



OPENING REMARKS

Dr Foday Bojang

COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Southern African Consultation
Intercontinental Lusaka, Zambia
13-14 December 2004

REMARKS BY MR FODAY BOJANG OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC)
REPRESENTATIVE AT THE COMMISSION FOR AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION

I would like to first communicate the appreciation of the African Union Commission(AUC) of SARPAN's invitation to participate in this very important consultation which will be centered on issues of common interest to the Commission for Africa (CFA) and the African Union, as regard sustainable development in Africa in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). May I also take this opportunity to convey the regrets of Madame Rosebud Kurwijila, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, who would have liked to personally address this gathering but for prior urgent engagements at the Commission.

The Commission of the African Union acknowledges the important role that SARPAN is playing in the Southern African sub-region toward poverty reduction. Its functions and goals make SARPAN uniquely qualified to coordinate this consultation. SARPAN's programme objectives falls within the general framework of the goals of the NEPAD programme of the African Union and is therefore an important CSO partner for the African Union in our endeavor to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental development in the continent.

The African Union Commission further wishes to acknowledge Prime Minister Tony Blair's initiative, in the form of the creation of the Commission for Africa, to drum up support globally, particularly within the European Union, for sustainable development efforts in Africa within the context of NEPAD.

To achieve the NEPAD objectives, which are complemented by those of SARPAN and CFA, the African Union Commission will focus on coordination, facilitation, harmonization and leadership, amongst others, of policy matters at the continent level for accelerated economic integration of the continent. Consequently AUC's programme for 2005 to 2007 cover a wide range of development issues in the economic, social and environmental arenas. It is hoped that the outcome of this consultation will help direct the focus of implementation of CFA's eventual programmes to priority areas of concern to Africa in these and in institutional development.

For the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AU Commission, the vision is for and Africa free from hunger. Consequently the Department will strive to work with governments, civil society organizations, NGO's, specialized regional institutions and agencies, private sector and development partners to bring about sustainable development in the the agriculture and natural resources sectors as well as for the improvement of rural livelihood systems.

The Southern African Regional Consultation, and other regional consultations in other parts of Africa, should actively engage and challenge the Commission for Africa to concisely and genuinely address the issue of equitable and sustainable partnerships for delivery on our common agenda and goals. The consultations should strive to help the Commission for Africa to identify priority needs and direct assistance to areas where short-term achievements could be made while fostering sustainable partnership for the advancement of the long-term development goals of the African Union.

The African Union Commission hopes that this consultative event marks the beginning of a lasting and fruitful relationship with SARPAN and the CfA in the continent wide effort to advance sustainable development for Africa.