

ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE SADC REGION

COMMUNIQUE OF SADC MINISTERS OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**14 FEBRUARY 2004
DAR ES SALAAM, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

1. The meeting of the Ministers of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources was held in Dar es Salaam in the United Republic of Tanzania on 14 February, 2004 under the Chairpersonship of Honourable Charles Keenja, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security of the United Republic of Tanzania. This meeting was preceded by a Meeting of Senior Officials, from 11 - 13 February, 2004.
2. The purpose of this meeting was to prepare for an Extra-Ordinary SADC Summit on Agriculture and Food Security which will identify measures to resuscitate and revamp agriculture in order to ensure food security in the SADC region. The theme of the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Food Security is "Enhancing Agriculture and Food Security for Poverty Reduction in the SADC Region". This will be achieved by adopting and implementing concrete action plans to address key challenges that will accelerate food production, guarantee food security and reduce poverty in the region.
3. The meeting was attended by Agriculture and Natural Resources Ministers from the following countries: Republic of Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Republic of South Africa, The Kingdom of Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Zambia and the Republic of Zimbabwe. The meeting was also attended by the SADC Secretariat and the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa.
4. Ministers reaffirmed the right of SADC citizens to have access to safe, adequate and nutritious food all the time and by all the people for an active and healthy life. Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of water for household use. Ministers underscored the importance of regional co-operation in promoting food security and water resource management.
5. Ministers warned that over-dependence on government by SADC citizens undermines household food security. Ministers underscored the need for self-sufficiency by households in food production. Ministers called for strong leadership to their citizens to communicate to them the importance of household self-reliance in food production.
6. Ministers noted with concern that financial flows to agriculture from both public and private sources have declined over time; hence a considerable level of investment in the agricultural sector is required in order to achieve the objectives of food security and economic growth. There have been a number of appeals to increase financial flows to agriculture at various fora. The Maputo African Union Declaration of July 2003, called for an increase in Member States' budgetary allocation of "at least 10% of national budgetary resources" to agriculture and rural

development within 5 years. Ministers reaffirmed the need to meet this target at national level.

7. Ministers encouraged SADC Member States to explore innovative financing instruments that promote private and public resource mobilization that could be used to finance agricultural activities including marketing, irrigation, agro-processing, infrastructure, rehabilitation of degraded areas, capacity building and the provision of credit at grass root level.
8. Ministers stressed that poverty reduction and food security strategies should, inter alia, include measures to increase agriculture production, productivity and food availability. Ministers expressed commitment to promote equal access for men and women, as well as child-headed households to land, credit, technology and other key agricultural inputs. Ministers in particular, reaffirmed the need to support empowerment of women recognizing and valuing their vital role in agriculture and food security. This will not only help in generating income but also create employment opportunities for the poor, thus contributing to reduction of poverty and hunger.
9. Ministers reiterated the importance of improved access by small, medium and large producers to basic agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, agrochemicals, seed, mechanization, fishing gear, as well as demarcated/ surveyed land to ensure food security. Organic farming and conservation tillage should also be promoted.
10. Ministers noted that land reform policies and programmes are complex. Ministers reaffirmed the need to review lessons learnt and share best practices in order to enhance access and use of land for agricultural productivity enhancement and poverty alleviation.
11. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to review ongoing national food security policies with a view to filling gaps, identifying new initiatives, removing implementation obstacles and streamlining policy initiatives.
12. Having noted the gradual depletion of natural resources Ministers called for political commitment and the need to utilize, conserve and manage forests, wildlife, marine resources and inland fisheries sustainably. The need to monitor and curtail illegal harvesting and export of natural resources was also emphasized.
13. Ministers reaffirmed the need for the region to urgently intensify national and regional efforts to control and manage the water resources in an efficient manner, in particular embarking on water storage and flood control infrastructures and harvesting technologies. Ministers also stressed the need to progressively and substantially increase cropland under irrigation to meet the targets set out in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). To this effect Ministers emphasized the urgent need to train farmers and professionals in irrigation management.
14. Ministers emphasized the need for demand-driven, client /user-oriented, participatory agricultural, research and extension development in order to enhance the transfer of technology especially at grass root level.

15. Ministers recognized the nutritional and economic value of indigenous fruits, vegetables and livestock, which are currently underutilized. Ministers therefore resolved to intensify research on domestication, propagation and value addition as a means of fostering food self-sufficiency and income generation.
16. Regarding trade in agriculture, Ministers reaffirmed the need for the region to harmonise the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures in accordance with international standards to facilitate trade in agricultural products and appealed to trading partners not to use SPS measures as barriers to trade. Ministers noted with concern that access to Developed Countries' markets for agricultural products originating from the region remains limited due to protectionism and called upon the WTO to accelerate liberalization of trade in agriculture.
17. Ministers committed themselves to the establishment of a Regional Food Reserve Facility (RFRF) that would ensure adequate food supplies during emergencies. To this end, Ministers reaffirmed the need to strengthen the Early Warning and Vulnerability Monitoring Systems (EWVMS).
18. Ministers agreed to promote joint venture partnerships between agricultural enterprises in Member States including the sharing of infrastructure and other service utilities.
19. Ministers reiterated the need to enhance the capacity of professionals and farmers in the region with emphasis on farmers exchange programmes and scholarships, for different specializations.
20. Ministers expressed grave concern on the high incidence of HIV and AIDS in the region, which has a devastating impact on all sectors and levels of society and consequently on food security. Ministers noted that this requires new approaches such as the use of labour saving technologies for farming households. In this regard, Ministers commended efforts by SADC Member States to fight HIV and AIDS and other communicable and chronic diseases on the basis of the Maseru Declaration by the Heads of States.
21. Ministers resolved to eradicate hunger using the abundant resources in the SADC region as a matter of urgency.
22. Ministers thanked the host Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania for hosting the meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to all the delegates.

14th February, 2004
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania