

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:00 August 1 2009

SPEECH BY FANRPAN CHAIRMAN AND COMESA SECRETARY GENERAL, MR. SINDISO NGWENYA, AT THE OPENING OF THE FANRPAN REGIONAL DIALOGUE, SEPTEMBER 1 2009.

- THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, HON. SOARES NHACA
- THE PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, HON. MIGUEL CLEMENTE
- FARNPAN BOARD MEMBERS
- FANRPAN, CEO, DR. LINDIWE MAJELE SIBANDA AND SECRETARIAT STAFF
- FARNPAN STAKEHOLDERS: GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, FOs, PRIVATE SECTOR AND RESEARCHERS
- FANRPAN COUNTRY NODES HOSTING INSTITUTIONS
- MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT IS MY SINGULAR HONOUR TO ADDRESS YOU ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2009 FANRPAN REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE. I ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY MY GRATITUDE TO OUR MOST GENEROUS HOST, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY, AMARNDIO EMILIO GUEBUZA, FOR EXTENDING A WARM WELCOME TO US AND FOR AGREEING TO HOST THE 2009 REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE AT THIS HISTORIC CITY OF MAPUTO.

THE THEME FOR THE OPENING DAY OF THE POLICY DIALOGUE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE IN THE LIGHT OF THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN THE WHOLE OF AFRICA AND MORE SO IN THE CONTEXT OF MOZAMBIQUE'S DECLARED QUEST FOR ITS OWN GREEN REVOLUTION. AS LONG AS AFRICANS DO NOT COLLECT THEIR OWN DATA TO TELL THE AFRICAN STORY WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BENCHMARK OURSELVES AGAINST DEVELOPMENT TARGETS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE WILL PLAN USING WRONG DATA.

WE SHOULD NOT ONLY LOOK AT RESEARCHERS IN UNIVERSITIES AS THE TRADITION RESEARCH COMMUNITY BUT LET US AT LOOK AT TOOLS THAT WILL DOCUMENT THE EVIDENCE SITTING IN ANECDOTAL INFORMATION. AFRICA HAS A STRONG ORAL CULTURE AND IT IS IMPORTANT WE USE IT, PRESERVE IT AND LINK IT TO MODERN RESEARCH TOOLS. WE HAVE UNDERMINED THAT ORAL CULTURE THROUGH PAPER-BASED RESEARCH EVIDENCE WHICH MANY OF US RARELY READ IT.

LET US GO BACK TO THE AFRICAN ORAL CULTURE WHICH IS LADEN WITH SPECIFIC MESSAGES THAT WILL BOOST THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE WE NEED TO SHAPE POLICIES.

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND MOZAMBIQUE FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING RESEARCH IN A NUMBER OF SPHERES. PRESIDENT GUEBUZA'S GOVERNMENT HAS SET ITSELF AN AMBITIOUS TASK TO GROW ITS RESEARCH PERSONNEL TO SUPPORT THE RESEARCH EVIDENCE WHICH IS SO CRITICAL IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.

THE MOZAMBIKAN GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY HAS ABOUT 660 SCIENTISTS WORKING IN ABOUT 17 RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS AND A FURTHER 2 000 IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. MOZAMBIQUE IS TARGETING TO HAVE AT LEAST 6,500 SCIENTISTS IN LABORATORY BASED RESEARCH BY 2025. THE GOVERNMENT, IS ALSO PROMOTING RESEARCH WHICH SOLVES DAILY PROBLEMS AND MAKES A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE'S LIVES THAN RESEARCH MERELY FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES. AFRICA FACES THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF ESTABLISHING AND MAKING USE OF ITS RESEARCH FOR EFFECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND POLICY CRAFTING. OUR BUDGETS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE INCREASED ON SO THAT WE GENERATE OUR OWN DATA TO BACK UP WHAT WE ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR SITUATION IN AGRICULTURE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE RELIED ON EXTERNAL RESEARCHERS, ON EXTERNALLY-GENERATED DATA AND EXTERNALLY DRIVEN RESEARCH AGENDA THAT DOES NOT EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS OUR ISSUES. IF WE DO NOT OWN THE RESEARCH, HOW COULD IT BEST ADDRESS OUR FELT NEEDS? IT IS TIME WE INVESTED IN HOME GROWN RESEARCH CAPACITY AND RESEARCH SOLUTION THAT WILL MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AFRICA. WE ARE NOT EXCLUDING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, BUT WE SHOULD DRIVE THE RESEARCH AGENDA.

MOZAMBIQUE'S 'GREEN REVOLUTION' FOCUSES ON INCREASING PRODUCTION THROUGH IMPROVED USE OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES AS WELL AS IMPROVED SEED VARIETIES, INPUT SUPPORT AND THROUGH THE LIMPOPO RIVER BASIN. THE FOOD CRISIS IS A WAKE-UP CALL FOR POLICY MAKERS, RESEARCHERS, PROCESSORS AND FOOD PRODUCERS. HOME GROWN RESEARCH EVIDENCE SHOULD GUIDE US IN FINDING LASTING SOLUTIONS TO THE FOOD CRISIS.

THE DEVASTATING FLOODS OF 2000, 2001, 2007 AND 2008 AND RECURRENT DROUGHTS IN 2002/2003, 2004/2005, 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008 HAVE COLLECTIVELY IMPACTED NEGATIVELY ON FOOD SECURITY IN MOZAMBIQUE.

REDUCED PRODUCTIVITY HAS MEANT THAT WE IN AFRICA SPEND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IMPORTING FOOD WHEN WE SHOULD BE PRODUCING IT, ADDING VALUE TO IT AND EXPORTING IT. THE 19 COMESA MEMBER STATES ALONE SPEND APPROXIMATELY US\$19 BILLION ON FOOD IMPORTS - MONEY THAT WILL OTHERWISE HAVE DEVELOPED AGRICULTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I STAND BEFORE YOU TO MAKE A CLARION CALL FOR AFRICA TO LOBBY FOR THE AFRICA CLIMATE SOLUTION AT THE DECEMBER 2009 COPENHAGEN POST KYOTO CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE AFOLU DEAL. WE SHOULD LOBBY FOR INCREASED AND MORE ACCESSIBLE GLOBAL FUNDING FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISMS. THIS CAN BE DONE BY ENSURING THAT THE REDUCTION OF GREEN HOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THROUGH AGRICULTURE, FORESTS AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE (AFOLU) ARE INCLUDED IN THE POST 2012 CLIMATE CHANGE REGIME.

AFRICA CAN PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGES, IF ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THE ENTIRE WORLD ENDORSE THE AFRICAN CLIMATE SOLUTION. IF AFOLU IS INCORPORATED INTO THE POST KYOTO PROTOCOL, AFRICA COULD GENERATE UP TO US\$3 BILLION PER YEAR IN CARBON TRADE.

SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE CONTINENT AS A WHOLE ARE AT DEVELOPMENT CROSS ROADS, HAVING BARELY SURVIVED THE GLOBAL CRISES. BUT AFRICA AND ITS PEOPLE ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR RESILIENCE TO BEAT THE ODDS. THIS IS A STRENGTH ON WHICH TO BUILD ON TO ENSURE THAT SMALL HOLDER FARMERS HAVE BETTER MARKET ACCESS, BETTER EXTENSION SERVICES AND BENEFIT FROM AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

OUR DEPENDENCE ON RAIN-FED AGRICULTURE HAS LEFT US VULNERABLE TO CHANGING CLIMATIC CONDITIONS THAT CALL FOR US TO ADAPT AND MITIGATE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. MITIGATION IS A SURE WAY OF SURVIVAL FOR OUR FARMERS. AS WE HEAD TO COPENHAGEN, AFRICA MUST SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE IN HAVING AGRICULTURE - THE BASIS OF OUR DEVELOPMENT - INCLUDED IN THE FINAL TEXT OF THE COPENHAGEN DEAL. THERE SHOULD BE NO DEAL WITHOUT AGRICULTURE.

OUR FARMERS MUST BE HELPED TO BETTER RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE WITHOUT DEPRIVING THEM OF THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

OUR BROTHER FROM SIERRA LEONE, RICE SCIENTIST, DR. MONTY JONES WHO MADE HISTORY AS THE FIRST AFRICAN TO WIN THE COVETED WORLD FOOD PRIZE IN 2004 TOLD A MEETING BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA IN JULY THIS YEAR THAT AFRICA NEEDS US\$4.4 BILLION ANNUALLY FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

AFRICA'S ENTIRE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET IS US\$2.2 BILLION ANNUALLY AND NEARLY US\$500 MILLION IS PROVIDED BY REGIONAL BODIES SUCH AS NEPAD, THE AFRICAN UNION AND FARA WHILE THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PROVIDES US\$250 MILLION TO 16 RESEARCH CENTRES.

WE CANNOT MODERNISE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE WITHOUT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE CAADP COMMITMENTS, ESPECIALLY PILLAR 4 ON IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS TO DISSEMINATE APPROPRIATE NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND SUPPORTING FARMERS ADOPT THEM. RESEARCH SHOULD SPUR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN IMPROVING CROP VARIETIES, CREATING BETTER FARMING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENSURING FARMERS HAVE BETTER ACCESS TO MARKETS. STORIES ARE ABUNDANT OF FARMERS LEAVING PRODUCE TO ROT BY THE ROADSIDE BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE TRANSPORT TO TAKE IT TO THE MARKET ON TIME.

AFRICA'S BUDGET PRIORITIES SHOULD MOVE FROM DEFENCE AND ADMINISTRATION COSTS TO AGRICULTURE AND RESEARCH. RESEARCH ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. WITHOUT ACCESS TO RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE WILL NOT TAKE OFF. HENCE IT IS CRITICAL THAT OUR SMALL HOLDER FARMERS HAVE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO UPSCALE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT.

AFRICA CANNOT DEVELOP AGRICULTURE WITHOUT MODERNISING IT. WE CANNOT DEVELOP AGRICULTURE WITHOUT ADDING VALUE TO THE BASIC COMMODITIES THAT WE CREATE. WE CANNOT CREATE WEALTH WITHOUT CREATING MARKETS BOTH INPUT AND OUTPUTS AND THAT IS WHY I AM HAPPY TODAY AS FANRPAN WE ARE DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES. FANRPAN CANNOT DO IT ALONE THEY NEED THE PARTNERSHIPS AS I BELIEVE THEIR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE IS IN PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE. WHEN IT COMES TO DEVELOPING CONTENT AND AMPLIFYING THE VOICES IN POLICY ADVOCACY, WE SHOULD ALL JOIN HANDS WITH FANRPAN.

I INVITE ALL THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND TECHNICAL PARTNERS TO USE THIS PLATFORM SO THAT WE CAN LEARN AND SHARE EXPERIENCES, USE THOSE WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED AS MODELS AND HELP THOSE IN NEED OF POLICY LEADERSHIP.

THERE IS NEED FOR ACCOUNTABLE PARTNERSHIPS, PARTNERSHIPS WHICH ARE EQUAL. AFRICA NEEDS AND SUPPORTS NORTH AND SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS THAT ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER AND TO THEIR CONSTITUENCIES BUT ARE EQUAL AS DEFINED BY THE TERM PARTNERSHIP.

I HAVE ALLUDED TO THE NEED TO USE RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURE FOR BETTER GAINS ON THE FOOD FRONT BECAUSE AGRICULTURE IS KEY TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION. WE SHOULD PUT OUR MONEY WHERE OUR MOUTHS ARE. THE GAME IS THE TRANSITION FROM POVERTY REDUCTION TO WEALTH CREATION AT EVERY LEVEL. WE NEED TO CREATE A WORKING MODEL WHERE SMALL HOLDER FARMERS CAN PRODUCE, PROCESS AND SELL THEIR PRODUCE BUT WITH SUPPORT SERVICES AT THEIR DOOR STEP. THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY ACCESS THESE SERVICES FOR FREE BUT CAN ACCESS THEM THROUGH THE WEALTH THEY HAVE GENERATED.

LET ME SHARE WITH YOU LESSONS FROM MY GRANDMOTHER AND FROM MY MOTHER WHO WAS FARMER AND KNEW WHICH CROPS TO -PLANT AND HOW TO KEEP THE HARVEST, WHEN AND WHAT TO SELL AND WHAT TO KEEP FOR THE FAMILY. WE WERE FOOD SECURE THEN. SO IT PUZZLES ME NOW THAT WITH ALL THE EXPERTISE THAT WE HAVE IN AFRICA, WE CONTINUE TO GRAPPLE NOT WITH WEALTH BUT WITH THE CHALLENGE OF FEEDING OURSELVES. I AM NOT SAYING FANRPAN WILL CHANGE THE WORLD BUT IF WE CAN HAVE MORE COUNTRIES THAT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY CAN FEED THEMSELVES THEN WE CAN BE PROUD AFRICANS.

THE TIME TO MAKE AGRICULTURE THE ENGINE TO DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS NOW. LET US USE THIS DIALOGUE TO ENSURE A FOOD SECURE AFRICA.

O BRIGADO! I THANK YOU.