



Launch of the ACC Initiative

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The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) officially launched the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) initiative on 28 November 2019 at the United Nations Conference Center in Addis Ababa in the presence of Her Excellency President Sahle-Work Zewde, State Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Ato Sani Redi, Director of State Minister of Finance Ato Kokeb Misrak Bilateral Cooperation Directorate Director at the Ministry of Finance, ambassadors, heads of partner development and donor agencies, academia and representatives of farmers from the ACC in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions.

"The ACC is an impactful, market-driven and value chain approach led by the government of Ethiopia that will contribute to the transformation of agriculture and improvement of the livelihoods of Ethiopian farmers," Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde said in her opening remarks at the event, adding, *"I would like to underscore that inclusion and sustainability is key to the success of this program, and call on implementers to intentionally promote the participation of women and youth in leadership roles in the implementation of the ACC."*

The ACC is a five-year program of the Government of Ethiopia coordinated by the ATA. It focuses on 10 priority commodities in a geographically clustered and integrated approach currently implemented in four regions – Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray, and targets doubling the income of nearly 5 million smallholder farmers in five years. During the five-year period between 2019/20 and 2023/24, the ACC will be implemented in 300 selected woredas grouped into 31 crop clusters across these four major regions.

The ACC aims to provide a strong platform to deliver on Ethiopia's Agricultural Development strategy through prioritization of high potential geographies and commodity value chains. It also focuses on integration of efforts amongst diverse government and non-governmental actors and across the value chain to support the small holder farmers and increase their productivity, creation of market linkages, and enhanced implementation effectiveness, monitoring, learning, and evaluation. The market linkages focus on areas such as forward and backward linkages broadly with industry, and particularly with the Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks. Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, State Minister H.E. Ato Sani Redi underscored

the Government's commitment to leading Ethiopia's economic development through a strong and robust agriculture system. *"With a market-driven and coordinated approach, agriculture can drive commercialization and growth – playing a key role in the country's stride towards middle-income status by 2025. In just a few years of implementation, the ACC initiative coordinated by the ATA has proved that this is possible and doable,"* he said. Ato Sani further commended the ATA for its coordination of the ACC and confirmed the Ministry's commitment to lead and support the initiative to realize its objectives. ATA CEO Ato Khalid Bomba for his part emphasized the importance of the ACC in improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers by enabling them to transition to commercial farming and helping them ensure food self-sufficiency, and in so doing contribute to Ethiopia's rapid economic growth. He emphasized, *"The farmers are the most important partners in the ACC implementation, and the ATA is committed to working with them in a value-chain approach to increase their decision-making power and income through the ACC."* He also thanked the community of partners ranging from development partners to civil society organizations to NGOs to the private sector,

whose collective contribution is key to the success of the program.

The Government of Ethiopia is implementing the ACC through partnership with DANIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) and the European Union. Speaking on behalf of the European Union member states, H.E. Ms. Karin Poulsen, Ambassador of Denmark to Ethiopia, commented, *"Accelerating the growth and transformation of the agricultural sector in Ethiopia requires innovative approaches, and the ACC is such an innovative approach. The Governments of Denmark and the Netherlands, as well as the European Union, are pleased to be part of this initiative and its launching event."*

At the launching event, partnership and bilateral agreements were signed with the DANIDA, the Netherlands Development Cooperation and the European Union, whose financial contributions have been key to the successful commencement and implementation of the ACC initiative. The Ministry of Finance and Development Cooperation and the ATA signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Ethiopia.



President Sahle-Work met with agricultural commercialization cluster farmers at the National Palace

In a follow up to the ACC launching ceremony President Sahle-Work Zewde met in her office at the Presidential Palace with the farmers that were attending the official launch of the Agricultural Commercialization Clusters (ACC) at the United Nations Conference Center. The 24 farmers that were invited to the palace were representing their respective agricultural commercialization clusters in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions.

"A discussion about agriculture and farming is not complete without farmers," President Sahle-Work Said. "I called you here today to learn more about your experience in the ACC and to subsequently look for solutions in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and agencies like the ATA."

The farmers thanked H.E. the President and ATA for the privilege of attending the launch and sitting in a meeting with the President of their country. Most said this is something they never imagined would happen to them personally.

They also shared their experience in the ACC, how it has helped them to exponentially increase their yield, and how the collective farming is also protecting the land through planned and rotational planting. All the farmers testified that their production has at least doubled since their involvement in the ACC and thanked the ATA for its role in this. They raised the lack of access to mechanization services and delayed availability of agricultural inputs and

agrochemicals as their biggest challenge. They also called for more research into crop diseases.

Ato Khalid Bomba, CEO of the ATA and H.E. Ato Sani Redi, State Minister of Agriculture assured the farmers that both the ATA and the Ministry are working with 10 mechanization cooperatives each to pilot access to mechanization through farmer clusters and cooperatives.

At the conclusion of the meeting, H.E. the President called on the farmers to continue working through these clusters, and to engage in climate-resilient agricultural practices as the climate situation is bound to get tougher in the years to come.







High level government officials and development partners visit a farmers' production cluster in North Shewa

A high-level field visit in Rome Kebele, Siya Debir and Wayu Woreda of North Shewa Zone in Amhara was organized on 29 November 2019 as part of the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster (ACC) launching event that took place on 28 November in Addis Ababa.

The Guest of Honor of the visit, H.E. Ato Sani Redi, State Minister of Agriculture, and State Ministers of Agriculture H.E. Ato Gebre-Egziabher Gebre-Yohannes and H.E. W/ro Aynalem Nigusie attended the field visit. Also present were representatives from USAID and the European Union. The visiting and

coordinating team from the ATA was led by ATA CEO Mr. Khalid Bomba.

W/ro Meseret Haile Head of the North Shewa Zone Agriculture Department appreciated the work done so far in creating farmers' production clusters saying that the approach has already boosted farmers' productivity. She also mentioned existing gaps in timely access to improved seeds, fertilizers, agro-chemicals and mechanization, and called on those present to do their part in addressing these gaps. Farmers' representatives also spoke highlighting the same issues while thanking the government for its

leadership in the success registered so far.

Addressing the participants of the visit, H.E. Ato Sani said, *"This is the beginning, not the end. The Ministry is finalizing arrangements to purchase fertilizers directly from manufacturers to improve timely and affordable access to quality fertilizers."* He encouraged farmers to continue employing the cluster approach and planting in rows to make fields conducive to mechanized harvesting and revealed that work is already underway to create access to agricultural machineries.

The visit included a visit at an ATA-coordinated 1,286 ha wheat cluster in Rome Woreda followed by a stop at an improved seed production site and a meeting with farmers in Deneba town.

The colorful visit to Siya Debir and Wayu Woreda was completed with assurances by Ato Khalid that the ATA will look into facilitating quick access to harvesting machines and addressing the human resource and machinery access gaps in an evidence-based approach.

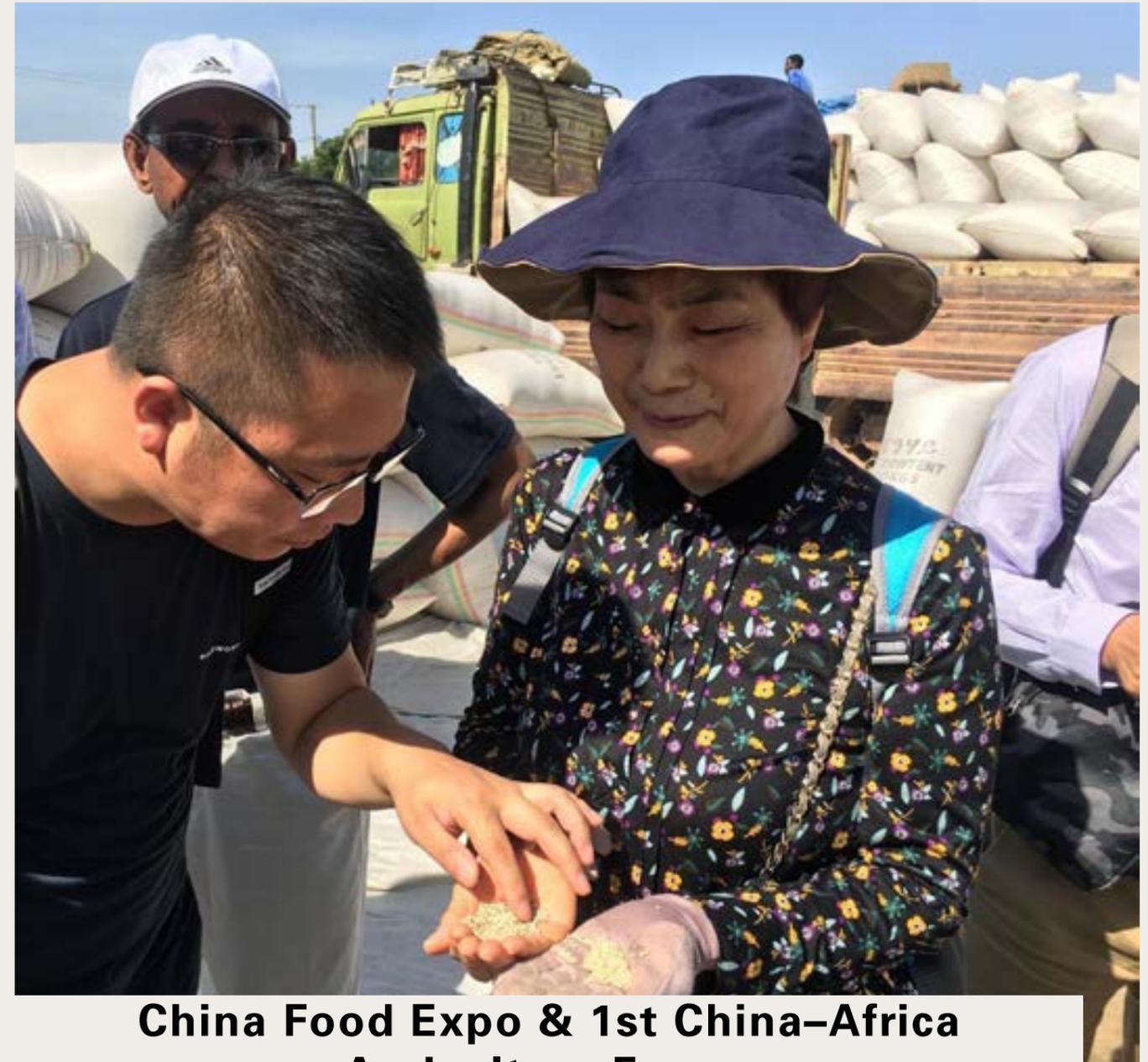


Chinese Delegation Visit to ATA HQ

ATA's Agricultural Investment and Trade Promotion (ATIP) team hosted a delegation from China to discuss on Sesame Value Chain from 11 to 16 November 2019. The visit was organized in collaboration with the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture's Foreign Economic Cooperation Center (FECC) and aimed to create an understanding about the status of the Ethiopian sesame value chain, identify areas of collaboration and transfer knowledge and expertise from China in developing the sesame value chain.

The 15-member delegation met with experts at the ATA, MoA, ECX and Private Sector

actors and also visited the Humera Agricultural Research Center, Humera ECX warehouse and e-trading floor, cooperatives, private sector investors, the Humera Farm Service Center and Hiwot Mechanization. Following the visit, the delegation proposed key areas of cooperation in research, contract farming and mechanization. Government and Private Sector representatives of the delegation have also expressed their interest to sign MoUs with Ethiopian partners during the China-Africa Agriculture Cooperation Forum that will be held on December 10 in Sanya, China to kickstart the cooperation.



China Food Expo & 1st China-Africa Agriculture Forum

The ATA Agricultural Trade and Investment Promotion (ATIP) team, together with the Ethiopian Investment Commission, participated in the China Food Expo and the 1st China-Africa Agriculture Forum from 6 to 10 December 2019. The visits aimed to promote Ethiopian agro-processing investment opportunities. The first part of the program took place in Wuhan at the China Food Expo where a presentation was made on investment opportunities in agro-processing, highlighting the work done in the Food & Beverage Processing and Auxiliary Industries Strategy to participants from the private sector and the Chinese government.

The second part of the program took place during the 1st China-Africa Agriculture Forum in Sanya where the ATIP team participated in a panel discussion on the role of government and the experience in working with international organizations and multilaterals focusing on previous work with AGRA as well as the cooperation with the Foreign Economic Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China.