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International research collaboration aims to boost food security for Africa through crop improvement

Nyankpala, NR. (January 5, 2024) — A group of scientists and agricultural leaders across three continents have joined together to develop improved crop varieties that meet the specific needs and circumstances of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

The alliance brings together African research organizations including Ghana's [Savanna Agricultural Research Institute](#) of the [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research](#) (CSIR-SARI), [Nigeria's Institute for Agricultural Research](#) (IAR), and the [African Agricultural Technology Foundation](#) (AATF). Additional partners include Australia's national science agency the [Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation](#) (CSIRO), the [Donald Danforth Plant Science Center](#), and [Bill & Melinda Gates Agricultural Innovations](#) (Gates Ag One).

By 2050, nearly [one in four](#) of the world's population will be sub-Saharan African. Modelling indicates that African countries could meet this increased demand for food with full access to the latest agricultural innovations that would improve productivity between [two and three-fold](#). The alliance aims to address threats to crop yields, for instance, from pest and disease outbreaks.

There is a strong correlation between agricultural growth and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Economic growth through agriculture is an estimated [11 times more effective](#) at reducing poverty than other sectors.

Africa's 33 million smallholder farms produce 70% of its food supply, yet they often lack access to the productive resources they need to thrive. In some countries, only 10% of smallholder farmers have access to the latest generation seeds or planting material.

The alliance is committed to working together to accelerate crop research and development that serve the unmet needs of smallholder farmers in the region.

About CSIR-SARI: The Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) is a leading institution under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Ghana. Dedicated to developing and promoting innovative

agricultural technologies, CSIR-SARI primarily serves the Northern, Savannah, North East, Upper East, and Upper West regions of Ghana. The institute focuses on research and development to enhance food security and reduce poverty in these areas, emphasizing sustainable farming practices that maintain and improve soil fertility. CSIR-SARI's initiatives are crucial in addressing the unique challenges of the savanna agro-ecological zone.