

**Remarks by FANRPAN made at the Third Meeting of the Joint Technical Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources**

**12 July 2010**

**By Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive Officer and Head of Mission**

Mr Chairman, we, the Food Agriculture Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network - FANRPAN, would like to thank COMESA for inviting us to participate at this meeting.

We commend COMESA for taking a holistic approach in addressing food security challenges, through this joint platform that brings three key sectors of agriculture, environment and natural resources.

We congratulate COMESA for taking the lead in spearheading the national CAADP process in 2007; championing the Africa Climate Solution globally in 2008 and for being the prime mover in calling for an inclusive comprehensive approach in the development of the regional compact, and moving towards a tripartite-wide CAADP compact in 2010. This is a major step towards the Africa-wide food security compact that the current AU chairman, H.E. Bingu wa Mutharika seeks to develop.

Mr Chairman, in the spirit of CAADP, a truly African owned and African- led programme, we on behalf of COMESA's regional technical partners appeal to COMESA, to capacitate and utilize the services of its sub-regional partners with whom it has signed MOUs -these partners being:

- a. Farmer Organisations - East African Farmers Federation (EAFF) & Southern Africa Confederation of Agriculture Unions (SACAU);
- b. Association of Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central (ASARECA)
- c. Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)
- d. Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) – a multi-stakeholder policy analysis and advocacy platform working in 16 African countries

Mr Chairman, these sub- regional partners have a mandate to mobilize farmers, amplify the voice of civil society, generate technologies and avail policy options to make the COMESA region food secure and wealthy; What they seek is capacity to implement their mandates.

Capacity is about financial resources, i) finances will allow these organisations to hire and retain staff to serve COMESA, ii) Capacity can also be built through partnerships, rather than peating local institutions against independent consultants and international firms.

We appeal to COMESA to institutionalize agricultural development by contracting sub-regional organisations to work side by side with international partners so that we build local capacity. We need to build and own our own knowledge databases and have the institutional memory that is necessary to inform the regions' development.

We appeal to the COMESA secretariat to embrace the principle of subsidiarity, provide core funding to support the secretariats of sub-regional bodies so that they can, as they are closer to the ground, deliver on their mandates and be genuine partners to accompany the COMESA secretariat in

program implementation; thereby creating the necessary interface between the secretariat and member states' multiple stakeholders.

Once again, FANRPAN values the partnership with COMESA and thanks COMESA for the opportunity to learn and contribute to this joint technical platform.

**END.**