

■ Focus

Southern Africa, where maize is a highly valued staple for small-scale, resource-poor farmers and their families, and where drought repeatedly threatens or destroys harvests and livelihoods.

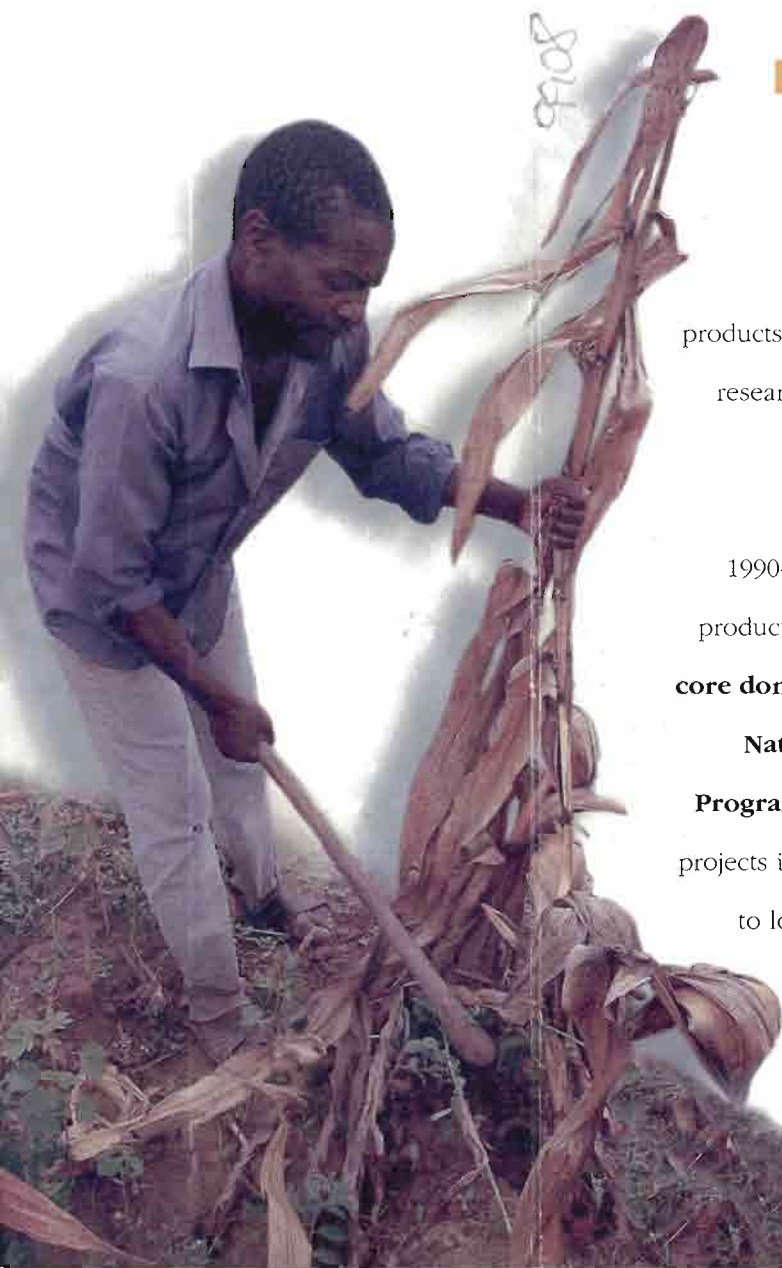


■ Future directions

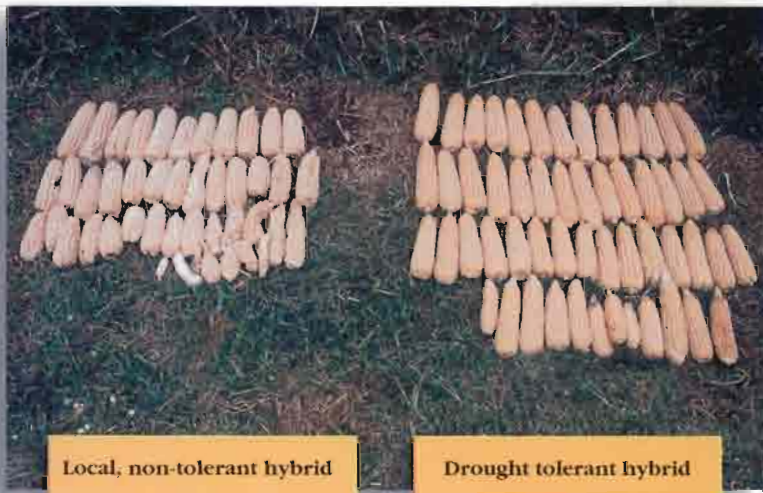
Participants in this project, which is funded by the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**, are now tailoring the CIMMYT seed for local use. Resulting varieties and hybrids are being tested under farmers' conditions throughout the region. The aim is to meet national certification requirements and reach farmers with useful products as soon as possible. The higher and more secure returns on labor and resources from stress-tolerant maize cultivars are expected to trigger investments by farmers in other productivity-enhancing, resource-conserving technologies, such as improved water and fertility management in soils.

■ Sources of science and support

This work draws on products and principles from research on stress-tolerant maize at CIMMYT headquarters during 1990-96 – an enormously productive effort funded by **core donors** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**. Both projects illustrate the pay-offs to long-term support for well-conceived and executed agricultural research.



DROUGHT-TOLERANT MAIZE FOR SUBSISTENCE FARMERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



Progress report

CIMMYT staff are working with breeders in the region to generate locally adapted maize varieties and hybrids that produce more grain than currently sown cultivars under severe drought stress. The tolerant maize is also bred for higher and more stable yields on low fertility soils, as well as responsiveness to favorable conditions. In first results from on-station trials in the region, experimental maize hybrids from CIMMYT outyielded popular, locally adapted hybrids by a dramatic 25-50% under drought stress.



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