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**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture

Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles
14 - 15 March 2008

**REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE**

**Theme: *"Consolidating Regional Economic Integration
through Value Addition, Trade and Food Security"***

ACRONYMS

ACTESA	:	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa
ACTIF	:	African Cotton and Textile Industries Federation
AfDB	:	African Development Bank
AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMPRIP	:	Agricultural Marketing and Regional Integration Project
AU	:	African Union
AUC	:	African Union Commission
BADEA	:	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
CAADP	:	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme
CAP	:	Common Agricultural Policy
CIFOR	:	Centre for International Forestry Research
COMESA	:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAFCA	:	Eastern African Fine Coffees Association
EAGC	:	Eastern Africa Grain Council
EC	:	European Community
ESA	:	Eastern and Southern African
ESADA	:	Eastern and Southern African Dairy Association
EPA	:	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	:	European Union
FAMIS	:	Food and Agricultural Market Information System
FAO	:	Food and Agricultural Organization
FPA	:	Fisheries Partnership Agreement
FARA	:	Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa
GCC	:	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	:	Human Immune Virus
IGAD	:	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IPPSD	:	Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development Division
KACE	:	Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange
KEPHIS	:	Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
LDC	:	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	:	New Economic Partnership for Africa Development
OIE	:	World Organization for Animal Health
OPEC	:	Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCU	:	Program Coordinating Unit
RABESA	:	Regional Approach to Bio-Safety and Bio-technology

		Policies in Eastern and Southern Africa
RATES	:	Regional Agriculture Trade Expansion Support Project
RATIN	:	Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network
REFORM	:	Regional Food Security and Risk Management
RELPA	:	Regional Enhanced Livelihoods for Pastoralist Areas
RMMTC	:	Regional Model Manufacturing Training Centre
SPS	:	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development
UNZA	:	University of Zambia
WFP	:	World Food Programme
WTO	:	World Trade Organization
WWF	:	World Wide Fund for Nature

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifth Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture was held in Victoria Mahe, Seychelles, from 14 to 15 March 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to review progress in the implementation of agricultural programmes in the region, the status of the regional food security situation and the progress being made at the national and regional level in aligning to and implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) agenda.

II. ATTENDANCE, OPENING OF THE MEETING, ELECTION OF THE BUREAU AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

(a) Attendance and Opening of the Meeting (*Agenda item 1*)

2. The meeting was attended by Ministers and Heads of Delegations from Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, representatives of the African Union (AU), Food and Agricultural Organisations (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), USAID/East Africa, International Fertilizer Development Centre, ICRISAT, ASARECA, Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), Regional Universities Forum (RUFORUM) and Michigan State University attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex II.

3. The meeting was graced by the presence of the Vice President of the Republic of the Seychelles, His Honour Mr. Joseph Belmont. In his welcoming and opening remarks, the outgoing Chairperson of the Committee of Agricultural Ministers, Professor El-zobir Bashir Taha, highlighted the main areas of the Khartoum Declaration, which included needs to ensure adequate supply of agricultural inputs to the regions' smallholder farmers. He also highlighted the Ministers' commitment to addressing Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) constraints to regional trade.

4. The Representative of the AU Commission, Dr. Babagana, in his remarks emphasized that through the CAADP agenda, the African continent was determined to become a strategic player in Agricultural trade and commended COMESA and ECOWAS for being the most advanced RECs in the implementation of CAADP.

5. The Representative of the FAO, Mr. Chipeta, in his remarks applauded COMESA for having done so much in prioritizing the agricultural sector. He emphasized the need for the African continent to focus on increasing productivity so as to regain its lost position in global Agricultural trade.

6. The Deputy Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP), Ms Sheila. Sisulu, in her remarks called the attention of Ministers to the impending challenges regarding reduced access to food caused by emerging issues such as rising fuel and food prices, increased use of food crops for bio-fuels and impact of climate change. She highlighted the need for countries to focus on the MDG 1. In this regard, Ms Sisulu highlighted that WFP, working with member States was looking at ways to fund sustainable solutions to problems by using WFP's local food procurement for the benefit of low income farmers.

The Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Mr. Erastus J O Mwencha, MBS, also made a statement. In his remarks, he noted the potential impact of rising agricultural commodity prices caused by increasing use of cereals for biofuels on regional food security. He underlined the importance of ensuring a strong negotiating position in the EPAs for long-term competitiveness of the region's agricultural sector. He reemphasized the importance of allocating increased resources to the agricultural sector in line with the Maputo Declaration and in this regard he commended the partnership between COMESA and the African Union in tracking the progress being made.

7. Officially opening the meeting, the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport, Honourable . Joel Morgan, informed the meeting that agriculture was an engine for economic development in the COMESA region as it accounted for 32% of the COMESA Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

8. Further, he noted that in order to raise the region's agricultural competitiveness, COMESA Secretariat had initiated the implementation of a number of initiatives in line with the COMESA strategy which stresses the importance of cooperation and coordination of regional agricultural policies, food security responses, product marketing, research and development, plant and animal disease, pest control, training, irrigation development and exploitation of marine and forestry resources.

9. The Minister noted that the region was faced with the challenge of climate change which may significantly impact negatively on agricultural performance through extreme weather patterns, which would alter the availability of water, arable land, biodiversity and terrestrial ecosystems

service. He further noted that the region was vulnerable to climate change as economies were dependent on rainfed agriculture. He informed the meeting that in the case of Seychelles, in 2007 there was a sharp decline in industrial fisheries production due to a change in ocean temperature which shifted the thermo-cline, causing the fish stock to go to depth beyond the reach of purse seiners.

10. He urged the region to implement mitigation and adaptation strategies to address the challenges of climate change, as well as exploring opportunities emerging from carbon trading.

11. He also noted that the COMESA region was facing additional threat to food security caused by the emerging bio-fuels industry as it puts additional pressure on food security by diverting natural resources from food production sectors.

12. Further, the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport informed the meeting that Seychelles had signed an Interim EPA with the EU. The interim trade agreement which Seychelles and other non-LDC countries have signed was indeed a bridge towards a more comprehensive common framework. He also noted that Seychelles's current Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPAs) with the international fishing partner was one of the framework that needed to be revised as the low returns on the exploitation of fisheries resources internationally was disadvantageous to the country.

13. The Minister noted that the region was honored that this year's Ministers' meeting would be followed by the AU-NEPAD CAADP Review Meetings and the CAADP Partnership Platform Meeting.

(b) Election of the Bureau (*Agenda item 2*)

14. The meeting elected the following Bureau:

Chairperson	-	Seychelles
Vice Chairperson	-	Zimbabwe
Rapporteur	-	Sudan

(c) Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work (*Agenda Item 3*)

15. The meeting adopted the agenda as follows:

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of the Bureau
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work

4. Consideration of the Report and Recommendations of the Eighth Meeting of the Committee on Agriculture
5. Emerging issues under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)
6. Interventions and Statements by the Ministers and Heads of Delegations
7. Statements by Co-operating Partners
8. Consideration of the Draft Declaration by the Ministers of Agriculture
9. Consideration of the Report and Declaration by Ministers of Agriculture
10. Any Other Business
11. Consideration and Adoption of the Report, Declaration and Recommendations of the meeting
12. Closure of the Meeting

III. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

(d) Consideration and Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee (Agenda item 4)

16. The Chairperson of the Technical Committee on Agriculture, Mr. Walter Talma, Principal Secretary for Environment, Natural Resources and Transport of the Republic of Seychelles, presented to the Ministers the Report of the 8th Meeting of the Technical Committee on Agriculture held from 12 to 13 March 2008, in Victoria, Seychelles.

17. The report outlined various topics discussed in the meeting. The Ministers considered the report and made decisions as outlined below:

(a) Overview of Agriculture in COMESA

18. The Ministers of Agriculture reviewed the Strategic Framework, which guides the implementation of the CAADP in the region. Further, they reviewed the report on the food security situation in the region and made a number of decisions.

Decisions

19. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *In order to provide a pool of knowledge in support of the new aggressive growth agenda for the agricultural sector being pursued under the CAADP framework, Sub – Committees on each one of the four Pillars of the CAADP: Land and Water*

Management, Trade Capacity, Market Access and Rural and Infrastructure, Food and Nutrition Security and Science and Technology, should be established to ensure sustained and quality technical input and review on agricultural programmes in the region

- (ii) *The detailed Terms of Reference for all the pillar sub committees should be developed;*
- (iii) *Member States should continue allocating greater resources to agriculture in order to foster accelerated economic development and comply with the directives of the Maputo declaration;*
- (iv) *In line with the Treaty, member States should endeavour to eliminate export bans on strategic food staples in order to allow free trade and flow of these commodities across borders and thus enable price stability for such commodities; and*
- (v) *Member States should focus on promoting increased capacity of entrepreneurs to enable them effectively take advantage of regional trade opportunities.*

(b). Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

(i) Progress Report on the CAADP Roundtable Processes in Member States

20. The Ministers reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the CAADP at National and regional levels.

Decisions

21. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *Member States should promote investment in agricultural training and support the establishment of Centres of Excellence to create a sustainable and robust regional capacity for the implementation of CAADP;*
- (ii) *Member States should identify key early action activities for support by cooperating partners and should put in place mechanisms for coordinating the various components of CAADP managed by other relevant ministries;*
- (iii) *Member States should provide resources to the office of the CAADP National Focal point to strengthen the implementation of*

- the round table process and overall coordination on the in-country agricultural development agenda;*
- (iv) *Member States need to explore modalities to strengthen farmer organizations and to facilitate their full involvement in the implementation of the CAADP agenda;*
 - (v) *The Secretariat should effectively highlight the impact of the completion of the CAADP Compact in Rwanda in order to encourage other Member States to hasten their processes;*
 - (vi) *The Secretariat should produce updated status of the implementation of the Maputo Declaration with regard to implementation of the decision to allocate 10% of national budgets to agriculture on the basis of the agreed AU definition;*
 - (vii) *The Secretariat should work with member States to track private sector investment in the agriculture sector in order to arrive at a more holistic view of total investments in the sector; and*
 - (viii) *Member States should enhance their collaborative activities in the areas of expert exchange and take advantage of the offers made by the Governments of Egypt and Sudan.*

(c) Pillar III: Programmes under Food and Nutrition Security

22. Under Pillar III, the Agricultural Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of initiatives aimed at attainment of regional food security such as the Regional Enhanced Livelihoods in Pastoral Areas (RELPA) which is aimed at promoting livestock marketing and enhancing the quality of life among pastoral communities in the horn of Africa and the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) focusing on promoting development of collaborative partnerships to promote expanded trade in staple crops in the COMESA region. Further, the Ministers noted that the escalating costs of farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and energy, rising fuel and food prices, increased use of food crops for bio-fuels, as well as the effect of climate change, posed a serious challenge to the attainment of regional food security.

Decisions

23. The Ministers decided that
- (i) *As a follow up to the Abuja Declaration on Food Security COMESA, FAO, WFP and other partners should work with member States to identify agricultural commodities of strategic importance and ensure these were included in the ACTESA and other promotional programmes;*
 - (ii) *Member States should ensure that food aid assistance in the region is development oriented and promotes sustainability of food*

security among target beneficiaries. In this regard, the COMESA Secretariat is directed to work with WFP and other partners in deepening the local food procurement initiative to enhance productivity of small holder farmers;

- (iii) Pursuant to the Abuja Declaration on Food Security, member States should expand the school feeding programmes in partnership with WFP and other stakeholders thereby creating a sustainable market for small farmers.*
- (iv) The Secretariat should fully define the term “food security commodities” and not equate this only to cereal availability but include other food security crops such as roots and tubers and pulses,*

(d) Pillar 1 Activities: Land and Water Management

Overall Continental Framework on Sustainable Land and Water Management (including climate change, fisheries sector development, irrigation, forestry development, wetlands sector management and Fertiliser Sub Sector)

24. The Ministers acknowledged the collaboration between NEPAD Secretariat and COMESA in the implementation of the overall framework on land and water sector on the continent which highlights the importance of promoting sustainable agricultural practices in order to promote sustained agricultural productivity.

Decisions

25. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) The COMESA region should prioritise and support country and regional initiatives addressing the development and promotion of appropriate sustainable land and water management practices in all farming and land use systems;*
- (ii) The region should take stock of trends in land degradation, on one hand and available/potential “best practices”, on the other, to offer countries and the region as scientifically informed and locally proven options to deal with land and water degradation;*
- (iii) COMESA should constitute, at the Heads of State and Government level, a special initiative to rally local and international support for COMESA’s country and regional efforts in responding to the challenges of land degradation and climate change, including informed abilities to adequately and collectively respond to emerging related issues such as bio-fuels and carbon financing;*

- (iv) *The COMESA region should enhance greater engagement between the Ministries of Agriculture and the Ministries of Environment to strengthen synergies and complementarities in offering more integrated, holistic and comprehensive measures in addressing the land degradation challenges and providing an environment supportive to attaining the mutual objectives of agriculture productivity and environmental resilience;*
- (v) *COMESA Secretariat should facilitate greater engagement by all the players and stakeholders, including the TerrAfrica Partnership, to speedily develop and make available to country CAADP teams the Sustainable Land and Water Management framework (country SLWM Investment framework tools) “tools” to guide analytical assessment, formulation and implementation of quality investment programmes aimed at supporting increased adoption of sustainable land and water management in all farming and land use systems. We specifically urge the development partners to align and support this process;*
- (vi) *NEPAD and COMESA should collaborate on a Capacity Development programme to enhance capacities and competencies in identified network of Pillar institutions with the University of Zambia (UNZA) taking leadership in the COMESA region with networks in the COMESA region; and*
- (vii) *NEPAD and COMESA Secretariat should work together on a joint programme to consolidate and enhance capacities of CAADP country teams including ensuring appropriate and adequate access to relevant information and knowledge.*

(a) Climate Change and the Carbon Fund

26. The Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of the Joint COMESA, NEPAD, and WWF programme on Climate Change. The meeting also noted that COMESA working together with AU, WWF and NEPAD had established a Working group on Climate Change, which will facilitate information sharing on best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Further, the Ministers noted NORAD's commitment to support the Climate Change Initiative spearheaded by COMESA and its partners.

Decisions

27. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *The Secretariat should establish the COMESA Carbon Fund by June 2008;*

- (ii) *Member States should integrate policies and measures that address climate change into development planning and ongoing sectoral decision-making;*
- (iii) *Member States should work closely with the COMESA Secretariat in the development of the Carbon Fund, which will significantly benefit the smallholder farmers;*
- (iv) *COMESA Secretariat should develop mechanisms for linking up climate work to the on going work being implemented in the region by other partner institutions; and*
- (v) *The COMESA Secretariat should ensure that the current climate change initiative covers the oceans as major sinks for carbon.*

(b) Fisheries Sector Development:

28. Under fisheries development, the Ministers noted the role which the fishery sector plays in the economies of the region and the progress made on the finalization of the Regional Fisheries Development Strategy. They agreed that the region should develop a programme aimed at setting up strategic fish market infrastructure, develop a capacity building programme on sustainable utilisation of fish, and designate a regional centre of excellence in marine and inland fisheries.

Decisions

29. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *Member States should provide necessary inputs for COMESA Secretariat to effectively coordinate the process of finalizing the regional fisheries development strategy;*
- (ii) *The Secretariat should be holistic in developing the fisheries sector and include both the fresh water fisheries sector as well as the marine fisheries sub sector in the strategy; and*
- (iii) *Member States should take advantage of the University of Malawi Agricultural Fisheries facilities and other relevant institutions in the region to support capacity development of the sector and should establish a Regional Training Centre for both Marine and Freshwater fishing;*
- (iv) *COMESA should develop a programme on capacity building and should mobilize resources for the establishment of a centre of excellence on fisheries development.*

(c) Forestry Sector Development:

30. The Ministers noted the collaboration between COMESA and CIFOR in the development of the COMESA forestry strategy. They noted that the COMESA region was among the leading exporters of timber and non-timber forest products. The Democratic Republic of Congo is the fifth largest exporter of tropical logs, Sudan provides approximately 60% of global supplies of gum Arabic, while many other member States are leading exporters in valuable non-timber forest products.

31. Further, the ministers noted that COMESA will be convening a Stakeholder meeting on forestry issues from 16-18 April, 2008 in Lusaka, Zambia

Decisions

32. The Ministers decided that

- (i) *Member States (particularly the Ministries for forestry, and Ministries responsible for the environment and trade from select member states) and key partners are invited to participate in a COMESA organized stakeholders workshop to be held in mid April 2008 to initiate development of a regional strategy on forestry management;*
- (ii) *Member States should ensure that at the national level, the Forestry Departments and other stakeholders are fully involved in the development of agricultural and economic development strategies, to capture synergies between Forestry and other sectors and harness its role in economic development;*
- (iii) *The COMESA Secretariat should establish a database of centres of excellence in the region on forestry and actively draw on their expertise in the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy; and*
- (iv) *COMESA, CIFOR and other partner organizations should ensure that the design and implementation of the COMESA forestry strategy takes into account successes and shortcomings of past approaches.*

(d) Irrigation Development

33. Under irrigation development, the Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of this programme and in particular the current collaboration between COMESA and other partners such as

China, India and Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA).

Decisions

34. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *Member State should forward bankable irrigation projects to the COMESA Secretariat for consideration by various institutions and cooperating states such as India, China, GCC, OPEC Fund, etc.*
- (ii) *Member States should take up the offer by the Governments of Egypt and Sudan in irrigation development and mechanization of farms*

(e) Wetlands Sector Development:

35. Under Wetland Sector Development, the Ministers acknowledged the role which this sector plays in food security and stressed the need for promoting sustainable utilization of wetlands utilization.

Decisions

36. The Ministers decided that

- (i) *The promotion of good agricultural practices such as soil/water conservation, afforestation of non arable uplands and other related techniques were essential in sustainable use of wetlands; and*
- (ii) *COMESA should forge partnership(s) with non Governmental Organizations such as Wetland Action on enhancing expansion of sustainable techniques in wetlands.*

(f) Fertilizer Sub Sector

37. Under, the Fertiliser Sub Sector, the Ministers underscored the importance of this sector. However, they raised concerns on the rising prices of fertilisers due to a rise in fuel price, which has direct impact on food security. Further, the Government of Zambia and Zimbabwe called on other countries to invest into the fertiliser production plants in these countries.

Decisions

38. The Ministers decided as follows:

- (i) *Ministers welcomed the offer by FAO to work with the Secretariat to carefully analyse the causes of the ever rising cost of fertilizer. Beyond just attributing the high cost of fertilizer to increases in crude oil prices, member States should look at the impact of low fertilizer consumption, the impact of procuring from many different sources, the impact of buying in small bags as compared to bulk buying, the impact of procuring from different parts of the world and the impact of shipping in small quantities; and*
 - (ii) *Member States are encouraged to explore the feasibility of local production as well as rehabilitation of existing plants. Rehabilitation of such plants would elevate production and benefit both local and regional agricultural production.*
 - (iii) *Member States should in addition to chemical fertilizers promote the utilization of organic fertilizers.*
- (e) Pillar II: Trade Capacity, Rural Infrastructure and Market Access**
- (i) Commodity-Based Trade in Products Derived from Animals**

39. The Ministers noted the potential value of adopting a commodity based trade approach in enhancing trade in livestock commodities.

Decisions

40. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *Member States should collaborate with development partners and the Secretariat in the realization of the Commodity Based Trading System in Livestock products, and including as a matter of urgency, an emphasis on the need for revision of international standards relating to livestock trade; and*
- (ii) *Member States should collaborate with the Secretariat to establish a Technical Working Group to develop a strategy for exploiting the commodity based trade system to the advantage of the region. The recommendations of the Technical Working Group should be submitted to the OIE via member States delegates to the OIE (Paris), their relevant OIE Sub Regional offices and the AU's Directorate of Rural Economy and Agriculture (Addis Ababa).*

(ii) Regional Food Security and Risk Management (REFORM)

41. Under the Regional Food Security and Risk Management (REFORM), the Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of this project.

Decision

42. The Ministers decided that:

Member States should ensure that farmer and trader organizations take an active part in the implementation of the reform programme.

(iii) Value Chains in Agriculture

43. The Ministers noted the role of Value chain development in livestock trade.

Decisions

44. The Ministers decided that:

(i) Member States should harmonise internal livestock health procedures with human pharmaceutical regulations in order to promote trade;

(ii) Member States should put in place best practice arrangements for the training and regulation of all cadres of para-veterinary professionals according to the OIE Code; and

(iii) Member States should explore regional markets.

(iv) Regional Model Manufacturing Training Centre (RMMTC)

45. The Ministers noted the progress made in the implementation of the RMMTC.

Decision

Member States should forward to the Secretariat names of potential candidates to participate in the initial training programme of the RMMTC by June 2008.

(v) Regional Agricultural Trade Expansion Support (RATES) Programme

46. Under the Regional Agricultural Trade Expansion Support (RATES) Programme, the Ministers noted that COMESA had made progress in the establishment of regional trade associations across specific commodity value chains. These are the African Cotton and Textiles Industries Federation (ACTIF); Eastern African Fine Coffees Association (EAFCA); Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC); and Eastern and Southern African Dairy Association (ESADA).

Decisions

47. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) *Member States that are not yet members of Regional Industry Associations in cotton and textiles; coffee; dairy; and cereals should be encouraged to join these, so that they derive the benefits in terms of partnerships, investment mobilization and market access to regional and external markets; and*
- (ii) *Member States should integrate the lessons learnt from the implementation of the RATES project with regards to having industry led platforms as drivers of commodity value chains of importance in the design of the trade expansion projects under the CAADP agenda.*

(vi) Agricultural Marketing and Regional Integration Project (AMPRIP)

48. The Ministers reviewed progress made in the implementation of AMPRIP and in particular, the establishment of the Food and Agricultural Marketing Information System (FAMIS), the harmonization of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures and HIV AIDS awareness campaigns.

Decisions

49. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) The following laboratories should be adopted as Regional Reference Laboratories:
 - The Veterinary Laboratory at the Central Veterinary Research Institute in Lusaka Zambia for Animal Health;
 - The Food Technology Laboratory of Mauritius for Food Safety; and

- The Plant Health Laboratory at the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) Plant Quarantine Station in Nairobi Kenya for Plant Health.
- (ii) Member States in which these laboratories will be hosted should provide the necessary funding for civil works where required and as stipulated in the Grant Agreement with the African Development Bank (AfDB);
 - (iii) Taking into account the fact that all national laboratories have certain important functions to their countries, which are important to international trade in agriculture and food products a system of using these laboratories as satellite laboratories to the reference laboratories should be established;
 - (iv) Laboratory Capacity Building activities should be implemented in all other countries that would not host the regional reference laboratories, and the Secretariat should prepare a programme to this effect based on the information provided by the laboratory assessment team;
 - (v) Member States should provide the required financial resources from their national budgets for collecting and uploading data into FAMIS to ensure sustainability of the system;
 - (vi) As the project approaches its final year, the Secretariat should start working on a second phase of the project for consideration by the AfDB and other development partners, which will ensure continuity of the activities that have been implemented in the first phase.;
 - (vii) The regional SPS Legal Framework should be adopted in accordance with the provisions contained in Article 10, 11 and 12 of the COMESA Treaty so as to allow the framework to be considered and adopted by the Committee of Attorneys General and later by the Council of Ministers;
 - (viii) Additional work should be undertaken to reformat the regional SPS Protocol on Trade in Dairy Products in accordance with the draft regional SPS Legal Framework after which it should be submitted for consideration and adoption by the appropriate Policy Organs.

(f) Pillar IV: Programmes under Science, Technology, Agricultural Extension and Agricultural Training

Regional Approach to Bio-safety and Biotechnology Policies in Eastern and Southern Africa (RABESA)

50. Under the Regional Approach to Bio-safety and Biotechnology Policies in Eastern and Southern Africa (RABESA), the Ministers noted that the RABESA II programme would consider modalities to put in place a panel of experts and identify centres of excellence as directed by the Ministers of Agriculture at their Khartoum Meeting in March, 2007.

Decisions

51. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) Member States should actively follow the activities of the RABESA II project as it works to finalise a roadmap for harmonization of bio-technology and bio-safety regulations in the region and to put in place a panel of experts and centres of excellency for the region; and*
- (ii) The RABESA II project should work with other initiatives in the region that have activities in the area of bio-technology and bio-safety.*

(g) Cross-Cutting Issues

52. The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of programmes aimed at addressing issues of HIV-AIDS and gender development, women and youth empowerment through skills development as very cardinal in promoting agricultural development.

Decisions

53. The Ministers decided that:

- (i) Member States should ensure effective mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in programme design and implementation and to give attention to policies that promote economic development of women, youths;*
- (ii) Member States should work with RUFORUM as a Sub regional body for coordinating agricultural training and education at graduate and post-graduate level and Networks of specialization in the COMESA region;*

- (iii) *Member States should increase investment in Agricultural Tertiary Education, especially post graduate training so as to increase regional absorptive capacity and competitiveness;*
 - (iv) *Member States be encouraged to participate in the policy dialogue meeting on Higher Education in Africa to be hosted by COMESA from 27th to 31st October 2008, in Lusaka, Zambia;*
 - (v) *The Secretariat should work jointly with NEPAD, FARA and RUFORUM to mobilize resources in support of agricultural education and training; and*
 - (vi) *The Secretariat should work towards concluding an MoU with RUFORUM in support of agricultural education and training.*
- (e) Emerging Issues under the WTO and Interim EPAs (Agenda item 5)**

54. The COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Erastus J.O. Mwencha, MBS, made a presentation on the on going Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the EU. He pointed out that the purpose of the interim trade arrangement to facilitate continuity of trade and avoided trade disruption. He pointed out that the arrangement is valid until a full EPA is signed.

55. In discussing the presentation, the Ministers observed that it was important for the region to be united in its approach in the negotiations.

56. The Honourable Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport, Mr. Joel Morgan, acknowledged efforts of Eastern and Southern African countries to reach a consensus and common positions in the ongoing Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations with the EU partners.

57. He also informed the meeting that Seychelles had signed an Interim Agreement with the EU in order to avoid trade disruption..

58. Further, the Minister informed the meeting that the current Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the Government of Seychelles with the international fishing partners needed to be revisited because of low returns on the exploitation of the fisheries resources.

59. The Honourable Minister of Agro-Industry and Fisheries of Mauritius thanked the Secretary General of COMESA for the clarity of his presentation. He highlighted the reasons as to why the ESA group was compelled to sign the Interim EPA:

- (i) The limit made by the EU that there would be a disruption in trade with the reintroduction of tariff on exports of textile and tuna in line with the EU market;
- (ii) The socio-economic consequences that such a measure would have entailed would have been very drastic for our population;
- (iii) He indicated that divisions the ESA group had been detrimental to regional integration and should not be repeated in future negotiations;
- (iv) He appealed for the solidarity and unity of the ESA group so as to have a common front to defend and safeguard the region's interests;
- (v) At the level of the WTO, the Minister noted that there were significant issues on the agenda and the region needs to have a common position; and
- (vi) On the issue of the sugar industry, he highlighted how events had been unfolding and that they would culminate in complete liberalization of the sector by 2010. He added how the region needed upfront disbursement of accompanying measures to accelerate the reform process of the sugar industry.

Decisions

60. The Ministers decided that:

Members States should commit themselves to working together and to use their inherent natural resource endowments to transform the region into a competitive and viable trading block that will negotiate favourable terms of trade with other blocks, such as the European Union (EU), and within the context of the WTO.

(f) Interventions and Statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegations (Agenda item 6)

61. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations made statements as follows:

Burundi

62. The Delegation leader from Burundi pointed out that Burundi was just starting to get out of its socio-political crisis and was dedicating its

energies to social economic development. He added that in May 2007, many donors showed interest in supporting the country in its development efforts. He outlined the various challenges that the country faced, which needed to be surmounted in order to develop the agricultural sector. He emphasized that the aid programme would greatly assist the country. He added that the MDGs are far from being achieved, but there was a programme to address these challenges. The delegation leader proposes that the various donors should adopt an integrated approach in providing aid to Burundi and the region.

Djibouti

63. The delegation leader from Djibouti thanked Seychelles for the warm welcome and COMESA for the meeting. He pointed out regional integration was very important in the socio-economic development of the region. He pointed out that Djibouti had created a Regional Center for Export of livestock and asked COMESA to establish an appropriate certification process to enable exports to access international markets.

Egypt

64. The Minister of Agriculture from Egypt expressed gratitude to the President, Government and people of Seychelles for hosting the meeting. He commended the Secretary General of COMESA for his efforts to assist the organization in attaining its goals. He point out that the adoption of a Common Agriculture Policy was very important. Egypt highly commended the CAADP and AMPRIP programme, emphasizing the importance of enhancing trade. He outlined the positive results that the reforms implemented in Egypt have yielded positive results in economic development. He reiterated Egypt's willingness to collaborate with other countries, by providing assistance in capacity building in various sectors including fisheries, livestock, crop production, agroforestry and agricultural research. With regard, to CAADP, Egypt reported that they had initiated the process of implementing CAADP.

Libya

65. The Minister from Libya pointed out that his Government's goal in agriculture is to stop land degradation in order to achieve food security. He pointed out that the main challenge is the shortage of water. He urged member States to take water management into account. He announced that the Libyan leader, Col. Ghadafi had called for a meeting to be held from 15-17 December 2008 in Sirte, Libya to discuss this issue.

Kenya

66. The Representative of the Government of Kenya pointed out that his country was committed to achieving COMESA objectives. Towards this end, Kenya has fully embraced the CAADP agenda of moving the country towards achieving food security and reducing poverty levels to ½ by year 2015.

67. In furthering the Maputo Declaration, by Heads of State, to increase agriculture budget, to 10% of the annual expenditure, Kenya had doubled its budget to agriculture from year 2003/4 to 2007/8. As agriculture is the mainstay of the Kenyan economy, this had resulted to reduction of poverty from 56% to 46% in the last 3 years. The economic growth has also averaged at 6.1% in the same period.

68. He alluded to the current political situation in his country and stated that the situation had stabilized. He concluded that Kenya joins the other COMESA countries to implement the recommendation reached in this Agriculture Ministers' Meeting.

Malawi

69. The Honourable Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Security of the Republic of Malawi gave a statement on the status of agriculture in Malawi. He noted that Agriculture in Malawi contributes about 36% of the GDP and supports 80% of the livelihood of the people.

70. He noted that the country has put in place strategies to ensure food security is not compromised such as the formulation of the Malawi Development Growth Strategy (MDGS) and the Agriculture Development Programme (ADP). The objective of the ADP is to improve food security and generate growth through increased productivity of food and cash crops while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.

71. The Deputy Minister informed the meeting that this year the country will spend slightly over 13% of the national budget on agriculture. Further, the country has developed an input subsidy initiative aimed at increasing the producer prices of agricultural produce.

Mauritius

72. The Minister of Agro – Industry and Fisheries of Mauritius indicated that agriculture remained a major contributor to the socio-economic development of the country. However, despite the place occupied by agriculture in the economy, Mauritius was a net food importing country.

73. The Minister stated that Mauritius is currently importing a large part of its food requirements from sources that are mostly outside the COMESA region. In view of opportunities existing in the region, he made an appeal for cross-border initiatives to further develop agriculture and promote trade exchanges in agricultural and food products for the benefit of our populations.

Seychelles

74. The Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport of the Government of Seychelles outlined the status of agriculture in Seychelles.

75. He noted that in Seychelles, the agricultural sector accounts for over 60% of national livestock production and for about 45% of crop production. The agricultural production is valued at over 17 Million United States Dollars annually and the fisheries sector generates over 200 Million United States Dollars in terms of inflows from fish processing and fish trans shipment activities.

76. He acknowledged the role which farmers and fishers' associations are playing in enhancing national food security.

77. Further he informed the meeting that Seychelles officially launched its Agricultural Development Programme (2007 – 2011) in joint collaboration with CAADP in 2007. The principal objective of the agricultural strategy is to enhance national food security through the sustainable utilization of limited natural resources with due regard to human health and the environment.

78. The agricultural development strategy 2007 – 2011 was born out of the Seychelles's 2017 strategy which was launched by the President.

Sudan

79. The Honourable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Sudan, Prof. El-Zobir Bashir Taha gave an overview of Sudanese economy mainly to revitalize the agriculture sector. He noted that improvement in the economy and the adoption of the Free Market Economy has lead to boost agro-industries such as the edible oil industry, cotton ginning, textile as well as sugar industry.

80. The Honourable Minister also highlighted on the contribution of agro-industries in the national economy whereby the GDP increased by 107.8 billion US Dollar. He also noted by saying that in year 2007 an extra

amount of 1.5 billion US Dollar was spent on water harvesting, strengthening transportation, infrastructure, input subsidies, afforestation, agro-forestry, rehabilitation of pasture and free vaccination of livestock. He also noted that further 1.8 billion US Dollar approved this year for the same purpose.

81. He concluded his statement by thanking COMESA for giving support to the Ministry in strengthening the capacities of the Sudanese cadres to implement the Food and Agriculture Marketing Information System (FAMIS).

Uganda

82. The Honourable Minister from Uganda noted that Ministers were meeting in the Seychelles to take stock of the achievement made in implementing agricultural programmes and to evaluate progress made as well as to lay strategies for effective alleviation of poverty in the Region. The Minister highlighted that in Uganda the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture laid emphasis on attained food security which is a major pillar of the CAADP agenda.

83. The Minister appreciated the leadership of the African Union through NEPAD on the guidance it was providing for agricultural development on the continent. He outlined that Uganda was on target to signing its CAADP Compact by May 2008.

Zambia

84. The Honourable Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Cooperative of the Republic of Zambia gave a report on the status of agricultural Development in Zambia. He noted that Zambia was working on programmes such as irrigation development, fertiliser subsidy programme, and food security packs. The Honourable Deputy Minister noted that Zambia was implementing the CAADP roundtable process and will be having the CAADP round table Workshop and Signing the Compact during the period 29-30 April 2008. Further the Deputy Minister informed the meeting that Zambia welcomed the implementation of AMPRIP and indicated that the country would like to see more collaboration and trade activities among COMESA member States.

Zimbabwe

85. The Honourable Minister from Zimbabwe highlighted the challenges that his country was experiencing in terms of agriculture development. These included the low productivity of the sector; the rising cost of oil, SPS challenges and those that are posed by rain feed

agriculture. He pointed out that the country was working with COMESA on CAADP especially in the areas of fertilizer and seed trade policy harmonisation. He welcomed the strides that the region was making in developing the sector i.e. the joint procurement strategy for inputs.

(g) Statements from Cooperating Partners (*Agenda item 7*)

World Food Programme (WFP)

86. The WFP representative highlighted collaboration with COMESA under ACTESA as a key potential programme. She further said WFP will leverage its local food procurement capacity and experience to make local grain procurement more conducive to smallholder development by buying grain from groups of smallholder farmers and therefore providing a reliable market but this will require inter alia organized supply chain. Member States should take advantage of school feeding programmes which promote locally produced commodities to provide markets for smallholder farmers in line with AU Assembly decision to expand home grown school feeding. . She urged COMESA to continue to investigate options to the rising energy prices and increasing prices of food commodities.

Food Agriculture Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

87. The network's Chief Executive highlighted the network structure, activities and programmes and emphasized the network's readiness to collaborate with COMESA in implementing the CAADP agenda. She advised that FANRPAN will extend its policy dialogue model which incorporates farmers, civil society, private sector together with government in the development of agricultural policies. She added that FANRPAN will enhance the capacity of research organizations to provide evidence based policy direction. FANRPAN is prepared to assist member States and the COMESA Secretariat to develop databases of experts, stakeholders and programmes that are relevant to CAADP.

NEPAD

88. The NEPAD representative declared that 2008 is the year of CAADP. It is the year that African leaders have committed to make the changes in what they invest in, how they invest and levels of investment to achieve 6% agricultural growth. It is the year that country, regional and continental leaders have pledged to put into use new business practices and partnership alliances to scale up agriculture. It is the year in which significant momentum has been built in the international community to scale up support and align these efforts with the African-led CAADP agenda.

89. In order to celebrate current achievements and scale up support, a major high-level event is planned for October 2008, to highlight the role of CAADP Partnerships and chart a course for broadening and deepening such partnerships. Among other things, this forum will provide the opportunity to announce and raise the profile of a new generation of public-private partnerships and alliances that have been or are now being forged under the CAADP agenda to support value chain development and finance, domestic, regional, and international trade, infrastructure and transport, as well as science and technology.

90. To celebrate 2008 as The Year of CAADP, this high-level event will be held in Mozambique and it will bring together public and private leaders from Africa, development partners, civil society and commercial interest groups from around the world to recognize achievements and stimulate the expansion of public-private partnerships in support of a more competitive and productive African agricultural sector, building a prosperous Africa with greater access to and participation in global economics.

Event Organizer/Host: AU/NEPAD and the Government of Mozambique

Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)

91. ASARECA is a membership organisation bringing together 10 countries in Eastern and Central Africa. ASARECA was created to assist the member countries to work together in addressing sub-regional challenges to produce sub-regional public goods and to share the benefits.

92. Specifically, ASARECA works in the area of generation of agricultural technologies and agricultural best practices. It works on issues of value addition to agricultural commodities to enhance their competitiveness in trade, and ASARECA also works towards an improved policy environment to enhance regional trade.

USAID

93. For USAID, COMESA is one of our most important African regional partners. Over the past decade, we have had agreements with the COMESA Secretariat in support of several areas: trade, agriculture, capacity-building, conflict resolution, gender, etc. Support for agriculture from our East Africa regional Mission in Nairobi, from various bilateral Missions, and from our headquarters in Washington supports CAADP. The RATES project and the Eastern and Central Africa Trade Hub have

supported activities in Pillar II. The RELPA project is managed in collaboration with the Pillar III team, focused on improving options for pastoral people in arid and semi-arid lands by stimulating increased opportunities for livestock marketing and trade, and by identifying complementary economic activities.

94. CAADP is proving to be an excellent framework for coordinating multi-donor support for priority activities through the Secretariat. COMESA's ACTESA program is being designed to facilitate and stimulate regional trade in staple foods between areas of current and potential surplus production and areas across borders where demand is high. Increased access to regional markets will stimulate increased productivity of smallholder farmers, thereby increasing incomes, reducing food insecurity, and reducing chronic need for food aid. In Pillar IV, USAID is one of a group of development partners that support COMESA's and also ASARECA's activities. These increase regional availability of a wide range of improved technologies and knowledge, including biotechnology that is effectively regulated in a regionally harmonized biosafety framework. We are now joining with COMESA and a group of regional partners in the public and private sectors in implementing the Eastern and Southern Africa Seed Alliance (ESASA), an alliance to increase the commercial availability improved seeds, as well as fertilizers and other inputs, to smallholder farmers.

95. The year 2008, five years after the Maputo Declaration, is an important one for CAADP. We in USAID stand with and support this African-owned and African-led process. Over the coming year, we look forward to seeing acceleration of CAADP processes and early actions at the continental, regional, and country levels. We wish you success.

RUFORUM

96. The REFORUM Chief Executive outlined the commitment of Universities in the region to actively contribute to the region's development agenda by providing input into the policy analysis. He outlined the current efforts by the universities to re-create themselves for development relevance and build Africa's human and institutional capacity for capacity development. RUFORUM was prepared to work closely with all national universities in the COMESA region to harness capacities and competencies existent in the various institutions in a manner that enhances synergy and economies of scale and scope.

CMA/WCA

97. Dr. Baha Dioum, General Co-ordinator of CMA/WCA made a statement. He congratulated COMESA for its commitment on the CAADP implementation.

98. He informed the meeting on the CAADP Pillar II progress. He pointed out the five areas of Pillar II:

- (i) Trade at national, regional and international level;
- (ii) Infrastructure and access to market;
- (iii) Developing value chain and financial structures for strategic;
- (iv) Strengthening capacity of farmer acquisition and trade association to be more business directed; and
- (v) Monitoring production and benchmarking of the Pillar II Progress.

The Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

99. The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) works to advance human well-being, environmental conservation and equity by conducting research to inform policies and practices that affect forests in developing countries. CIFOR has been working closely with the COMESA Secretariat and partner organizations to summarize current opportunities and challenges for sustainable trade and management of forest products and forest environmental services in the COMESA region. A set of 13 recommendations is distilled from this review in the Executive Summary of the report entitled, "Sustainable Trade and Management of Forest Products and Services in the COMESA Region: An Issue Paper." A few of the recommendations are to:

- (i) Support the mainstreaming of forestry into national level CAADP Compacts; poverty alleviation strategies; and national decisions on development finance and trade (in sectors affecting forests);
- (ii) Support members States in designing *and testing* more effective strategies for ensuring sustainable forest management based on the principles of secure forest tenure; enhancing the value of standing forests; and the properties of effective institutions (e.g. clear and enforceable rules on forest users and uses);
- (iii) Support the design of a framework to assess the social, economic and ecological trade-offs of trade deals and investments in sectors affecting forests, and support members States in its use and strategic engagement with policy-makers;

- (iv) Support the design of an instrument for full accounting of the forestry sector's contribution to the economy, and support member States in its use so as to raise the profile of forestry and budgetary allocations to the sector;
- (v) Support the cooperation between member States in improving policies and strategies for joint management of forest reserves, forest-dependent wildlife and cross-border trade in forest products; and
- (vi) Ensure the design of the COMESA forestry strategy is well-grounded in a review of the successes and shortcomings of past approaches tried, and implementation is supported by research (for targeting, monitoring, capturing lessons).

100. Draft recommendations will be deliberated on by COMESA stakeholders during a meeting to be held on April 16-18, 2008 in Lusaka, where the outlines of a forestry strategy for the COMESA region will be developed. We welcome the opportunity to work with COMESA and its other partners on the development and implementation of the forestry agenda in support of CAADP Pillars I and II and the broader objectives of NEPAD and the African Union.

101. COMESA should also consider being more explicit about the different sub-programmes in the area of climate change, so it adequately reflects the two main instruments for carbon sequestration and finance: (i) reforestation/afforestation (adding more carbon to land scapes); and (ii) Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, or REDD (avoiding loss of carbon from landscapes). Currently the text reflects a focus on the former, but not the latter, and a number of forest-rich member States will be interested in capturing opportunities associated with REDD. REDD will come into effect in 2012, and the global community is using this interim phase to pilot REDD instruments in different countries as a means to demonstrate "readiness" to receive future carbon investments. The COMESA Climate Fund could be utilized to support pilot testing of REDD in the region, demonstrating readiness of African nations to receive carbon investments, and use this platform to participate actively in COP meetings where the post-2012 REDD instrument will be designed.

(h) Consideration of the Draft Declaration by the Ministers of Agriculture (*Agenda item 8*)

102. The Ministers adopted the Victoria Declaration which outlined the key issues discussed during the meeting.

(i) Consideration and Adoption of the Report by Ministers of Agriculture (*Agenda Item 9*)

103. The Ministers considered the Report of the Fifth Meeting. They adopted the Report with appropriate amendments.

(j) Any Other Business (*Agenda item 10*)

104. The outgoing Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Mr. Erastus Mwencha, informed the meeting that he would soon retire and leave the organization to take up a new appointment as Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. He thanked everyone for facilitating his work and assured the Ministers that he was leaving behind a capable Secretariat that would ably carry on the work of the Regional Organisation.

105. In response to Mr. Mwencha's announcement the Chairperson paid tribute to him and thanked him, on behalf of the Ministers for the exemplary services he had rendered to the organization. He wished him success in his future assignment.

(k) Date and Venue of the Next Meeting and Vote of Thanks (*Agenda item 12*)

106. Hon. R.E.N Gumbo, Minister of Agriculture in the Republic of Zimbabwe gave a Vote of Thanks. He thanked the Government of Seychelles for the efficient and able manner in conducting the deliberations and for hosting the meeting.

107. He noted that as indicated during the deliberations, the importance of agriculture should not be over-emphasized.

108. He reminded his fellow Ministers that the region's destiny lay in their hands and noted that they alone could produce enough food to feed and create better livelihoods and those of future generations.

109. Minister Gumbo said that the region now had a common framework across Africa to accelerate agricultural development through CAADP under the auspices of the African Union and NEPAD, which is receiving overwhelming support from both member States and cooperating partners.

110. He recognised that there was need to remove physical and non-physical barriers that inhibit COMESA from functioning as a single market

such as poor physical and market infrastructure and non-tariff barriers to agricultural trade.

111. Honourable Gumbo invited the Ministers to the Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture to be hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe on dates to be mutually agreed upon with the COMESA Secretariat.

112. Finally, Hon. Gumbo thanked Mr. Erastus Mwencha, the out-going Secretary General, for contributing tremendously to regional integration in Eastern and Southern African during his time at the helm of the regional block.

113. Minister Gumbo wished Mr. Mwencha success as he assumes the Vice-Chairmanship at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

(I) Closure of the Meeting (*Agenda item 13*)

114. The Representative of the COMESA Secretary General, Dr. Chungu Mwila, thanked the Ministers and other delegates for participating actively in the meeting and wished them a safe trip back to their respective capitals. He further thanked the Government of Seychelles for hosting a very successful Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.

115. The meeting was officially closed by the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Transport, Hon. Joel Morgan. In his closing statement, he thanked COMESA and the Secretary General in particular for providing guidance in the regional integration agenda. He also thanked the Ministers for their active participation in the meeting and wished a safe trip to their respective countries.