COMESA AND FANRPAN SIGN MoU TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Food Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) to among other factors exchange information on food, agriculture and natural resources policy and institutional issues relevant to sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It also facilitates, where possible, access to relevant research and published materials on agriculture.

COMESA Acting Secretary General Ambassador Nagla El-Hussainy signed the MoU on behalf of COMESA while FANRPAN was represented by the Chief Executive Officer Dr Lindiwe Sibanda.

The MoU will also enable the two organisations work together to strengthen the understanding of regional international trade agreements and support the formulation of national trade agreements on agriculture, support the formulation of national and regional policies, build shared market information and communication systems and establish a database and promote advocacy on farmer issues.

Both FANRPAN and COMESA agreed to cooperate with relevant national, regional, and international institutions operating within the region in the design, implementation and assessment of capacity building initiatives to achieve maximum impact on matters of common interest.

Dr Sibanda commended the signing saying it will help COMESA and FANRPAN collaborate on finding solutions to the challenges in the agriculture
sector which include low productivity due to technological and policy constraints.

“We are honoured to formalise this very important relationship with COMESA whose programmes in agriculture are in line with what FANRPAN advocates for,” said Dr Sibanda after the signing ceremony held in Lusaka, Zambia on 28th August 2006.

FANRPAN’s objectives include the promotion of appropriate agricultural policies in order to reduce poverty, increase food security and enhance sustainable agricultural development in Southern Africa.

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1 COMESA is the largest African Economic grouping whose members are Burundi, Comoros, D R Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 11 of these are already operating a Free Trade Area launched in October 2000, while the rest trade on preferential terms, it is already working on the creation of a customs union by 2008.