



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

**5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010**

**SAFARI HOTEL**

**WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

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SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security met on 5th November 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia. The Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry of the Republic of Namibia, Honourable John Mutorwa, chaired the meeting. The meeting, which was preceded by a 2-day meeting of Senior Officials, was attended by Ministers from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were represented by their Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the Republic of Namibia. Also in attendance were Senior Officials from the Seychelles and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The meeting was opened by the Right Hon. Marco Hausiku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia who highlighted the importance of agriculture in the region and called upon Member States to continue giving strong support to agriculture.

The Ministers reviewed progress on the regional food security situation, the implementation of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, and the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration Plan of Action on Agriculture and Food Security.

Ministers noted that the overall Regional food security situation for the 2010/11 marketing year had improved significantly compared to the previous year. This was due to good rains and implementation of enabling policies with regard to availability and utilization of inputs. Production and consumption of non-cereal food crops such as cassava and plantain is on the increase even in countries where cassava is not a traditional crop such as Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Ministers underscored the importance of livestock production in the region and observed that production of meat had increased by about 30% between 2004 and 2009, while milk and egg production increased by 12% and 22% respectively. Ministers expressed concern that the Region still remained a net importer of these products and called upon Member States to intensify efforts to meet the region's demand for livestock and livestock products. Ministers were delighted to note that the contribution of fisheries to food security and nutrition continued to grow due to the recent rise in fish production as a result of improved management and expansion in aquaculture.

Ministers observed that the SADC region continues to experience disasters, such as droughts, floods and cyclones which adversely affect the regional food security situation. They approved the second phase of the Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Program which will enhance the region's capacity to reduce the negative effects of these disasters on the Region's food security situation.

Ministers noted progress made in the development of the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) which is designed to stimulate sustainable agricultural development and food security in the SADC region by promoting investments and supporting actions at regional and national levels in the agricultural sector.

Ministers emphasised the importance of the SADC Harmonised Seed Regulatory System, which aims at increasing the availability of high quality seed to farmers, facilitating seed trade and encouraging investment in the seed sector. Ministers noted that the Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the SADC Harmonised Seed Regulatory System had been signed by eight Member States and will soon come into force.

Ministers recommitted themselves to the establishment of the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) which will stimulate agricultural growth through research, technology development and dissemination. During the meeting Ministers signed the Charter for the establishment of CCARDESA which will be located in Gaborone, Botswana.

Ministers launched a book entitled "Pests of phytosanitary importance in the SADC Region" which is expected to help Member States in the identification and control of pests and diseases of crops.

Ministers appreciated the role and support of development partners and donors to Agriculture and Food Security.

Ministers expressed gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Namibia for hosting the meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to them and to their delegations.

**Done at Windhoek, Namibia, on 05th November, 2010**