

## PRESS RELEASE

### SADC-RAP WORKSHOP FOR FARMERS ORGANISATIONS

DATE: 4-6 September 2009

EMBARGO: NONE

A consultative workshop on the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) was held from September 2 to 4 2009, in Johannesburg, South Africa, for Farmers' Organisations (FOs) in the region. The workshop was jointly organised by the SADC- Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR), the FAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa and the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU). It aimed at enabling Farmers' Organisations to better understand the rationale and objectives of a regional agricultural policy and eventually effectively contribute to identifying essential elements of the SADC-RAP.

SADC is currently in the process of formulating its Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) in an effort to facilitate the implementation of the resolutions of the Dar Es Salaam Declaration. Whilst the latter provides the political commitment to further the process of agricultural policy harmonisation, the RAP will work towards the provision of the necessary policy and legal instruments through which SADC can give real effects to its commitment by comprehensively coordinating its food security and agricultural policies. At continental level, the SADC-RAP will link with the NEPAD/CAADP initiative. As the SADC regional agricultural policy will ultimately be the framework for harmonising and integrating agricultural policies for all countries in the region, it is therefore critically important that major stakeholders, and especially Farmers' Organisations, are fully involved in the process.

About 50 delegates, drawn from 13 SADC countries as well as the SADC secretariat, the FAO, SACAU and ReSakss-SA, participated in the workshop. The participants were first presented examples of common regional agricultural policies that were developed and are being implementing in other regions – namely the EU Common Agricultural Policy, and the agricultural policy of the ECOWAS (ECOWAP). They then discussed the main purpose and objectives of a SADC-RAP, key policy areas to be covered by the SADC-RAP, as well implementation arrangements.

The outputs of this regional consultation of farmers' representatives will be added to those of the other consultations that took place since the formulation process of the SADC-RAP started in March 2008, including contributions from the livestock sector and from the crop sector in the region. Concurrently, reports of national reviews that have taken place in the 15 SADC member States are being compiled by the SADC – FANR directorate. Thematic studies, such as on edible oilseeds, have also been undertaken and will further feed the RAP formulation process. Eventually, a first draft of SADC Regional Agricultural Policy will be discussed at a regional consultative workshop for SADC government representatives and other key regional stakeholders, which is scheduled to take place towards the end of the year and will set the steps for the next development phase of the SADC-RAP.

The RAP workshop for FOs, together with the entire formulation process of the SADC-RAP, has received technical and organisational support from FAO and the financial assistance of the French Cooperation.

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