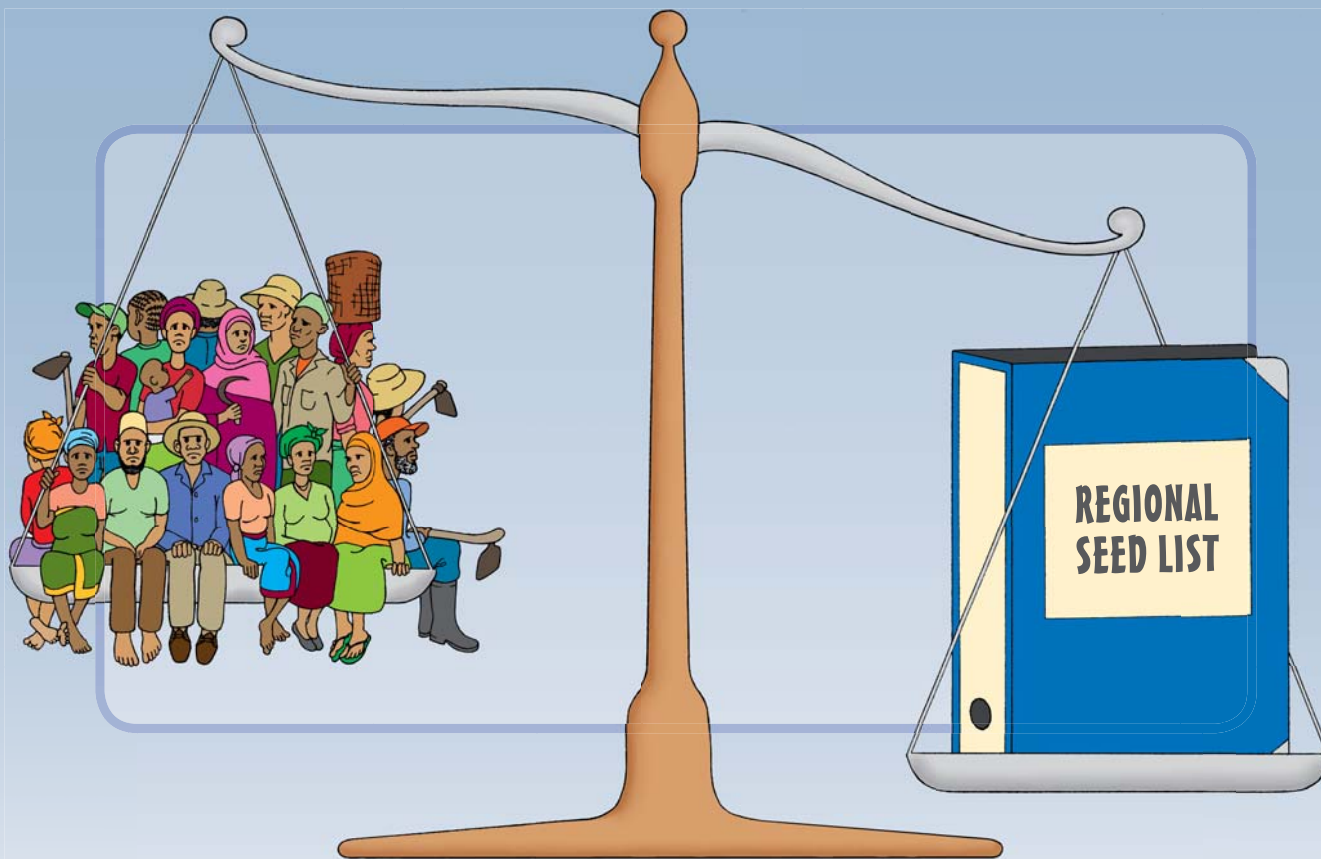


HARMONISATION OF AFRICA'S SEED LAWS THROUGH SADC AND COMESA



Harmonisation of seed laws means that all the countries in a regional bloc will apply the same variety release systems, the same seed certification and testing procedures, and the same quarantine and phytosanitary measures for seed production and distribution. There will be one *Regional Seed List* or *Regional Seed Catalogue* providing details of the seed varieties approved at the regional level by a central decision-making authority. This means that, if approved onto the Regional Seed List, a variety of seed that is released and tested for only two seasons in one country can be produced and traded also in all the other countries in the regional bloc.

Harmonisation of seed laws in Africa is regulated by regional economic communities (RECs). The Southern African Development Community's (SADC) harmonised seed regulatory system applies to **15** member countries, while the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa's (COMESA) harmonised seed trade regulations apply to **19** member countries. Individual countries are forced to revise their seed laws to comply with the regional harmonisation process. This means that the regional regulatory system will have more authority than the government of a country regarding what seed varieties can be released regionally.

Harmonisation aims to increase regional seed trade and the role of private seed companies in seed production and distribution across several countries. This will create bigger seed markets for these companies.

