

## **Speech by Richard Chenevard**

### **SDC and Seed Security in the SADC region.**

Representatives of governments, COMESA and SADC,  
Partners, donors and friends,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to give you a short brief on the activities and projects of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) which are or will be implemented in Southern Africa.

Allow me first to introduce SDC. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Our overall goal is poverty reduction and we intend to achieve this by fostering economic self-reliance, state autonomy and good governance and by providing better access to education and basic healthcare services.

In Southern Africa, our regional programme aims at supporting reforms addressing social, economic, political and environmental vulnerabilities within the SADC region. Beside Governance and HIV and Aids, SDC is active in the Food Security sector and has specifically focused on Seed Security.

The regional food security strategy of SDC could be summarized in the following way: From seed research to markets. Our strategy was designed to respond to issues of quality, availability and accessibility of food.

Research is necessary to develop new seed varieties adapted to local conditions and having an improved yield. Linkages with the private sector are compulsory, only professionals can guarantee multiplication and dissemination in a sustainable way but for this to happen it is necessary to have a conducive policy environment. There is a need to train small-scale farmers on how to use new seeds and new farming techniques such as conservation farming. Obviously storage issues must be addressed as well. Why work on productivity improvement if surpluses don't get to the market?

Southern Africa – through for instance the SADC RISDP, CAADP or COMESA-ACTESA – has defined Agriculture as a top priority. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has therefore decided to increase its support to these regional initiatives and efforts.

Our forthcoming projects will – in a nutshell – address issues of productivity improvement and adapted seed multiplication, linkages to market, storage facilities, knowledge sharing and support to policy development. Other transversal issues such as gender equality, good governance and HIV and Aids will be considered as well.

As you know, our support – along with other donors – to the SADC Seed Security Network lead to the adoption of what I am calling the "Seeds protocols" harmonising modalities for seeds to be certified and traded in the region. This was a major achievement by SADC and particularly by its Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate.

The Harmonised Seed Security Project you will discuss today is the direct consequence of the above mentioned success. It took SDC and FANRPAN quite some energy and time before this project could be finalised because both organisations have high quality standards. In order not to overlap with other donors SDC has decided to fund activities in Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Budget constraints unfortunately did not permit to include more countries.

With its investment of over USD 4 million, SDC shows its commitment towards the region and its trust in FANRPAN. It must also be noted that a thorough due diligence process underlined the professionalism of FANRPAN.

Your presence today to this common vision workshop proves that we – meaning all of us – are on the right track. There is a lot of work to be done but the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation is convinced the project objectives will be achieved. And this is possible only with your involvement. On behalf of SDC I would like to thank you for your work ...and for your kind attention.