



**For Immediate Release**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New, High-Yielding Maize Seed Introduced to Swaziland**

**Mbabane, Swaziland:** A new hybrid seed well-suited to Swaziland's farming community has just been introduced into the country. The seed, MRI 514, is an early-maturing, drought-tolerant and has a potential yield of ten metric tons per hectare. Adoption of this variety could significantly increase the average smallholder's yield, currently less than two metric tons per hectare.

The launch of the seed into the Swazi market by Mbovane Marketing from Syngenta Zambia is evidence of the progress Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Member States have made harmonizing and modernizing their seed sectors. Lengthy seed trial processes have been replaced with a streamlined system to ensure quality seed can be introduced quickly for the benefit of farmers.

For several years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported harmonized seed regulations and a modernized seed network. New seed varieties have the ability to transform agriculture in Southern Africa and accelerate productivity with the development of new seed technologies.

Speaking at the launch event, USAID/Southern Africa Deputy Mission Director Littleton Tazewell commended everyone involved in bringing MRI 514 to market and stated that: "In the twenty-first century, science and technology are agriculture's greatest resources, with the power to lift nations out of poverty and eliminate food insecurity for vulnerable populations."

Harmonized seed regulations attract investment from the private sector and make powerful distribution networks available. Investments from seed companies make improved seeds more accessible and affordable for farmers, especially smallholders, boosting food security and nutrition for the population.

USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub works to enhance regional economic growth, agricultural productivity, nutrition, and food security through trade in Southern Africa.

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