

DRC FANRPAN NODE SPEECH - KINSHASA, DRC

SPEECH BY FANRPAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DR LINDIWE MAJELE SIBANDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE FANRPAN DRC NODE MEETING

- HONOURABLE MINISTERS
- FANRPAN STAKEHOLDERS: GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, FARMER ORGANISATIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR AND RESEARCHERS
- OUR VALUABLE FANRPAN COOPERATING PARTNERS
- MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
- ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

ALLOW ME, TO THANK YOU HONORABLE MINISTERS FOR GRACING THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION. I ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY MY GRATITUDE TO OUR MOST GENEROUS HOST, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO. I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOT TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PAY SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MR CHARLES MUSHIZI FOR THE EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THIS SPECTACULAR POLICY NODE MEETING. WE SAY TO YOU, THANK YOU AND MERCI BEAUCOUP.

IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO BE HERE TODAY AND REPRESENT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF FANRPAN, DR LINDIWE MAJELE SIBANDA, WHO IS REPRESENTING AFRICA AT THE LAUNCH OF THE CGIAR CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY (CCAFS) INITIATIVE IN NAIROBI, KENYA.

I BRING YOU GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF FANRPAN, HON. SINDISO NGWENYA, WHO IS ALSO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF COMESA.

THIS INDEED IS AN IMPORTANT AND HISTORIC OCCASION FOR FANRPAN. POLICY DIALOGUES 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 A QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN 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.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT AFRICA CAN FEED ITSELF! THIS REALIZATION IS REFLECTED IN THE AFRICAN VISION ESTABLISHED BY AU-NEPAD, WHICH AIMS TO ACHIEVE AN ANNUAL GROWTH IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY OF 6% PER ANNUM BY 2015. PRESSURE TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION HAS LED TO SEVERAL IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS. AMONGST THESE IS THE AU-NEPAD COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP). CAADP PILLAR 4 CALLS FOR 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. THERE CAN BE NO BETTER VEHICLE TO BENCHMARKING OUR SUCCESS THAN THE CAADP FRAMEWORK. WE WILL ENSURE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET AND THE SECTOR'S GROWTH TO ENSURE 6% MINIMUM ANNUAL GROWTH.

WE SHOULD NOT ONLY LOOK AT RESEARCHERS IN UNIVERSITIES AS THE TRADITIONAL RESEARCH EVIDENCE PROVIDERS. INSTEAD, LET US ALSO LOOK AT TOOLS THAT WILL DOCUMENT THE EVIDENCE SITTING IN ANECDOTAL INFORMATION, OUR VERY OWN GRAND-PARENTS. AFRICA HAS A STRONG ORAL TRADITION OF PASSING INFORMATION DOWN GENERATIONS. IT IS IMPORTANT WE USE IT, PRESERVE IT, AND LINK IT TO MODERN RESEARCH TOOLS. WE HAVE UNDERMINED THAT ORAL TRADITION THROUGH PAPER-BASED RESEARCH EVIDENCE WHICH MANY OF US RARELY READ. LET US GO BACK TO THE AFRICAN ORAL TRADITION WHICH IS LADEN WITH SPECIFIC MESSAGES THAT WILL BOOST THE POLICY DIALOGUES AND PROVIDE KNOWLEDGE WE NEED TO SHAPE POLICIES.

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING RESEARCH IN A NUMBER OF SPHERES. 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 AND PRIORITIES? IT IS TIME WE INVESTED IN HOME GROWN RESEARCH CAPACITY AND RESEARCH SOLUTIONS THAT WILL MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF AFRICA. WE ARE NOT EXCLUDING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, BUT WE SHOULD DRIVE THE RESEARCH AGENDA.

THE FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY ANALYSIS NETWORK (FANRPAN) IS A REGIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER NETWORK ESTABLISHED IN 1997. THIS POLICY NETWORK WAS FORMED AS A RESPONSE TO A CALL BY AGRICULTURE MINISTERS IN THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION FOR A NETWORK THAT COULD PROVIDE INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE TO INFORM POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND HARMONISATION AT REGIONAL LEVEL. THE NETWORK MEMBERS INCLUDES GOVERNMENT, FARMER ORGANISATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY, RESEARCHERS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE MEDIA. THE NETWORK CURRENTLY WORKS IN 13 COUNTRIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: ANGOLA, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO, MADAGASCAR, MALAWI, MAURITIUS, MOZAMBIQUE, NAMIBIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SWAZILAND, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, AND ZIMBABWE; NEW NODES ARE SOON TO BE ESTABLISHED IN EAST AFRICA.

THE NETWORK'S VISION IS "A FOOD SECURE AFRICA FREE FROM HUNGER AND POVERTY", AND ITS MISSION IS TO "PROMOTE EFFECTIVE FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICIES BY:

- 1) FACILITATING LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY
- 2) BUILDING THE CAPACITY FOR POLICY ANALYSIS AND POLICY DIALOGUE IN AFRICA
- 3) SUPPORTING DEMAND-DRIVEN POLICY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

FANRPAN'S KEY FOCUS IS ON

- 1) IMPROVING POLICY RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION ON KEY REGIONAL PRIORITY THEMES

- 2) DEVELOPING HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR COORDINATED POLICY DIALOGUE AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS
- 3) IMPROVING POLICY DECISION MAKING BY ENHANCING THE GENERATION, EXCHANGE AND USE OF POLICY RELATED INFORMATION

IN-LINE WITH THE NEPAD'S COMPREHENSIVE AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP), FANRPAN HAS THE FOLLOWING BROAD RESEARCH POLICY THEMES:

- FOOD SYSTEMS: ENSURING APPROPRIATE POLICIES FOR ENHANCED FOOD PRODUCTION, QUALITY, SAFETY, PROCESSING, PACKAGING AND DISTRIBUTION.
- AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY: IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL BY INCREASING UPTAKE OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES, PROMOTING INPUT AND OUTPUT MARKETS AND INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE.
- NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT: DEVELOPING POLICIES FOR MANAGING TRANSNATIONAL WATER RESOURCES, THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND COORDINATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOFUELS POLICIES AFRICA-WIDE.
- SOCIAL PROTECTION AND LIVELIHOODS: DESIGNING POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS TO MITIGATE AGAINST POVERTY, MALNUTRITION, VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE, HIV AND AIDS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING HERE TODAY IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IMPORTANT PLATFORM IN THE ROLE OF STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS IN POLICY PROCESSES:

- PLATFORMS THAT PROMOTE GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT ARE TO BE ENCOURAGED, ESTABLISHED AND NURTURED BECAUSE AFRICA HAS AN ORAL TRADITION, AND IT CANNOT SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE SHARING.
- PARLIAMENTARIANS AS CUSTODIANS AND DRIVERS OF THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS – HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN PROMOTING WELL INFORMED AND EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES.

- TO INCREASE FARM PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITS, FARMERS NEED SUPPORTIVE POLICIES THAT WILL OPEN UP NEW MARKETS, AND ENCOURAGE INNOVATION FOR HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITS.
- IMPROVED POLICY REQUIRES IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE—KNOWLEDGE FIRMLY ROOTED IN LOCAL AFRICAN CONTEXT AND EXPERIENCE. FANRPAN IS MOTIVATING FOR PROFESSORIAL CHAIR IN EVERY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY WHICH WILL ACCOMPANY THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD POLICIES SO THAT THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY BRINGS EVIDENCE TO INFORM POLICY DEVELOPMENT.
- FANRPAN COUNTRY NODES ARE WELL PLACED TO CONVENE AND COORDINATE THE POLICY DIALOGUES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (CAADP) AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS.
- FANRPAN HAS MOBILISED CIVIL SOCIETY WHO ARE WILLING TO ENGAGE IN POLICY PROCESSES AND DIALOGUE WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN ALL 13 MEMBER COUNTRIES.
- CLIMATE CHANGE IS A MAJOR THREAT TO AFRICA AND PARLIAMENTARIANS NEED TO LEAD THE ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS!

IT IS INDEED AN HONOR FOR US TO WITNESS THIS CONVENING. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DRC IS NOT NEW. OUR QUEST TO HAVE A FANRPAN NODE BEGAN A LONG TIME AGO. AT THE 2007 FANRPAN ANNUAL REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE IN ZAMBIA, AND ALSO AT THE 2009 FANRPAN ANNUAL REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE IN MOZAMBIQUE, WE HAD A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE DRC, MR CHARLES MUSHIZI, WHO HAD COME TO EXPLORE ON HOW WE CAN SET UP A NODE IN THE DRC. I AM HAPPY TODAY WE ARE WITNESSING THE FRUITS OF THAT ENGAGEMENT.

FANRPAN WAS SETUP A RESPONSE TO CREATE A FOOD SECURE AFRICA THAT COULD PROVIDE INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE TO INFORM POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND HARMONISATION. AFRICA CANNOT DEVELOP AGRICULTURE WITHOUT MODERNIZING 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 OUTPUT. THAT IS WHY I AM HAPPY THAT TODAY AS FANRPAN

WE ARE DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES. FANRPAN CANNOT DO IT ALONE. WE NEED 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.

AS FANRPAN, EVERY YEAR WE MEET AS A NETWORK TO DIALOGUE ON KEY POLICY ISSUES. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING A FULL DELEGATION FROM THE DRC AT THE NEXT FANRPAN ANNUAL REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE TO BE HELD IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, FROM 31 AUGUST TO 3 SEPTEMBER 2010 ON THE THEME “LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES IN A CHANGING CLIMATE”. AT THIS ENGAGEMENT, THE DRC WILL BE FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY FANRPAN NETWORK MEMBERS. CONSTITUTIONALLY, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE MANDATE TO LAUNCH NODES IN EAST AFRICA, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO EVENTUALLY LAUNCHING NODES AFRICA WIDE.

OUR BOARD CHAIRMAN, HON. NGWENYA, WILL BE HERE IN THE DRC IN THE COMING WEEKS, AND HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE AND CONGRATULATE YOU FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NODE. LATER IN THE YEAR FANRPAN’S CEO, DR SIBANDA, WILL ALSO COME TO THE DRC AS WE SEEK TO STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR COUNTRY.

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

I THANK YOU.