

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 15 January 2014

Contact:
Maureen Mecozzi
Head, Communications and Information
maureen.mecozzi@worldveg.org
Tel: 886-6-583-7801

New Leader for Agricultural Development in Eastern and Southern Africa

AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center hires Dr. Thomas Dubois as Head of Eastern and Southern Africa operations

SHANHUA, TAIWAN -- 15 January 2014 -- Small-scale vegetable farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa have a new advocate in Dr. Thomas Dubois, who has been appointed by AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center to lead its Eastern and Southern Africa operations in Arusha, Tanzania. As Regional Director, Dr. Dubois will collaborate with donors and partners, develop new projects, and extend the research, development, and capacity-building work of AVRDC through networks to benefit farmers and consumers all along the region's vegetable value chain.

Dr. Dubois brings a wealth of experience in international development and agricultural research to the post. His recent activities have emphasized value chains for rice in sub-Saharan Africa, developing banana as an income-generating crop, and enhancing technologies to reduce aflatoxin contamination of crops at a commercial scale.

"Thomas' strengths are rooted in research and policy development to benefit farming communities," said Dr. Dyno Keatinge, Director General of AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center. "His proven ability to build strong and productive partnerships will help improve seed systems, food safety, and job creation throughout these regions of Africa."

Dr. Dubois received his PhD in Entomology from Cornell University, USA in 2003. From 2003 to 2012 he served as a scientist with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), where he managed several banana-related projects in East Africa, ranging from endophytes to boost plant resistance to developing seed marketing systems. Together with farmer groups, he developed banana as an income-generating crop through linkages with the private sector. He also worked on aflatoxin mitigation in maize and groundnut, and was instrumental in developing harmonized strategies for biopesticide regulations in sub-Saharan Africa. His recent activities at the Africa Rice Center emphasized value chains for rice in 11 countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Dubois received the 2006 Young Promising Scientist Award from the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research).

AVRDC's Regional Center for Africa was established in 1992. To better address the needs and opportunities across the continent, regional operations will now take place in two offices: **AVRDC Eastern and Southern Africa** in Tanzania, and **AVRDC West and Central Africa** in Mali. Dr. Abdou Tenkounao, formerly Director for the Regional Center for Africa, will serve as Regional Director for West and Central Africa.

###

AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center, an international nonprofit vegetable research and development institute, seeks to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in the developing world through the increased production and consumption of nutritious and health-promoting vegetables. Founded in 1971 in Taiwan, the Center's global network now covers East and Southeast Asia, Africa, South Asia, and Central and West Asia.

Activities are structured around four global themes—Germplasm, Breeding, Production, and Consumption—to strengthen the entire vegetable value chain, from seeds and soil to market access and nutrition. Through partnerships with farmers, national agricultural and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, the Center promotes safe production and postharvest methods to help small-scale farmers boost their vegetable yields and increase their incomes. The AVRDC Genebank holds the world's largest public-sector collection of vegetable germplasm, and AVRDC breeding lines are used throughout the world to develop improved vegetable varieties with better pest and disease resistance that can tolerate extremes of flooding, drought, and heat. The Center works with traditional vegetables—underutilized species with the potential to provide sustenance and much-needed micronutrients to balance staple-heavy diets—and conducts research on the nutritional and nutraceutical qualities of all vegetables for their potential to improve health for individuals, families, and communities.



Dr. Thomas Dubois