
NEWS & FEATURES

At REPOA Workshop, SAGCOT CEO Urges ‘Action-Oriented’ Steps for East Africa’s Agriculture

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Arusha, Tanzania, October 29, 2024:

In his address at REPOA’s 28th Annual Research Workshop, Geoffrey Kirenga, SAGCOT Centre CEO, shared insights on the essential role of government support, international partnerships, and regional collaboration in strengthening Tanzania’s agricultural sector. With a call for action, he encouraged the agricultural community to advance from discussions to concrete steps toward regional economic growth and food security.

Appreciation for Government and International Support

Kirenga began by recognizing the Tanzanian government’s strong and ongoing commitment to initiatives that drive agricultural growth and economic resilience. He acknowledged the backing from key international partners, notably Norway and Denmark, who have provided consistent support. “These countries have played a major role in decision-making processes that are vital for advancing our goals,” he noted. Kirenga’s message highlighted that international collaboration is increasingly vital to achieving sustainable growth in today’s interconnected world.

Recognizing Influential Contributors and Ideas for Research

Kirenga acknowledged the diverse insights contributed during the morning session, expressing gratitude for the impactful inputs from Dr. Jacqueline Mkindi, CEO of the Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA); El Barik, seasoned trade and development expert from Trademark Africa; and keynote speaker Mr. Junior Lodge, Assistant-Secretary-General for Structural Economic Transformation and Trade at the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. He described the presentations, including those from the ministers, as key drivers for future research and practical implementation in Tanzania and East Africa. “The knowledge shared today will help us internalize, domesticate, and apply innovative ideas to enhance our regional competitiveness,” he stated.

Addressing Tanzania’s Business Environment and Regional Potential

Kirenga highlighted both the progress made and the challenges still faced in improving Tanzania’s business environment. “While important reforms are underway, we recognize that barriers remain,” he said, encouraging continued efforts to create a more conducive environment for investment and growth. He emphasized the critical importance of collaboration among Tanzania, Zambia, and Mozambique, saying that their collective efforts will strengthen Africa’s agricultural output. “We must sit together, deliberate, and agree—and

then we must walk the talk,” he added, calling for sustained and action-oriented cooperation.

Clarifying SAGCOT’s Role as Tanzania’s ‘Breadbasket’

Mr. Kirenga provided an overview of SAGCOT’s mission and significance. He explained that SAGCOT is designed as a “breadbasket region” within Tanzania, facilitating agricultural productivity and resilience. “SAGCOT represents an area that supports agriculture in Tanzania, connecting with various economic corridors to expand its reach across East Africa,” he noted. Through SAGCOT’s work, he aims to transform Tanzanian agriculture to meet national and regional demands for food security and sustainable growth.

Appreciation and Forward-Looking Goals

Closing his address, Mr. Kirenga thanked REPOA for its research and commitment to fostering economic and agricultural transformation in Tanzania and the East African region. “The work REPOA continues to do is essential for our economies and sectors,” he said, recognizing the importance of data-driven approaches in guiding future policies.

Kirenga’s remarks set a collaborative and actionable tone for Tanzania’s agricultural leaders, international partners, and policymakers—one focused on moving from dialogue to implementation for the benefit of Tanzania and East Africa.

Photo: **Honourable Dr. Sulemani Yafo, Minister for Industries and Trade, United Republic of Tanzania, and SAGCOT CEO Geoffrey Kirenga at the 28th Annual REPOA Research**

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