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa</td>
<td>Kampala, Uganda</td>
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<td>22nd – 23rd November</td>
<td>2018 Planning and Review of EAGC 5 year Strategic Business Plan</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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<td>24th November</td>
<td>Regional Staff Retreat</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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<td>28th November</td>
<td>Regional Rice Trade Facilitation Forum</td>
<td>Kigali, Rwanda</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Country Members Meetings and All CPCs Meeting</td>
<td>ALL COUNTRIES</td>
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<td>27th – 1st December</td>
<td>RATIN Data Quality Management and new border Profiling</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th – 1st December</td>
<td>RFBS Contributor Recruitment</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th – 7th December</td>
<td>Board meetings</td>
<td>Nairobi, Kenya</td>
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