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Dear SATG Members:

Welcome to the new SATG Quarterly Newsletter!!

A new initiative from the SATG Office, Nairobi, the Quarterly Newsletter is a way to reach out to members, keeping you in the loop about our current and future activities.

We hope you find these newsletters informative and interesting.

About SATG:

SATG is a registered non-profit association of Somali professionals and friends of the country dedicated to assisting in the reconstruction of Somalia and its agricultural heritage. SATG was established to provide sustainable home-grown solutions to alleviate the rampant food shortages caused by conflict and the lack of agriculture and food policies.

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SATG Field Activities—Grain Storage Work

In Somalia, vast amounts of produced grain are stored in farm underground pits for immediate and future use. Grain stored in such a manner is often subjected to considerable storage losses, caused by factors related to moisture, rodents, insects and diseases. The inner walls of such pits are usually not lined with protective material, hence exposing the stored grain to the migration of moisture from the surrounding soil walls into the store favoring the development of fungal diseases. Underground pits often form an ideal condition for the presence and proliferation of insects and rodents. These not only consume the stored grain, but can also contaminate the stored commodity by way of deposition of disease causing pathogens, urine, hair, etc. The multiplication of fungi due to excessive humidity, in particular, *Aspergillus* spp. produce dangerous toxins (Aflatoxins) which make grain unfit for human consumption. Aflatoxins, even in lower concentration are carcinogenic and at higher concentration are acutely toxic. Underground pits are also vulnerable to impacts from heavy rains and flash flooding.



Traditional Underground Pits

The economic importance of such losses is better grasped if we consider that, in Southern Somalia alone, they may range between 50,000 and 80,000 tonnes per year. The value of such losses can be estimated to range between US\$ 15 and 25 million per year. Improvement of post harvest and storage conditions will therefore have a positive impact on food security and livelihood of populations.

To overcome these losses, SATG in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) with financial support from the European Commission (EC) have, since 2009, embarked on a Grain Storage Project in the Bay Region of Somalia. This initiative is targeting farmers in 3 districts in the Bay Region. So far, over 10,000 farmers have been trained on grain storage losses and appropriate use of metal silos, 20 artisans have been trained on metal silos production, and 2,000 metal silos have been produced by the trained artisans in the districts of Baidoa, Berdale and Burhakaba, and distributed.



Artisans standing alongside completed metal silos in Baidoa



Farmers' training on post-harvest and storage losses

11/07/2010

MISSION TO MINNEAPOLIS

The mission to Minneapolis was arranged around the objective of reaching out to the Somali Diaspora and friends of Somalia. An initial meeting was first held with the Somali Diaspora. This was attended by Drs. Richard Jones, Hussein Haji, Paul Porter and around 30 people from the Diaspora. Most of the 3 hour discussion revolved around updating the community on the agriculture situation in Somalia and mobilizing support for SATG activities.

This was followed by meetings with other organizations – Compatible Technology International (CTI), General Mills (Food Processing Alliance), American Refugee Committee, Margaret Cargill Foundation, University of Minnesota and a meeting with the Mayor of Minneapolis.

The Mayor was exploring ways of mobilizing the Somali community, youth in particular, in Minneapolis to contribute to positive developments in Somalia e.g. Sponsor-A-Silo, rather than have members of the community fall prey to extremist elements. A concept note for such a project was sent to the Mayor's office.

The president of the American Refugee Committee has also expressed interest in working with SATG.

Overall, there was good support from the Somali Diaspora Community. University of Minnesota and CTI. Follow up meetings will be undertaken in the future.



Sharing ideas and mobilizing support...



SATG WORKSHOPS...

The workshops “Harvesting the Future: Technical and Institutional Options for Agricultural Technology Testing and Transfer in Somalia/Somaliland” were hosted at the Ambassador Hotel in Hargeisa, Somaliland from 23rd to 24th November 2010 and at the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya from 29th to 30th November 2010.

The workshops were convened by the Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG) and were supported by the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), European Union (EU) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The workshops brought together various stakeholders including representation from the Ministry of Agriculture in Somaliland and Puntland, international organizations, universities, international and local

NGOs, agro dealers and independent experts.

The objectives of the workshops were as follows:

1. To understand the current and emerging context of agriculture in Somalia/Somaliland.
2. To identify the key technical, institutional and policy challenges and opportunities for agricultural R&D in Somalia/Somaliland.
3. To develop a short list of strategic options that SATG can, in collaboration with other (potential) development agencies, facilitate/implement to enhance delivery of agricultural support and applied research services.

4. To identify/develop modalities, including resources, for fast-tracking the implementation of the priority options.

The Hargeisa workshop was attended by 35 participants, while the Nairobi workshop was attended by over 60 participants. Indeed, this high turn out of knowledgeable enthusiastic participants ensured the workshops were a success.

SATG now looks forward to following up on the ideas and outcomes generated as a result of these workshops.

You can download the workshops' background paper and the summary report at www.satg.org (check under the 'News' section on the homepage).



Workshop proceedings in Hargeisa (left) and Nairobi (centre); Nairobi workshop participants engaged in a group discussion (right).