



**COMESA CAADP COUNTRY FOCAL POINTS AND
COOPERATING PARTNER BRIEFING MEETING.**

**SPEECH BY ACTING COMESA SECRETARY GENERAL,
AMBASSADOR NAGLA EL HUSSAINY**

PAMODZI HOTEL, LUSAKA.

AUGUST 28, 2006

Your Excellencies,

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Zambia,
Representatives of Governments and Cooperating Partners affiliated to COMESA,
Representatives of the COMESA Member State present here,
Representatives of the NEPAD Secretariat,
Leaders of the Private Sector,
Leaders of Civil Society,
Heads of Research and Academic Institutions present,
Representatives of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially welcome you all, first to the beautiful city of Lusaka, and to this very important workshop on the efforts COMESA has made to design and effectively implement the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

Ladies and Gentlemen, on 31st October, 2000, COMESA reached the great milestone of a Free Trade Area (FTA), when nine of the 19 COMESA member States eliminated their tariffs on COMESA originating products. Today 12 member States are participating in the Free Trade Area. Intra-regional trade in COMESA is growing at an average of 9% per year. In FTA COMESA countries intra-regional trade growth is 20% per year. Agricultural goods comprise about 40% of regional trade by value. If we raise the productivity of the agricultural sector, the share of agricultural trade will go up and we would be making a more meaningful impact on the challenge of poverty and hunger in the region.

Key priorities for COMESA in consolidating the FTA and preparing for the Customs Union include implementing major programs in infrastructure, trade and agriculture. In the agricultural sector, our focus is on implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), a programme of the African Union whose implementation mandate in our region rests with COMESA. The CAADP programme's four broad areas of focus include:

- (a) expansion of the irrigation sub-sector and promoting sustainable land management (Pillar 1 of CAADP)
- (b) strengthening trade capacity, improving physical market infrastructure and market support areas such as market information, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacity, strengthening regional and cross-border farmer and business organizations, establishing value addition enterprises and promoting contract farming (pillar 2 of CAADP)
- (c) promoting food and nutrition security and dealing with the challenges of the vulnerable and food insecure populations (pillar 3 of CAADP), and
- (d) Strengthening research institutions and supporting farmer adoption of productivity –enhancing technologies (pillar 4 of CAADP).

Ladies and Gentlemen, given a population increasing at more than 3% per year in the region, rapid agricultural sector growth will be required to meet poverty reduction targets we have set for ourselves in the Millenium Development Agenda. Most importantly, we must add value to our products to mitigate the impacts of unstable commodity prices, and we must invest in technologies that make the agricultural sector more resilient in the face of frequent droughts.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of member States expenditure must also be examined. Agricultural resuscitation programs launched in many of our member States have struggled to influence the budget process, programming or policy formulation across the board. Ladies and gentlemen, it is critical that the CAADP process receives support in our Government systems.

In today's meeting, we have representatives of governments appointed by their respective Ministers of Agriculture in COMESA member States. It will be crucial that this team of men and women lead the efforts of working with all key public and private sector stakeholders to ensure delivery of resources to agriculture. In this regard, we should all remember that in 2003, our heads of State agreed to set aside

10% of the public budget for agricultural development annually. This matter will be a cornerstone of the CAADP agenda and the Secretariat will follow it closely.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we now know that even when our Governments deliver the 10% share of public budgets to the agricultural sector, we will still be short of the required investment levels to reach the 6% growth rate required to attain Millennium Development Goal number 1 of cutting hunger and poverty in half by the year 2015. It is in this regard that we must all look at CAADP as a partnership. A partnership in which our cooperating partners must play a crucial and critical role in assisting member States in identifying the gaps and providing the required sectoral investments. Further, the private sector must be encouraged to play a greater role in the sector and we should all work to address the constraints that hold them back from investing in the region's abundant potential. Civil society, research institutions and other classes of stakeholders should all contribute to the analytical agenda for identifying the real investments that must be made to ensure attainment of sustained growth in the sector.

Over the last year, various meetings have been held which are important to the Pillars of CAADP and for the design of regional and national compact agreements. The fertilizer meeting in June in Abuja and the recent meeting on sustainable land management at the NEPAD Secretariat in South Africa were key in informing the programs that must be supported under Pillar 1 of CAADP. Through the support of our cooperating partners we have been able to initiate design work for Pillar 2 and Pillar 3 of CAADP at the regional level and we have very advanced drafts. This will need all stakeholders' inputs to finalize. Our research community in the region is leading our design for pillar 4. Our target is to complete all design and consultative work and sign a concrete regional agreement with all our partners by December 2006. In the coming year 2007, we want to see full implementation of the CAADP framework at the regional level.

At the national level, Member States have also done a lot of initial work on their own. We will work with them over the next few months to stock take their efforts to ensure

a well targeted robust agenda that delivers resources to key areas in the sector and that there is a working partnership for growth. This will be done through what we are calling the country roundtable process that has now been initiated in Rwanda.

Monitoring of what we do is very important. This is why we have put in place a dedicated structure for the process. We have put together a team of seasoned and well experienced professionals to manage implementation of CAADP regionally and nationally, together with an effective monitoring and knowledge support system. Where capacity gaps have been identified, these are being filled through the support of our cooperating partners.

As CAADP is a process, and not a one time event, let me share with you some of the early actions we are putting in place at the regional level.

Under Pillar 1, to assist member States increase area under irrigation and deliver support to major agricultural projects with a regional impact, we are seeking the establishment of a Regional Irrigation Fund. Our irrigation sector activities are presently receiving technical support from the Government of India and we are working with the Indian Government to ensure delivery of funds to well defined irrigation sector projects. To promote sustainable production, we have prepared a joint COMESA/SADC strategic framework for fertilizer, and this is being expanded through consultations with the private sector to include issues related to the seed sector.

Under Pillar 2, we are consulting with the European Union for speedy implementation of the Regional Food Security and Risk Management Program for Eastern and Southern Africa (REFORM) in which we working with our colleagues in the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community. The COMESA component of this program will focus on strengthening Cross Border Trade Associations. The program will also contribute to improved regional and national capacities to analyze policies and programs for management of

chronic food insecurity, and assess the potential of alternative social protection approaches.

Other ongoing activities under Pillar 2 include advanced consultations with regional and international research, academic and private sector entities for implementation of programmes that enable a more systematic movement of staple food products from surplus areas to deficit areas as well a programme for expanding the access of farmers to finance through an enhanced regional commodity warehousing system.

We are also in process of establishing a regional model manufacturing centre to lead efforts in value addition, particularly in the cotton sector.

Under Pillar 3, we have initiated, with the support of USAID, a programme to control the spread cassava mosaic virus disease and banana bacterial wilt in 6 COMESA countries. Further, working with USAID, we are in the final stages of launching a Regional Enhanced Livelihoods Program for Pastoral Areas. The program will include activities to assist with movement and trade of animals across borders; regional Early Warning mechanisms and response to emergencies and conflict; and sanitary and phyto-sanitary harmonization for export across borders and to other countries. A key component of the program is to enhance livestock and livestock products trade within COMESA and with the Middle East through negotiating reasonable animal disease certification, or through alternatives such as export of chilled meat and building on successes already in place.

Still in the livestock sector, we are working with member states to conclude a programme for the eradication of tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis.

In Pillar 4, our research community in the region is identifying a package of agricultural technologies for up-scaling in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in this workshop today, we will share with you more concretely,

- (a) the Status of COMESA Regional CAADP Compact design and implementation;
- (b) Activities leading to the launch of the Rwanda CAADP Roundtable;
- (c) Activities leading to the launch of CAADP in the rest of COMESA;
- (d) The role of CAADP focal points;
- (e) Actions to quicken CAADP implementation in COMESA, and
- (f) Modalities for up scaling proven agricultural technologies.

As conclude, I would like to thank the Government of Sweden, the Government of the United Kingdom, the US Government, the EU, the Government of Norway, the FAO, the World Bank and other partners for the moral and financial support provided to COMESA as we move towards finalizing and signing our regional agricultural compact programme. I would also like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to the NEPAD Secretariat and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) for the strong partnership and guidance on many issues of strategic significance to our work in agriculture. We are also grateful to our member States for their seriousness in working to resolve the key challenges of our region. Overall, in COMESA we are determined to raise our cooperation in confronting the many challenges that face us to a new high. We are resolved to marching towards creating a robust Customs Union in which the greatest majority of our people will be supported to participate through tapping of their comparative advantages. We look forward to a Customs Union in which agricultural productivity is spurred by an expanded market and where consumers will have access to quality products produced by a competitive regional private sector.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all an excellent meeting today. For those of you, still having follow-on meetings with us at the Secretariat, we will see you tomorrow.

I thank you very much.