



Press Release

10 May 2018

SACAU hosts Annual Conference on trade as a driver for agricultural transformation

The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa will address over 90 delegates attending the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions' (SACAU) Annual Conference. The event, which will be held at the Kingdom Hotel in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, will be co-hosted with SACAU's two members in Zimbabwe, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) and Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). It will take place from 14 to 15 May.

Held under the theme, *trade as a driver for agricultural transformation in southern Africa*, the conference will bring together the top leadership of national farmers' organisations, policymakers, agribusiness leaders, development partners and other stakeholders from the southern African region and beyond.

"This year's conference theme is primarily motivated by Africa's natural resource endowment and the increasing global demand for food, fuel and fibre, which are essential elements for the transformation of the agricultural sector. While trade plays a critical link between markets and production, its performance in transforming the agricultural sector in the region has been less than satisfactory. Currently, there is an unequal balance of power between industrialised and developing countries, hence our countries have for a long time been reduced to suppliers of cheap raw materials and consumers of imported processed/manufactured products. In addition, our farmers are consigned to the high risk-low return type of agriculture, partly due to their limited appreciation and understanding of the complexity of the whole trade architecture and its requirements," said SACAU's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ishmael Sunga.

The conference aims to discuss key concerns and issues around trade arrangements and practices; identify and discuss key elements to consider in pursuing a trade-driven agricultural transformation agenda and create an opportunity for farmer leaders in southern Africa to better understand the rules, regulations, and key processes (e.g. negotiations and dispute settlements) within which trade happens at global, continental and regional levels as well as in between countries.

SACAU invites interested stakeholders and the press to the conference which will also be addressed by various trade experts.

The conference will be followed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 16 May. The AGM is the highest governance authority of the organisation and is for members only. Dr Theo de Jager who is the President of SACAU will present his last Chairman's report before retiring from the Board at this meeting. SACAU will confirm its new president and elect a new deputy president and an ordinary Board member during the meeting.

SACAU's AGM and conference are important platforms for farmer leaders and key agricultural players to interact and address various issues that have an impact on the region's agricultural sector. We anticipate constructive discussions and a plan of action for change.

Ends/

For more information and interviews, contact:

Boitumelo Molusi

Tel: +27 11 888 0140

Cell: +27 79 713 5953

bmolusi@frayintermedia.com

Adeva Machiso Gwenzi

Cell: +263 77 244 2156

info@zfu.org.zw