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World Food Security

Can Private Sector R&D Feed the Poor?

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE AND ABSTRACT FOR

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Dyno Keatinge is an agronomist with a Doctorate in Agriculture from Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland and is Visiting Professor of Tropical Agriculture at the University of Reading, UK. He has global expertise in crop agronomy having worked at ICARDA in Syria, Pakistan and Turkey, IITA in Nigeria and Cameroon and ICRISAT in India and several countries in sub-Saharan Africa. He was also Professor of Agricultural Systems and Management at Reading University for much of the 1990s and claims to have worked professionally in every continent on earth except Antarctica! Presently, he is Director General of AVRDC – The World Vegetable Research and Development Center based in Taiwan.

Vegetables and Small Private Sector Interests

Poor farmers in developing countries need access to affordable high quality seed of improved crop varieties to improve their incomes and reduce malnutrition. Vegetables are vital for balanced nutrition - particularly in Africa where production has been almost static for decades, per-capita consumption is very low and malnutrition is rife. They produce much greater income than staples and farmers are willing to pay substantial amounts for good seed of open pollinated varieties that they can later reproduce themselves. Small local seed firms have a competitive advantage over multinationals in supplying such niche markets provided by large numbers of smallholder farmers and in dealing with their complex seed distribution chains, but they need public sector research support. AVRDC's vegetable breeding research and the business expertise of small private seed companies are delivering improved varieties to smallholder farmers in developing countries where there is limited public sector plant breeding capacity. Over the last ten years AVRDC has worked closely to build partnerships with national agricultural research services and local seed companies in Tanzania to create effective national seed systems and breed and widely distribute a series of improved tomato varieties, revolutionizing East African tomato production and increasing farmer incomes by an average 40%. Similar close cooperation is successfully commercializing improved varieties of Africa's highly nutritious indigenous vegetables – previously ignored as food for the poor. International research cooperation and public-private partnerships are also increasingly important to vegetable industries in Australasia and the Pacific as national agricultural funding priorities change, diseases become more internationalized and quarantine alone is insufficient insurance.

*189. *Physalis Alkekengi* L.*

Gemeine Nudenkirsche.