



PRESS RELEASE

MEETINGS OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY AND MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND HIV AND AIDS, 16-17 JULY 2014, LILONGWE, MALAWI

1. Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security and Ministers of Health and HIV and AIDS from SADC Member States met in Lilongwe, Malawi to consider the SADC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy 2015-2025 and the draft revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020 among others. They also held extra-ordinary meetings of Health and HIV and AIDS on 16th July and of Agriculture and Food Security on 17th July 2014.
2. The meetings were attended by Ministers, Ambassadors/High Commissioners and Senior Officials from 11 SADC Member States namely Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. Also in attendance were Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Africa (CCARDESA).

JOINT MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY AND MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND HIV AND AIDS

4. The meeting was officially opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malawi, Hon. Dr. George Chabonda. The Executive Secretary of SADC, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax was represented at the official opening ceremony by the Director Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mrs. Margaret Nyirenda.
5. The meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministers of Health and HIV and AIDS was co-chaired by the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development of Malawi Hon. Dr. Allan Chiyembekeza and the Minister of Health of Malawi Hon. Dr. Jean Kalirani.

6. Ministers underscored the importance of the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy in achieving the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) target of reducing the population affected by extreme hunger by 50% by 2015. They noted that the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy will facilitate the attainment of the African Union's vision to end hunger in Africa by 2050.
7. Ministers however noted with concern the high levels of malnutrition due to low dietary intake of required nutrients. They recognized the importance of good nutrition in the first 1000 days of children's lives which is critical for enhancing their intellectual, physical and social growth.
8. Ministers called upon Member States to promote access to indigenous foods of high nutritional value. To this end, Member States were urged to share information on locally available traditional foodstuffs.
9. Ministers unanimously adopted the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy 2015-2025 which will serve as a regional mechanism to facilitate the attainment of universal physical, social and economic access to safe, health and nutritious food to ensure the wellbeing of the people of Southern Africa.

EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

10. The extra-ordinary meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and Food Security was chaired by the Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development in Malawi Hon. Dr. Allan Chiyembekeza.
11. Ministers noted, with satisfaction that the 2013/2014 food security situation in the region has been stable and the outlook for 2014/2015 is expected to improve due to favourable weather conditions. They also noted that the 2013/2014 food security assessment shows an overall cereal surplus of 0.67 million tonnes unlike in the last four years when cereal production stagnated, leading to deficits and subsequent importation of food products.
12. Ministers also noted that regional livestock and fisheries production increased although at a slow pace. They noted that the increase of livestock and fisheries production was below the regional requirement. They called on Member States to accelerate implementation of programmes aimed at increasing livestock and fisheries production.
13. Ministers endorsed areas of focus and strategies on Environment, Agriculture, Food Security and Natural Resources in the draft revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020. They also adopted the Memorandum of Understanding of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), the Protocol on the Protection of New Varieties

of Plants (Plant Breeders Rights) and the Charter Establishing the Seed Centre.

14. Ministers also approved a new Board of Directors for the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Africa (CCARDESA).

EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH AND HIV AND AIDS

15. Ministers endorsed areas of focus and strategies on Health and HIV and AIDS in the draft revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

16. Ministers congratulated His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, on his election as President of the Republic of Malawi as well as the people and the Government of the Republic of Malawi for holding peaceful and democratic tripartite elections held in May 2014

Done at Lilongwe, Malawi, this 17th day of July 2014