

**Speeches and Communiqué from the meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Land Affairs, Johannesburg, March 2008.**

**1. Welcome address by the Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, Hon Lulu Xingwana (MP) at the meeting of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Ministers responsible for Land Affairs (Sandton Convention Centre, South Africa)**

27 March 2008

Good morning to everybody and a warm welcome to the Sandton Convention centre to South Africa to all the dignitaries who have come from all the 14 SADC Member states.

You will recall that this gathering today was preceded by a preparatory meeting of senior officials of the SADC Secretariat and Ministries responsible for land and Land and Reform to prepare an agenda for this meeting. Today as Ministers we will discuss progress made on the establishment of a Regional Land Reform Facility.

The facility is premised on four components, namely the: policy formulation and implementation support, capacity building, information and communication and research. The expected outputs of the facility are that it should:

- \* Provide support to member states in formulating and implementing land and agrarian reform policies and programmes,
- \* Mobilise financing and technical services of regional and international experts in support of land reform programmes,
- \* Support sharing of information and best practices, and
- \* Facilitate capacity strengthening of regional and national agencies including civil society institutions.

Today the meeting will also provide a mechanism for exchange of information and best practices for land related matters to support development implementation of pro-poor land reform policies. We will also discuss various land reform challenges facing member states and initiatives that they are undertaking to address these challenges.

In the SADC region land is a key production resource to 70 percent of the rural based population who depend on agriculture and utilise natural resources for income and livelihood. Therefore, access to land becomes very crucial for the rural poor to enable them to participate in economic activities that lead to poverty reduction.

Equally so, at its 52nd national conference, the African National Congress, noted that South African Land Reform has not been located within a broader strategy of rural development that is able to improve rural livelihoods.

The ANC further noted that Black economic empowerment and the deracialisation of agricultural ownership was necessary but that conditions were insufficient to realise transformation goals in rural South Africa.

The ruling party therefore called for strengthening the voice of rural South Africans, empowering of poor communities and building the momentum behind agrarian change and land reform by supporting the self organisation of rural people, working together with progressive

movements and organisations and building forums and structures through which rural people can articulate their demands and interests.

As I address you this morning about improving the living conditions of the rural poor and black economic empowerment, I am delighted to announce that since the launch of the Agri-Black Economic Empowerment (AgriBEE) framework in July 2004 my colleague in the Department of Trade and Industry in South Africa, Hon Mandisa Mphahlwa, has approved our application for the AgriBEE Sector Transformation Charter which was gazetted in terms of Section 12 of the B-BBEE Act (2003) on the 20 March 2008.

The objectives of AgriBEE are to eliminate racial discrimination in the agricultural sector through implementing initiatives that mainstream black South Africans in all levels of agricultural activity and enterprises along the entire agricultural value chain.

Land is at the centre of food security and poverty reduction interventions and issues of access, tenure security and utilisation will be addressed. As a region we need to tackle land issues urgently in order to foster regional stability and promote economic growth on a sustainable basis. For us to achieve the goals of land reform we will require a major new effort to build capacity, both at national and regional levels.

Given our collective history of colonialism, dispossession and repression, it is not surprising that the stories of the member states are very similar, notwithstanding, possibly, the different approaches that each individual SADC member state embraces.

It is worth to note that when our new democratic state came into power in 1994, its mandate was very clear: undoing the past injustices and leveraging available national resources to foster reconciliation and stimulate economic growth and development.

In response to this national imperative, the Ministry for Agriculture and Land Affairs developed a land reform process premised on three legs - restitution, redistribution and land tenure reform.

Firstly and foremost, the over-arching strategic objectives of our land reform were formulated to:

- \* redistribute 30 percent of white-owned agricultural land to black South Africans by 2014
- \* reconstitute land to provide equitable redress to victims of racial land dispossession and
- \* address land tenure insecurity that existed in the rural areas, particularly the former - Bantustan areas.

#### Restitution

By February this year, only 4 891 of the land claims were outstanding, the commission had settled more than 94 percent of the claims lodged by the 31 December 1998.

The performance of the commission in settling land claims has enabled our government to restore at least two million hectares of land to our people.

The challenge associated with the settlement of the outstanding claims should not be underestimated, however, as these are rural and very complex in nature. These challenges which include, amongst others, the following:

- \* traditional leader conflict in terms of jurisdiction, boundaries and land ownership
- \* claims that will still be in the Land Claims Court (the finalisation of which the commission has no control over)

- \* the exorbitant land prices and the unavailability of alternative land
- \* protracted and involved negotiation and facilitation processes
- \* disputes with landowners mainly on land prices and validity of claims
- \* claims where there are family/community disputes.

## Redistribution

Equally important in our relentless quest to address the "land question" in our country, is our redistribution programme, which is aimed at redistributing 30 percent of white-owned agricultural land to black South Africans by 2014. To date, a total of 4,1 million ha have been delivered to black South Africans, against the 2014 target of 24,6 million ha (2,2 million ha of which have been redistributed through other land reform programmes apart from the restitution programme).

The Department of Land Affairs has introduced another strategy known as, Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) - In contrast to the previous applications-directed approach, the department now proactively identifies and purchases land (based on land needs trends) and distributes this land in terms of these established needs. One of the challenges that have emerged in connection with PLAS – which we are dealing with – is in terms of whether the State can procure farmland as "going concerns" and the maintenance of such assets as there is an inevitable time-lapse between the procurement of such 'going concerns' and the transfer to the beneficiaries.

## Land Tenure Reform

Land Tenure Reform occupies a very strategic position and role within the Government's transformational agenda – successful tenure reform programme implementation will make a very critical contribution and impact on our rural development strategy, enjoyment of rights and dignity enshrined in our Constitution and advances our socio-economic development targets.

The implementation of the Communal Land Rights Act (ClARA) is another fundamental intervention in addressing land tenure reform imperatives in South Africa, and the development and sustainability of rural economies. The Act was, among other reasons, aimed at providing for the transfer of communal land to communities and to provide for the democratic administration of communal land by the communities themselves. The Act, once it comes into operation, will effectively change the lives of about 21 million South Africans.

One of the biggest challenges facing us around tenure reform is possibly in relation to the protection of the land rights (and associated rights) of farm dwellers and farm workers.

Though the government has passed two pieces of tenure security legislations, the Extension of Security of Tenure Act (ESTA) and the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act (LTA) since 1994, there is sufficient evidence that farm dwellers and farm workers continue to lose their rights at an alarming rate. Part of our response in addressing this menace is by setting up a Land Rights Facility to mainly provide legal and mediation support in cases of infringements of land rights of farm workers and farm dwellers. This also includes, amongst others, a call centre (which has already been set up) that will improve farm dweller access to the departmental services in cases of need.

On the legislative front, the department has also initiated legislation to fill the gaps in both ESTA and LTA, which should culminate in an Amendment Act by 2009.

Effective land administration, vesting and disposal of state land also play crucial roles in our pursuits for land tenure reform in our land reform programme. Currently notable initiatives in this regard include the following:

- \* efficient public land administration: an audit of all registered state land in the country
- \* vesting of state land: confirmation of ownership of State land (vesting) to ensure effective management and control of State land for both land reform and development purposes and
- \* disposal of state land to support state development objectives.

In our quest to address the spatial inequalities and improve the land-use decision-making processes, the department has developed legislative proposals in form of the Land Use Management Bill (LUMB), certain aspects of which are currently being piloted in some of our provinces (Northern Cape and Limpopo Provinces).

### Post Settlement Support

Beyond the challenges of land acquisition and redistribution, lie bigger challenges – the quantity and quality of support given to the beneficiaries of land reform to ensure that the resituated and redistributed land is productively and sustainably utilised.

We do have land reform projects that have failed and our analysis of these projects points to the urgent need to review the quality of our integrated approach to land reform delivery to our beneficiaries. Very clearly, singular emphasis on land acquisition and redistribution at the expense of equal (or even more) efforts on post-settlement support provision can undo all the good work done towards achieving land reform objectives.

It is against this background that February this year, the department launched this ambitious project of developing the Settlement Implementation Support (SIS) strategy to both resuscitate projects that are at the verge of collapsing as well as mitigate the possibilities of the collapse of future land reform projects.

In February 2007, the President of South Africa, his deputy and the Directors - General initiated a review of government's priorities, programmes and strategies. This review concluded inter alia that:

- (i) improving access to land for the security of tenure and agricultural production should be reaffirmed as government's top priority, and
- (ii) that there was an urgent need for the departments of agriculture and land affairs programmes to focus more sharply on increasing access to land, increasing the participation of historically disadvantaged persons in the agricultural sector, food production and generating rural employment, thereby contributing to more accessible food supplies.

We have developed a programme to fast track the delivery of land, namely the Land and Agrarian Reform Programme called LARP. In terms of LARP we have undertaken to:

- \* redistribute five million ha of white-owned agricultural land to 10 000 new agricultural producers
- \* increase black entrepreneurs in the agribusiness industry by 10 percent
- \* provide comprehensive support to the target group
- \* to increase agricultural production by 10 to 15 percent, through Letsema/illima campaign
- \* increase agricultural trade by 10 to 15 percent.

This is a pro-poor programme which is focusing on farm dwellers and farm workers to enable them to participate and benefit from agriculture development in the country. We have already

identified areas where the land need is greatest and where evictions on farms have been common. These are the areas where we will prioritise land acquisition for the poor.

In conclusion I would like to thank the officials of the SADC Secretariat, Department of Land Affairs, the International Relations desk of the Department of Agriculture, the South African Police Service and the National Intelligence for their valuable work as well as all those who were involved in ensuring that this meeting takes place.

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## **2. Opening statement by Dr João Samuel Caholo Deputy Executive Secretary, Southern African Development Community (SADC), Secretariat at the SADC meeting of Ministers Responsible for Land Affairs**

27 March 2008

1. On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Dr Tomás Augusto Salomão and indeed on my own behalf, it is an honour and a privilege to address you at this SADC meeting of Ministers responsible for land affairs. This is the first meeting of Ministers of lands since SADC embarked on restructuring of its institutions and programmes in 2001. Considering the current issues on land reform, the meeting is timely and relevant as it will allow Honourable Ministers from our member states to share information and experiences and chart the way forward for this region.

2. The meeting will also deliberate on the establishment of a regional land reform facility which should support our member states in the various activities on land reform. Today, Honourable Ministers will review the progress made and recommendations put forward for the full functioning of the facility. These are critical issues and indeed require your guidance.

3. Before I continue, Honourable Ministers, allow me to extend SADC's appreciation to the government of South Africa for accepting to host this meeting and for the kind hospitality we have enjoyed since our arrival. Let me also recognise the pivotal role which the Land Affairs Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs in South Africa has played. As the Chair of SADC Land Reform Task Team together with the other Task Team members namely Mozambique, Namibia, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, they have steered the process of establishing the SADC Land Reform Support Facility for the past two years.

4. Coming back to the task at hand. The Extra-ordinary summit on Agriculture and Food Security in May 2004 underscored the importance of access to land as a prerequisite for improved agricultural production. To this effect, the Extra-ordinary summit approved the following measures:

- \* that member states should share experiences and best practices on land utilisation, land tenure systems, land administration and adjudication,
- \* member states should accelerate land distribution/policy reform programmes based on various options such as willing seller willing buyer,
- \* member states should promote gender equality on access to land and accelerate ongoing land policy reform programmes, and
- \* directed SADC secretariat to fast track the establishment of the SADC Land Reform Support Facility.

5. I am aware, Honourable Ministers that member states are implementing various programmes in line with the Extra-ordinary summit to address various land problems they face. For example,

a number of countries are formulating comprehensive national land policies and laws and others are already implementing their policies. Realising that land is a cross cutting issue and a critical factor of production, there is need for ministries responsible for lands to foster linkages with other sectors to ensure land is sustainably used and that maximum returns are obtained from investments on land. The land users must also be facilitated to make maximum use of the resource.

6. Honourable Ministers, you will agree with me that land is the most basic of all resources available for social and economic development and is a key asset for poverty reduction in our region. It is central for the attainment of deeper regional integration which is the key objective of our Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). It is also essential for the achievement of most of the objectives of intervention areas of the RISDP. As you are aware, about 70 percent of the SADC population is rural-based where agriculture and utilisation of natural resources are the main economic activities for food security and livelihood support. Agriculture alone is the largest land use and contributes to about 35 percent of the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

7. Honourable Ministers, let me mention that the nature of land issues facing many SADC member states are related to colonial land alienation policies and, discriminatory development and investment patterns which, in most states, denied or limited access to land and the associated economic opportunities to large segments of the population. The nature and degree of the problems vary among member states depending on historical, cultural and political considerations. It is due to this diversity that the facility is built on the premise that it is not possible to recommend a "one size fits all" land policy. The facility will seek to promote sharing of information and experiences and assist member states in formulating and implementing land policies and programmes in line with their national development priorities.

8. The facility will support member states' efforts on land reform by mobilising financial, technical and human resources required for effective formulation and implementation of land reform policies and programmes. It will also provide a robust platform for exchange of information on land related issues and building of consensus on topical land issues affecting the region. The facility's approach therefore recognises, among other things, the need to enhance capacity of both state and non-state actors in the formulation and implementation of pro-poor land policies, the need to document and share information and best practices on land and the need to promote collaboration with relevant institutions.

9. Honourable Ministers, it is my expectation that you will deliberate on various land problems in the member states, the initiatives undertaken, successes and challenges. With your guidance, we expect the pace of reform on land issues in the region to accelerate.

10. At this point, allow me, to thank all Honourable Ministers for finding time to come and attend this meeting despite their demanding schedules. This is a clear manifestation of the importance you place on land issues in the development of our region. Let me also thank Department of International Development (DFID) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their continued financial support to the establishment process of the facility and all International co-operating partners who are supporting various member states in the land sector.

11. I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to the outcome of this important meeting.

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**3. Opening speech by Hon Bradford M Machila, Minister of Lands (Zambia) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Chair of Ministers Responsible for Land Affairs, delivered at the meeting of SADC Ministers Responsible for Land Affairs**

27 March 2008

1. It is indeed a great honour and privilege for me this morning to deliver a statement, on behalf of my government Zambia, the current chair of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) at the opening of this important meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for Land Affairs. Allow me this morning to join the host Government, South Africa in welcoming you all to this very important meeting. We meet here to discuss land issues affecting our region and to reflect on the progress made in implementing in particular, the decision of 2004 Extraordinary summit on Agriculture and Food Security, of fast tracking the establishment of the SADC Land Reform Support Facility.

2. This meeting is significant as it constitutes an important rare forum for the exchange of ideas on the problems faced by member states in addressing various land related problems. It will help us to develop a common understanding and develop a strong resolve to address the disparities in land distribution created by our colonial past. It is my belief that our countries can assist each other through the sharing of expertise and the exchange of information on good practises in land reform. It is for this reason that I find the establishing of a regional facility on land reform especially appealing as it has the potential to provide a robust platform for information exchange.

3. Honourable Ministers, let me emphasise that land is a very critical factor of production particularly for our region where the majority of the population is rural based and where agriculture and the utilisation of natural resources are major economic activities for food security and livelihoods support. It need not emphasised that the attainment of Millennium Development Goals, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) objectives, as well as the objectives of our SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and indeed our national development initiatives depends, to a large extent, on the attainment of equitable land distribution and its sustainable utilisation.

4. I wish to reiterate that our region faces a number of challenges relating to land. Not only do we have racially skewed land distribution and poorly resourced land administration institutions, we also have problems of unsustainable land utilisation leading to the decline in the ability of our land resources in providing goods and services. The degradation of the land base is both a cause and an effect of poverty among land users. It is, therefore, important that the land users are provided with skills, knowledge and other resources to be able to optimally and sustainably utilise the land for income generation and poverty reduction.

5. Honourable Ministers, land is arguably the most important asset that can be made available to the poor. Improving equitable distribution and tenure security of this resource through reform may ensure access to land for the poor, particularly the poor women and other vulnerable groups. Secure tenure is an important vehicle for increasing the productivity of land and in enabling the poor to utilise their land for investment and collateral.

6. It is for this reason that most of the member states are engaged in reforms aimed at improving access to land, revamping and capacitating land administration institutions, improving land information systems and establishing effective land dispute resolution mechanisms. Admittedly, these reforms are slow due to a number of reasons including the need for proper and all inclusive consultation in the policy and legal framework formulation processes, unwillingness of land owners to release land for settlement under the "wiling buyer –

willing seller" principle and inadequate resources in some countries for land acquisition, resettlement and post settlement support.

7. Honourable Ministers, in my home country Zambia, we have been in the process of developing national land policy since 2002. It has taken us long to finalise the process due to the need for detailed analysis of issues and the need to include and incorporate the aspirations of a wide range of stakeholders. I am sure you will agree that the need for a holistic approach to land matters can not be overemphasised, as I have already stated earlier; it is the basis of all other interventions. Therefore, our draft policy does ensure linkages with other sector policies through clearer land tenure arrangements. The draft policy has gone through intense scrutiny to ensure that it spells out concrete actions for enhancing administration and use of land, initiatives for revenue generation, decentralisation and empowerment of rural and urban communities while addressing the challenges posed by social inequalities; poverty, gender and disability.

8. At independence, like most countries in the region, Zambia inherited a customary, freehold and leasehold tenure system in which the administration of customary tenure was subordinate to written law. In 1995 our government appointed a Commission of Inquiry to review the land administration system. Recommendations were made for the unification and integration of land administration, simplification of the statutory tenure law, individual land title registration of customary tenure and the acquisition and control of vacant land by the Government.

9. Our post independence period saw the enactment of laws to provide for compulsory acquisition of land and other property in the public interest, increasing state control and land transactions to cater for urban development, control and improvement of housing for low income groups, regulation of tenants and rentals, restrictions of land acquisition by non-Zambians and the conversion of freehold to leasehold tenure.

10. Land administration in the pre and post independence era primarily served to preserve law and order, provide basic land services and to collect fiscal revenue through provision of public services. The government ably fulfilled this obligation and sustained an effective land administration system during the earlier years of macro-economic stability. However with time, societal demands for land services gradually accelerated to levels that were not matched by administrative efficiency among institutions responsible for administering land. This has brought us to where we are today, developing a land policy responsive to the demands of the day.

11. Honourable Ministers, at a regional level, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) which was adopted in 2003 aims at achieving deeper regional integration and poverty reduction and identifies key intervention areas for success. Amongst those intervention areas are; poverty reduction, sustainable food security, HIV and AIDS, gender and development, environment and sustainable development, infrastructure for development and trade, just to mention a few. It is clear that land is at the centre of all those interventions and therefore it is imperative that greater efforts are made in addressing the existing land problems that have the potential to disrupt the social and economic development of this region, if not attended to.

12. Honourable Ministers, I am pleased to note that since the 2004 Extra-ordinary summit decision, the SADC Land Reform Task Team comprising of Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe assisted by the SADC Secretariat has worked tirelessly to get to where we are today. I am informed that the recommendations which this meeting is going to consider for approval have been discussed and endorsed by both the Task team and a wide committee of Permanent Secretaries of Ministers responsible for land matters from all SADC member states in April and September of last year respectively. I strongly

believe that these recommendations do operationalise the 2001 summit directive for the region to develop a regional strategy for addressing land reform issues and the recent urgency expressed by the 2004 Extra summit on Agriculture and Food Security to fast track the establishment of the facility.

13. The United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa in its African review report on land at the fifth meeting of African committee on sustainable development meeting of October 2007 hailed the South African development community for having a regional initiative on land reform through the establishment of the SADC land reform support facility. It is indeed commendable that as a region we have resolved to have a regional initiative in support of the various national efforts in land and agrarian reform policy formulation and implementation.

14. Honourable Ministers, my expectation is that when the facility is fully established and well resourced it will provide access to advice, expertise, training and technical support on different aspects of land reform to member states. It will provide a mechanism for pooling donor resources for regional programmes or individual country projects. While acknowledging the sovereignty and national nature of land issues, the regional approach provides for development of consensus and common stands on matters relating to land reform in the region.

15. Although the establishment of the facility has been on the agenda of SADC policy meetings for a long time, the actual establishment process started in September 2006 with the recruitment of facilitator and consultants. It is therefore in its early stages and requires our support to sustain the moment now acquired. It is a learning process and the facility will organically grow through experience during the first few years.

16. It is pleasing to note that within the short period of the facility's establishment and with limited resources, we have begun to see marked improvements in the collaboration and networking among land stakeholders in the region. The facility has also engaged in collaborative activities with other institutions such as the World Bank institute, Southern Africa Research Poverty Network and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in a number of areas including training and research. It has actively been involved in the regional assessments and consultations for Southern Africa as an input to the African Union Commission (AUC)/Electronic Communications Act (ECA)/African Development Bank (ADB) Africa Land Policy Framework and Guidelines Initiative. SADC through the facility coordinated the first regional assessments and consultations among the many regional economic communities. It is hoped our regional initiatives will add value to the Africa Policy initiative and has a greater chance of influencing it to consider the peculiarities of land problems in Southern Africa when developing the framework.

17. Honourable Ministers, allow me to join those who have spoken before me to thank all members of the SADC Land Reform Task team comprising Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, for steering the process of facility establishment. I particularly wish to thank the Department Of Land Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs for providing leadership and hosting all task team meetings during the establishment process.

18. The outcome of this meeting is very vital in shaping the activities of the facility. I invite you to actively participate in discussing the recommendations and providing the way forward to the development process of the facility. I know the process has been slow but I believe you can agree with me that the process is now on course and we need to express commitment and take ownership of the whole process.

19. I now wish to extend my gratitude to the Republic of South Africa through the Directorate of Land Affairs in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land for accepting to host this meeting and for

the hospitality accorded to delegations from all countries in attendance. Let me also take this opportunity to thank United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Drylands Development centre for its keen interest as well as financial, administrative and technical support to the establishment process. The continued financial assistance of Department of International Development (DFID) is also greatly appreciated. Thanks also to a number of International co-operating partners who have shown interest to support the facility and it is my hope that these will translate into concrete commitments and support.

20. Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks, let me, once again, thank you all for making time to come to attend this meeting despite your busy schedules. It is now my humble duty and a privilege, to declare this SADC meeting of ministers responsible for land affairs officially opened.

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#### **4. Communiqué on meeting of Southern African Development Community (SADC) ministers responsible for Land Affairs, Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa**

27 March 2008

1. The meeting of the SADC Ministers Responsible for Lands was held at Sandton Convention centre in Johannesburg, South Africa on 27 March 2008. The meeting was chaired by Honourable Bradford Machila, the Minister of Lands of the Government of Zambia and Chairperson of SADC Ministers. This meeting was preceded by a meeting of senior officials from 25 to 26 March 2008.

2. The purpose of the meeting was for the Ministers responsible for Lands to discuss the establishment of the SADC Land Reform and Management Support Facility and give guidance on the way forward.

3. The meeting was attended by ministers and representatives as follows:

Angola: Hon Afonso Pedro Canga,  
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

Botswana: Hon Dikgakangamatso N. Seretse, M.P.  
Minister of Lands and Housing

Democratic Republic: Hon Edourad Kabukapwa Bitangila, of Congo  
Minister of Land Affairs

Lesotho: Hon Pontso Matumelo Sekatle, M.P.  
Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship

Mauritius: Hon Mohammed Asraf Ally Dulull  
Minister of Housing and Lands

Namibia: Hon Jerry Ekandjo, M.P.  
Minister of Lands and Resettlement

South Africa: Hon Lulu Xingwana, M.P.  
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Swaziland: Hon Dumsile Sukati  
Minister of Natural Resources & Energy

Zambia: Hon Bradford Machila  
Minister of Lands

Malawi: Hon Rashid Gaffar, M.P.  
Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources

Madagascar: Counsellor Noel Nirina Raharijaona,  
Embassy of Madagascar, Pretoria, RSA

Mozambique: Mr Julio M'Chola  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

United Republic of Tanzania: Mr Albert Adiel Msangi,  
Commissioner for Lands, Ministry of Lands, Housing & Human Settlements Development

Zimbabwe: Ms Sophia Christina Tsvakwi  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Land Reform and Resettlement

4. In her welcoming remarks, Hon Lulu Xingwana, Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs in South Africa and Deputy Chairperson of SADC Ministers welcomed all Honourable Ministers responsible for land and land reform and all delegates. She stressed the importance of land and other natural resources in the social and economic development of the region. She outlined the land reform and management programmes implemented in her country, which all seek to alleviate poverty, create employment opportunities enable black people to participate in economic growth as well as improvement of the quality of life. She emphasised the need for post settlement support including a comprehensive agricultural support programme.

5. Mrs Margaret Nyirenda, Director of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), SADC Secretariat, speaking on behalf of the SADC Executive Secretary joined the host government of South Africa, in welcoming the delegates to the meeting. She stated that member states face different land problems and that the SADC Land Reform and Management Facility will support member states in the development and implementation of land and agrarian reform programmes. It will also provide a platform for sharing experiences and information on land and agrarian reform issues in the region.

6. In his opening address Hon Bradford Machila, Minister of Lands for Zambia and Chairperson of SADC Ministers, commended the progress made towards the establishment of the SADC Land Reform and Management Support Facility particularly following summit decisions to fast track the establishment of the facility.

7. Ministers reaffirmed the centrality of land in the social and economic development of the region and in poverty reduction initiatives and stressed the need to accord prominence to land issues at the regional level. They also noted the complexity and diversity of land issues in the region due to historical differences. The other problems relate to insecurity of tenure, gender imbalances in access to and ownership of land, land utilisation and low capacities of land administration institutions. Ministers noted that member states are at different stages of formulating or implementing reforms to address the problems in line with their national development priorities.

8. At regional level, the ministers expressed satisfaction that now land issues are incorporated in the policies and programmes of SADC and that they now form part of the agenda of policy meetings. They noted that the process of establishing the SADC Land Reform and Management Support Facility is progressing very well and that the facility will:

- \* assist member states in the formulation and implementation of pro-poor land policies and programmes
- \* facilitate in capacity building for the improvement in delivery of land and agrarian reforms
- \* promote documentation and sharing of best practices and experiences and
- \* facilitate research into aspects of land in an effort to provide the necessary land related information.

9. Ministers commended the effort of the SADC Land Reform Task Team comprising Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe assisted by SADC secretariat in steering the process towards the establishment of the facility.

10. Ministers approved recommendations on human and financial resource requirements, institutional location of the facility and the governance framework for the proper running of the facility.

11. Finally, Hon Dikgakgamatso N Seretse, M.P. Minister of Lands and Housing Ministers of Botswana, on behalf of other ministers, extended his appreciation and gratitude to the Honourable Lulu Xingwana, Minister of Agriculture and Lands of South Africa, the government and the people of South Africa for hosting the meeting and for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to them.