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SEEDS OF FREEDOM DOCUMENTARY LAUNCHES TODAY

Dar es Salaam - 10 August 2016 -

Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement (TOAM) today launches a powerful documentary film, *Uhuru wa Mbegu za Wakulima (Seeds of Freedom Tanzania)*.

Uhuru wa Mbegu za Wakulima captures the testimonies of farmers whose customary rights to save, share and exchange seeds, are threatened by seed laws designed to replace traditional varieties with commercial hybrids and handover control to the global seed companies. The 28-minute film follows a local seed producer, Mathias Mtwale, as he meets with farmers, researchers, seed suppliers, regulators, and legislators to understand the issues, and to make the case for a fair deal for the farmers,

“We have met different stakeholders in the seed system, especially farmers, to see how policies and laws marginalise them, while empowering large companies and those with economic power to own the system of seeds production,” says Mr. Mtwale.

The film exposes the reality of the seed system in Tanzania. Farmers in Morogoro, Dodoma and Lushoto tell their inspiring stories of traditional seeds passed down through generations. Researchers explain why the commercial seed system of imported hybrids is not meeting farmers’ needs. Farmers’ organisations clarify how the new legal framework means disaster for the rich agricultural biodiversity nurtured by the nation’s smallholder farmers.

“These seeds are our inheritance, and we will pass them on to our children and grandchildren. These too are quality seed and a pride for Tanzania. But the law does not protect these seeds.” emphasises Janet Maro, director of Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT).

Joseph Hella, a Professor from SUA, also insists, *“Any effort to improve farming in Tanzania depends primarily on how we can improve farmers’ own indigenous seeds.”*

The film, which has been produced by award winning Swedish film director, Lars Johansson and Tanzanian veteran filmmaker, Suleiman Kissoky, goes on general release today, Wednesday 10th August. The film was produced with the support of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung with funds from German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Watch the film online at: <https://uhuruwambegu.wordpress.com>

And at Facebook pages: Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement – TOAM, and Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity

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Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement is the national umbrella organization for the organic sector in the country. www.kilimohai.org

Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity is an alliance of civil society and private sector organizations concerned with the conservation of agricultural biodiversity for livelihood security and food sovereignty. www.tabio.org