

FANRPAN

Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network

Speech delivered at the FANRPAN Board and Partners Meeting, June 2009

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya,
Chairperson FANRPAN Board of Governors, COMESA Secretary General**

24 June 2009

On behalf of my colleagues in the FANRPAN Board, (1) Mr. Ajay Vashee; (2) Madam Vangile Titi; (3) Dr. Sam Mundia; (4) Madam Margaret Nyirenda (5) Prof. Johann Kirsten

We are all honoured to have you all, our valued partners joining us today.

I recognise our dignitaries:

- Honourable members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished senior officials from government and in particular our host government; the government of the Republic of South Africa and the Agricultural Research Council
- Representatives from UN agencies
- Our funding partners, from bilateral, multilateral and private foundations, and those that are yet to join us
- Our technical partners from National and International Research Institutions, Universities, The Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, the African Union,
- The media fraternity
- The Business and Agribusiness community both in their individual capacities and as representatives of various chambers of commerce
- Our partners implementing projects jointly with us
- The farming community

Allow me here to recognise the president of IFAP, Mr. Ajay Vashee

I recognise the resident representative for FAO, Ms. Rosebud Kurwijila who is the former Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agricultural at the African Union

Friends of FANRPAN and our Regional Secretariat,

It gives me great pleasure once again to welcome you to the FANRPAN 2009 Partners meeting.

We at FANRPAN are particularly honoured by your presence as we hold our partners in very high regard. It is especially heartening to see some familiar faces that attended last year's Partners Meeting. This is reinforcement of the decision the Board took to make the Partners Meeting an annual calendar event in the FANRPAN diary.

Allow me colleagues to amplify on the issue of networking and partnerships. FANRPAN is a network, whose membership in thirteen southern African countries consists of Farmer organisations, private sector; research organisations and governments that have a stake in FANR. In recognition of the fact that FANRPAN is a multi-stakeholder regional think tank, the development of appropriate FANR policies cannot be the responsibility of a single stakeholder. FANRPAN has strengthened its capacity by entering into partnerships with like-minded organisations.

Since 2001, FANRPAN has signed MoUs with forty seven international organisations. Of these, nine were in the past twelve months and these include; East African Farmers Federation (EAFF); University of Venda, South Africa; World Vision International; Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU); African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE); Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Oxfam America and Coordinating Assembly of NGOs (CANGO).

These diverse partnerships are a testimony of FANRPAN's mission which is to promote effective Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) policies by

- (i) Facilitating linkages and partnerships between government and civil society,

- (ii) Building the capacity for policy analysis and policy dialogue in southern Africa, and
- (iii) Supporting demand-driven policy research and analysis.

In the areas of advocacy, FANRPAN has registered visible presence and impact and advocating for social protection of vulnerable farmers by way of supporting and documenting successful input policies. Second, FANRPAN is working across nineteen eastern and southern African countries, and has carried the climate change agenda to global levels. And third, in promoting recovery after the global food crisis, FANRPAN has been a champion by promoting the “Farming First” principles

Colleagues, these are just a few of the notable success stories of the past twelve months.

Coming to the subject of finances, we as your governing board are proud to report that we met with the FANRPAN auditors yesterday and they have delivered an unqualified audit report and high commendation of the quality of financial reporting and maintenance of standards in the FANRPAN Finance department. This should definitely place FANRPAN on a very high pedestal for increased investments.

Whilst on the subject of finances and technical cooperation, I am proud today to announce to all of you that this week FANRPAN and the Gates Foundation will be issuing a public statement on their recently signed grant for strengthening the capacity of women farmers’ access to agricultural inputs.

I do not want to take away the thunder from our programme managers who have an action packed program for us, however allow me to articulate three things that we can get from this FANRPAN Partnership day.

Firstly, the FANRPAN secretariat would like to share its programmes and hear from you how best they can enhance their impact in attaining the overall goal of a food secure Africa.

Secondly, the network is about growth, if you are already not part of the network this is the time to enlist your partnership because there is a stake and niche for all stakeholders who want to eradicate poverty in Africa.

I spoke of this event being an annual event.

Let me end by inviting you to the annual FANRPAN policy dialogue which is a supreme not-to-be-missed event where we will be dialoguing on the true contribution of agriculture to African economies. Let us meet in Maputo, 1 – 5 September as we champion the fight against poverty and create a sustainable base for Africa's development.

I THANK YOU