The Pan-African Bean Research Alliance (PABRA) has been recognized for its contribution to the bean crop value addition that has positively impacted smallholder farmers across 31 African countries and on the international market.

PABRA's marked the celebration in the AGRF 2022 Pre-Summit Side Event which was held in Kigali on September 5, 2022.

Addressing the audience, PABRA Director Jean Claude Rubyogo told the meeting which brought together researchers, government representatives, nutrition agencies, and farmers that he was privileged to mark this jubilee milestone.

"Since 2009, we've consolidated the market-led demand and the demand-led breeding which really made people start thinking on how we can make a difference by moving from subsistence to commercial, highly nutritious crops." He said.

PABRA Director Jean Claude Rubyogo

"PABRA member countries have seen great transformations in the bean value chain

through technology innovations such as demand-driven breeding, where farmer- and market-preferred beans are bred” He reflected.

Additionally, Dr. Rubyogo observed that they are driving bean commercialization through the Bean Corridor to maximize bean trade in sub-Saharan Africa

“More than 540 partners are working together on a common framework, and well-coordinated framework for investment in bean crop research” He noted

In numbers, over 37,000 bean types, with high iron, resistance to diseases such as root rots, heat tolerance, drought tolerance, and insect resilience, have been bred in and made available to 31 countries in Africa through international scientific collaboration deployed through the network.

Other keynote speakers looked back on some of the key milestones, actions and activities achieved, as well as reflected on the significance of the jubilee anniversary.

On her part, Dr. Geraldine Mukeshishimana, Minister of Agriculture, Rwanda said, “Rwanda was at the forefront of the development of biofortified bean varieties. African countries are now producing varieties developed in Rwanda. That is a good contribution to Africa.”

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Dr. Patrick Karangwa Director General, Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) observed, “Through our partnership with PABRA, we have been able to develop systems that enable more farmers and consumers to benefit from the beans, integrating value chains to markets for local, national, and international impact.”

He went on to outline some of the main ways PABRA has engaged with farmers over the past years, including good agricultural practices, to encourage farmers to be able to grow enough beans for their own families and to sell.

On average, bean farmers now earn US$1,000 more and US$500-800 more per hectare, per season with new beans in irrigated and rain-fed conditions respectively.

“We are confident that beans can improve the food security, income, and health of smallholder farmers and urban dwellers, as well as contribute to improving soil fertility. Not only in Africa, but across the globe,” Dr. Karangwa remarked

Claudia Sadoff, the Executive Managing Director of CGIAR which is a global partnership that unites international organizations engaged in research about food security, underlined that PABRAI’s 25years demonstrate the value of the research to improve food security, climate-resilient economy, and health.

“For example, a significant uptake of the adoption of these nutrient-rich beans across so many territories, including here in Rwanda, between 2004 and 2011 there was a 20% increase in the production of improved varieties.” She said

“Rwandan farmers have seen a 50% increase in their yield and an additional 16% of Rwandan households would be food insecure if it weren’t for the work of the scientists and the availability of these nutritional agencies.” Mrs. Claudia added.

Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director General of the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT & CGIAR Global Director of Partnerships and Advocacy remarked, “Through our strong partnerships, we are confident that we can build on PABRA’s success to double the production and consumption of beans across the continent, to make sustainable and nutritious food accessible to all”

“We are confident that beans can improve the food security, income, and health of smallholder farmers and urban dwellers, as well as contribute to improving soil fertility. Not only in Africa, but across the globe,” Restrepo added