THE TEA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL AFRICA:

ONE OF THE SABINA NODES

A. S. Kumwenda, PhD
Director TRFCA
INTRODUCTION

• TRFCA, Not-for-profit, established in 1966
• Service provider in tea R & D to Tea growers in central & southern Africa
• Head offices at Mimosa in Mulanje, Malawi
• Two satellite stations at Nsuwadzi in Mulanje and Chipinge in Zimbabwe.
MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDING

• TRFCA, Regional in nature
• 10 tea companies, 6 in MW, 1 in ZA, 3 in ZW
• Members pay a cess per kg of made tea produced
• About 40% of its own from its green leaf sales
TEA PRODUCTION

• Tea an **important economic crop** in these member countries.

• In Malawi, about **8% of foreign exchange from tea**

• About **40,000 people employed** in the industry

• MW 19000 ha produce annually about **42,000 mt made tea**

• ZW 6,000 ha produces about **10,000 Mt**

• Other tea companies 1000 ha produce **2500 mt**
MISSION STATEMENT

Committed to the provision of services to tea growers in central and southern Africa by:

I. Developing ethical and improved tea production technologies,

II. Providing training and specialist advices

III. To increase made tea yields and quality & sustain and viable tea industries
ACHIEVEMENTS

• All tea-growing practices currently used
• Notable achievement- widely adopted clonal tea cultivars
• They are HY and produce high quality tea
• MW growers are replacing old seedling teas with clones
• Getting high yields and good prices of tea
• Other technologies:
  – Production of composite plants,
  – use of pluckable shoots in vegetative propagation,
  – determination optimum time for pruning and practices for mechanical harvesting etc
  – Recently, the possibility of developing cultivars with health benefit characteristics has assumed some priority.
RESEARCH PROGRAMS

• Plant breeding
• Vegetative propagation
• Agronomy
• Pests and diseases (surveys and monitoring of incipience & prevalence)
• Technology transfer through annual reports newsletters, field days, seminars, workshops and scientific peer reviewed papers and annual TEVs to tea estates.
• Few professionally trained scientists implement all programs
• Any prioritised research that cannot be conducted by resident scientists is contracted
CHALLENGES

• Dependence on a low and narrow income base
• Low number of scientists disproportionate to the production problems
• Threatening climate change impacts, drought, pests, and diseases
• Food safety & other standards on the world market (MRLS, Social responsibility, ETP etc)
• TRFCA needs to be pivotal to finding such solutions
FUTURE PROSPECTS

• World tea production of 3.9284 exceeds demand of 3.7838 million metric tonnes, reducing world tea prices,
• Higher prices dependent on high quality tea
• TRFCA to develop cultivars inherently of high quality
• CC requires TRFCA to develop cultivars, hardier to drought
• Health benefits of tea promotes tea consumption of the beverage
• TRFCA has to identify such cultivars, programs on going
• MRLs considered as a trade barriers & TRFCA to develop resistant cultivars with minimal use of pesticides in tea.
NETWORKING

• TRFCA networks with TTRA, Sri Lanka TRI, TRF of UPASI, TRFK, TRIT & UP
• Longest history of collaboration with UP
• Now collaborating with UP through THRIPs
  I. Subscribes through payment for analysis of its made tea samples at the UP’s biochemistry department
  II. One scientist trained through collaboration
• TRFCA has SABINA as the only regional network as an industrial partner
• Scientists are being trained through this networking
  I. Two PHD students being trained through SABINA
  II. Through the POL Sabina, a rain shelter
• Exchange of info with other networks
CONTRIBUTION OF TRFCA TO THE NETWORK

• TRFCA is supportive with regional network of Universities
• Promotes University/Tea industry partnership
• Both parties to benefit
  I. TRFCA will be open to the universities for their students
  II. Lecturers could implement long-term projects in tea
  III. TRFCA is the only centre for tea research in this part of the world
  IV. Students visits to familiarise with the tea industry
  V. New products from tea could be study area for biochemistry students
CONCLUSION

• TRFCA To continue being a partner
• TRFCA strongly believes in partnership

• Thank you