

Status of Seed System in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

It is a recognized fact; seed is the most vital input for crop production. The objective of this paper was to assess the major challenges and opportunities of seed system in Ethiopia which entirely influence quality and quantity of seed production and subsequent crop production. Seed system in Ethiopia represents the entire complex integration of organizational, institutional and individuals associated with the development, multiplication, processing, storage and distribution and marketing operations of seeds. Informal, formal and alternative seed systems co-exist in Ethiopia with low quality, low

operations in an integrated firm. One hundred fifty years ago the United States did not have a commercial seed industry; today it has the world's 2010s largest .

Ethiopian and similar developing African countries seed system performance mainly depends on skills and capacities of farmers' own seed management incase informal seed supply contribute in large for

Enterprise (OSE), Amhara Seed Enterprise(ASE) and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region Seed Enterprise(SRSE) and entered into the formal system. All actors have inter-dependent roles and inefficiency of one actor automatically affect negatively the performances of the rest actors.

Informal seed system also known as local system or farmers' system which is called informal because it operates under non-law regulated and characterized by farmer-to-farmer seed exchange. Five key features of informal are: traditional, semi-structured, operate at the individual community level, uses a wide range of exchange mechanisms and usually deal with small quantities of seeds that demanded by farmers(Abebe and Lijalem,2011).The informal system is extremely important for seed security. The bulk of seed supply is provided through the informal system. About 60-70% of seed used by Ethiopian smallholder farmers is saved on-farm and exchanged among farmers and the remaining 20-30% is borrowed or purchased locally. The informal seed system (either self-saved seed or farmer-to-farmer seed exchange) accounts 90% of the seed used by smallholder farmers.

On average more than 12 million hectare of land were cultivated by major food crops over the last five years (2005-2010). Seed distributions for cereals, legumes, oilseeds, root crops and horticultural crops were covered by local seeds (96.56%) in 2009/10.The informal seed system were also the major source of vegetables. The informal seed system also dominated the seed marketing of Africa at large(Getachew,2010).The Ethiopian farmers depend on the informal system due to the following key reasons: It is relatively cheaper; readily available in the farmer's villages just at the time of seed is needed; reliable and its sustainability is more guaranteed than the formal seed system. The imported seeds were distributed by local traders, farmers' cooperative/union, bureaus of agriculture and NGOS. Such seeds rarely checked for quarantine and quality by the seed regulatory department of the Ministry of Agriculture and the regional bureaus of agriculture despite criticize the expansion of seed system. General, the local seed marketing plays an important role in narrowing the gap between the demand and supply of seed. Local seeds were produced at low cost with local resources, easily adopted and most preferred by the farmers Ethiopia because ?

