

# THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN SMALL SCALE FARMERS' FORUM (ESAFF)

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### Women Small Scale Farmers Censure Inadequate Consultation in Regional Agricultural Policy Making Processes



**Group photo: Women's Conference on the SADC RAP**

Women small scale farmers (SSFs) in the SADC region have deplored inadequate consultations in the regional agricultural policy making especially in the SADC and COMESA with the latter being now a closed door system for SSFs. This came out at the Women's Small Holder Conference on the SADC Regional Agriculture Policy (RAP) convened by the Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) on 12 December 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference, convened under the theme: **"Making Policies Work for the**

**Poor”** was attended by participants from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Women from the various countries represented were against pseudo-consultations that have been happening within the two regional blocs. Ms Florah Maswanganyi, a SSF from South Africa said that what is worrying is that 60-70% of the total population in the region lives in rural areas and women are mostly found in agriculture and depend on agriculture as a source of livelihood, for survival, income generation and employment creation. She is added that “it is disheartening is the marginalisation of women in household, national and regional decision making structures and how women are disempowered when it comes to economic decisions.” In this regard the women farmers applauded ESAFF for convening the conference which buttressed the need to recognise the roles being played by women in agriculture and offer a platform for women to engage with the SADC regional policy making body on issues of agriculture.

Women farmers called on governments to address the issue of land ownership, access and utilisation by women in the region. SSFs also questioned why there was no regional land policy as SADC governments had agreed that the land question is dealt by individual governments. Ms Mamalefetsane Phakoe, a farmer from Lesotho painted a gloomy picture in her country where she called on the Lesotho government to address the land question and stop forced evictions whereby farmers have lost their land to private companies. This was also echoed by Ms Hawa Kihwele from Tanzania who also noted that as SSFs they had lost their land to private companies but they depend on land for agricultural activities and economic wellbeing. The case is the same in Mozambique and Swaziland whereby investors were said to be getting into bilateral arrangements with government leaders to take the land.

Farmers also castigated the new COMESA Seed Harmonisation policies that will wipe out indigenous seeds, restrict selling of local seeds among SSFs but would promote commercial hybrid seeds. Ms Mariam Mayet from the African Centre for Bio-safety said there is a danger of misappropriation of indigenous knowledge system by corporates. There are also no safeguard measures under COMESA laws. “Countries such as Malawi and Mozambique that were influenced by COMESA to approve COMESA laws, SSFs are criminalised for selling or exchanging seeds among themselves”, said Ms Mayet. She urged the governments to protect trade in farmer local seed varieties and also ensure confluence between commercial and indigenous seed varieties that will also benefit SSFs.

Mrs Elizabeth Mpfu, a farmer from Zimbabwe however acknowledged the warm welcome SSFs have been receiving from SADC and urged the COMESA bloc to do the same. She expressed her gratitude to the SADC FANR for accepting to work and engage with ESAFF since 2013 during the Gaborone meeting when a group of SSFs visited the SADC Secretariat. Reflecting on the past, she said ESAFF had achieved “a milestone in the SADC Policy making cycles and if SADC fails to deliver, the blame will be on SSFs.” SSFs need to be strong and visit SADC Focal points in their countries. Mrs Mpfu implored farmers to lobby governments so that the Ministries of Agriculture are manned by women leaders who have SSFs interests at heart, especially women and youth farmers.

The SSFs urged the regional governments to take concerns of SSFs’ participation in policy making seriously and start engaging the farmers because the policies to be enacted would affect farmers. The farmers also called on governments to immediately deal with the land question, institute policies that protect indigenous seeds rather than promote commercial hybrids, to revive agricultural banks that offer cheap loans and grants. Governments should also seek to adopt agro-ecology and ensure more cooperation with farmers and policy makers at local, national and regional levels.

### **ESAFF’s Contribution to the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) Processes Applauded**



**Mr Martin Muchero, SADC FANR RAP Coordinator**

The Eastern and Southern Small Scales Farmers Forum (ESAFF) has been applauded for its immense contribution to the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) processes. Speaking at the ESAFF Women’s Small Holder Conference on the SADC Regional Agriculture Policy (RAP) on 12 December 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa, Mr Martin Muchero, the SADC FANR

RAP Coordinator expressed his gratitude to ESAFF for wanting to work with the SADC FANR. He pledged that they would always give ESAFF space in future engagements and expressed optimism that ESAFF would be able to build a vibrant SSFs organisation with women in the lead. “SADC is now a demand driven institution and will always push forward SSFs issues,” said Mr Muchero adding that SADC FANR looks forward to continue alliance building with ESAFF.

The conference, convened under the theme: “**Making Policies Work for the Poor**”, was attended by participants from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Mr Joe Mzinga, the ESAFF Regional Coordinator said that this conference came against the backdrop of ESAFF having met the SADC FANR Department in 2013 and ESAFF having participated in the SADC RAP consultative workshops. This was also supported by the ESAFF Chairperson, Mr Serge Benstrong who said that ESAFF also presented its position to the SADC FANR on the RAP and most ESAFF positions were included in the final RAP as well as in the Result Framework. This has given ESAFF more visibility in the SADC policy making processes and in this regard expressing, Mr Benstrong expressed ESAFF’s gratitude to the SADC FANR for giving the farmer led organisation space in its policy processes.

The SADC RAP aims to contribute towards the attainment of the SADC Common Agenda which promotes sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development and contribute to sustainable agricultural growth and socio-economic development. He said that on issues of production and productivity and competitiveness, SSFs need ownership and access to factors of production; that is land, water, energy access to finance and inputs. Mr Muchero added that SSFs need appropriate technology friendly to use, there must be conservation of genetic resources and indigenous materials that have been lost over the years. He advised the farmers that the SADC Plant and Genetic Resources Centre has tried to protect indigenous varieties from crop and animal materials. SSFs need training to support them in agriculture and the need to strengthen SSFs organizations with women farmers and also protect initiatives of SSFs such as in production of small grains and aqua-culture.

Mr Muchero the SADC RAP provides an overarching policy framework that is guided by inclusiveness and harmonisation of policies in the region. The SADC RAP supersedes the other frameworks and has been bought by the SADC leadership noting that the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) of 2003 adopted the SADC Common Agenda and recognised the CAADP processes as credible continental agricultural framework. Mr Muchero said that the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security and Plan of Action sets out the plan of action to operationalise the RISDP in the context of Agriculture and Food Security taking into account CAADP values, principles and targets thus it can be noted that

all these programmes are interrelated. He noted that the African Union on 10% budget allocation to agriculture embedded in the Maputo Declaration of 2003 clearly adopted the CAADP.

At the end of the conference, SSFs agreed that there is need to have strong relations and contact details of the Permanent Secretaries in each country in future engagements because they are technocrats rather than Ministers who politicians. During the consultative meetings on the implementation of the SADC RAP and CAADP processes, ESAFF would be invited again within the RAP Investment Plan meetings thus there is need to need to engage CAADP Country teams in each ESAFF network country. Mrs Elizabeth Mpofu from Zimbabwe encouraged SSFs to engage the SADC focal person in each country and get updates in future meetings and learn how to engage at national and regional levels to monitor the processes and hold member states accountable. SSFs also called on governments, the SADC and COMESA to fully accord SSFs space in the policy making processes.

### **Zimbabwe finalises CAADP Compact**



#### **Dr Isaiah Mharapara introducing CAADP and ZAIP process**

Zimbabwe's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has finalised the country's compact document which is being funded by the World Bank. Titled the 'Zimbabwe Agricultural Investment Plan' (ZAIP), this is being aligned to the country's national development policy, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation: October 2013-December 2018 (ZIMASSET) policy. This was revealed by the CAADP focal person from the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Isaiah Mharapara during a training organised by ZIMSOF in Mutoko. The meeting was attended by 20 farmer leaders who included 8 women. Also present were local councillors, chiefs (Chief Mutoko) and village heads.

The meeting sought to critically evaluate the CAADP processes in Zimbabwe and assess the country's commitment to the 2014 Malabo Declaration as well as assessing re-commitment to agriculture transformation of Zimbabwe's agriculture sector by improving upon the 2003 Maputo Declaration, under which Zimbabwe committed to spending at least 10% of its national budgets on agriculture. This was critically analysed in relation to Zimbabwe's national policy in pursuit of a new trajectory of accelerated economic growth and wealth creation. Dr Mharapara noted that "agriculture is about people's livelihoods and nearly 75% of Zimbabwe and the SADC region depend on agriculture for food security and nutrition, employment and income and the region is mostly agro-based."

The CAADP (2003) Policy framework for agricultural development aims to stimulate and catalyse increased public and private sector investment for agriculture to achieve the goal of wealth creation, food security and nutrition. It is Africa's policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth and prosperity for all. In Maputo, Mozambique in 2003, the African Union (AU) Summit made the first declaration on CAADP as an integral part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Dr Mharapara indicated that there will be a 2015 CAADP Post Harvest Business Meeting to include all stakeholders.

He noted that ZIMASSET is a Results Based Agenda and is built around four strategic clusters that will enable Zimbabwe to achieve economic growth and reposition the country as one of the strongest economies in the region and Africa. The four strategic clusters are Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation.

He added that on the other hand the four pillars of CAADP include: land and water management, market access, food and hunger and agricultural research and development. The principles and values that informed the implementation of CAADP in the first decade (2003 – 2013) are still valid and will continue to guide the implementation modalities in the next decade (2015-2025). These include: African ownership and leadership; accountability and transparency; inclusiveness; evidence-based planning and decision making and harnessing regional complementarities. In addition, the sets of principles and values important to CAADP include: People-centeredness; private sector driven development; systemic capacity; and subsidiarity, and: peer learning and multi-sectorialism.

Dr Mharapara called upon African heads of state to implement a number of essential policy reforms towards ending hunger and cutting poverty in Africa in half by 2025 as reaffirmed in Malabo by devoting 10% of their national budgets to agricultural development and agreed targets such as doubling agricultural productivity, halving post-harvest loss, and bringing stunting down to 10% across Africa.

Dr Mharapara commended the Government of Zimbabwe for having achieved great strides in trying to implement the CAADP Compacts but however noted that there was still need, in of implementing the ZAIP, to explain roles of the different stakeholders clearly; Network with other farmers and regions, capacity development of farmers, Constructive policy engagements, ensure management information system such as in East Africa, Learning and sharing of experiences, working together and coordination of units , Formation of agricultural sector steering committees, Low costs financing and local government engagement.

Dr Mharapara noted that the challenge for those preparing Investment Plans thus far has been that the documents, principally drafted with a government audience in mind, does not clearly speak to the issues that are relevant to the private sector, and as such have not been as useful in attracting private investment as desired. The documents are not farmer friendly, minimal consultancy with farmers and mostly undertaken by technocrats. He said that there is lack of clarity on roles and poor execution of policies.

Dr Mharapara called on governments to adequately link research to policy for the benefit of small scale farmers and make frantic efforts to meet their 10% budgets allocation and meet the 6% growth rate projected in agriculture. He highlighted there must be inclusivity of all stakeholders in agriculture policy formulation and implementation and there must be partnerships as well as capacity building of farmers on how to improve productivity. He supported the ZIMASSET for its call for increased investment in agriculture with emphasis on value addition, improved food security and nutrition programmes.

Participants noted that there was lack of consultations of farmers and other stakeholders as well as lack of shared vision even within government ministries. They bemoaned the lack of a resource mobilisation strategy within the Ministry of Agriculture. They called upon the relevant ministry to put in place proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms so as to learn from past mistakes. Policy makers were called upon to be transparent and accountable in their roles and for commitment from all stakeholders at national, regional and continental levels. Participants also called on the government to address market access challenges in the region. Farmers were called upon to diversify into the production of small grains and livestock that are resistant to climate change threats. Lastly farmers called upon government to make agriculture viable as it is a source of livelihood.

## **ZIMSOFF Farmers call on Zim Government to design a seed policy specific for smallholder farmers**



### **Different seed varieties**

The Zimbabwe Small Scale Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF) recently invited various stakeholders working on seeds in Zimbabwe to learn more and share its concerns about the proposed regional seed laws. The stakeholders included the government officials, private seed companies, African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO), Seed Trade Association, Agricultural Research Council, Seed Services Zimbabwe, Civil Society and Ministry of Agriculture. The meeting stimulated an interesting debate among the farmers, presenters and other participants.

The farmers highlighted that the SADC and COMESA processes are closed systems with minimal participation of CSOs and smallholder farmers, and thus, most of their issues such as the protection of indigenous knowledge systems and farmers' rights, and the adoption of agro-ecology to achieve food sovereignty, have not been included in national and regional policies which affect their livelihoods.

The presentations focused, at national level, on the evolution of seed laws, the current seed and trade laws, and the government's position to the proposed new laws. At the regional and international level, the issues included UPOV/ARIPO, proposed Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) seed protocols and the related international treaties in existence and their implications. The government officials assured the smallholder farmers that Zimbabwe has not yet ratified the protocols. Both the ARIPO and SADC Protocols on Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) are still under

discussion and the drafts are yet to be submitted to member states and thus, the government has not taken a position at the moment.

These protocols were proposed at the SADC Heads of States meeting in Dar es Salaam in 2004 when most countries, including Zimbabwe, were facing food and seed shortages. The movement of seed materials within the regional countries was too cumbersome due to bureaucratic hurdles at the ports of entry and this affected timely delivery of seeds to recipient countries. The governments therefore proposed to harmonize seed policies as a quick solution to expedite the export and import of seed. However, the government official indicated that the country has the most stringent conditions on registering seed companies. He also added that member States have room to deny entry any genetic material on ecological and environmental grounds.

The officials acknowledged that the registration fees are high, beyond the reach of smallholder farmers. This is meant to deter any individuals who are not serious from engaging in the process. At the moment there are 43 Plant Breeders in Zimbabwe. The government will consider creating seed policy for smallholder farmers as they are breeders too. The existing seed policy was meant for private companies and was only amended to include smallholders after their outcry. The government acknowledged the lack of information on these policies in local languages which has affected smallholder farmers' participation in the processes.

Elizabeth Mpofu, ZIMSOFF Chairperson and General Coordinator of La Via Campesina, highlighted that the proposed protocols, drafted with minimal participation of smallholder farmers, will have a major impact to livelihoods of smallholder farmers who depend on indigenous seeds and agro-ecology.

Nelson Mudzingwa, the ZIMSOFF National Coordinator urged the smallholder farmer leaders to share with other farmers in their localities/clusters the issues discussed in order to consolidate the struggles over the seed rights for food sovereignty. And that there is continued need to protect and promote agro-ecology practices and smallholder farmers' need to lobby for policies that recognize agro-ecology and smallholder farmers' seed rights.

Farmers were tasked to formulate a vision of where they want see ZIMSOFF heading towards and they came up with the following statement: ***Empowered smallholder farmers that can participate in agricultural policy formulation and promoting agro-ecology and farmer led on indigenous seeds systems.***

## **ZIMSOFF farmers review the implications of the proposed regional seed laws**



### **Participants engrossed in discussions**

ESAFF's partner organisation, Zimbabwe Small Scale Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFF) organized a preparatory meeting to discuss the implications of the new regional seed policies, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Africa Regional Intellectual Organisation (ARIPO) namely the seed policy harmonization and Plant Variety Protection (PVP), on the smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe. Sixteen ZIMSOFF Council members (who also are farmers) and representatives from the African Centre for Biosafety (ACB) and Third World network (TWN) participated in the discussions aimed at building the capacity of the smallholder farmers to understand and defend their seed rights nationally.

The proposed regional seed policies, if adopted, will negatively impact on indigenous seeds which ZIMSOFF and La Via Campesina promote. The COMESA seed protocol will open national borders through easing market and regulatory requirements on registered commercial seeds; while the SADC and ARIPO will promote the "commercial breeders' rights" through Plant Variety Protection based on "DUS" (Distinctiveness, Uniformity, Stability). In general, the former, will flood both the regional and local markets with hybrid and genetic modified (GM) seeds and thus push out traditional seeds, the latter, recognizes and promotes commercial breeders and criminalize traditional breeders, who are peasant farmers. The ZIMSOFF Chairperson and La Via Campesina General Coordinator, Elizabeth Mpfu, in her opening remarks, urged the farmers to take these new developments seriously and hold the government accountable.

Mr Delma Ndlovu, the ZIMSOFf vice-chair, urged the farmers to create seed banks, market traditional seeds and promote the consumption of indigenous vegetables and crops, which conventional research has ignored, within their communities. He noted that while it is now widely acknowledged that a smallholder-based, agro-ecological food production system is the best way to eradicate hunger and reduce the impact of agriculture on climate change, less attention is given to the role farmers' play in sharing the lessons they have learned. Building on a farmer-to-farmer approach, the ZIMSOFf is interested in training community facilitators and trainers, helping them develop a horizontal and participatory learning system.

Ms Mariam Mayet of ACB said that the new seed policies are being pushed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the Alliance For Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), a new Green Revolution focused on improving agricultural productivity in developing countries, which in Africa finds resonance in the new agricultural policy frameworks such the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the new SADC Regional Agriculture Policy (RAP).

The ZIMSOFf farmers, at the end of the meeting, agreed to scale up networking and participation in dialogues on seed issues; they urged ZIMSOFf to seek space in the panels that have been created in the region to discuss seed issues. The organization should also continue to strengthen the smallholder farmers to defend their rights against the new systems which threaten farmers' rights to save and exchange their indigenous seeds

Farmers vowed to reject certification of seed, which it is so expensive that smallholder farmers cannot afford. Moreover, they called upon ZIMSOFf to reject the whole process because it is top down and its ownership is not clear. They also recognised the need to engage with and lobby the government to recognize agro-ecology and peasant seed production systems and protect them from competition from big companies as we as push the government to consult smallholder farmers before signing these policies.

Zimbabwe Small Organic Farmers Forum (ZIMSOFf) is a forum for smallholder farmers practicing organic agriculture in Zimbabwe and was formed to create and nurture a dynamic alliance of Smallholder Farmer Organizations (SFOs). It promotes organic farming, processing and marketing, to uplift the welfare of smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe through participatory ecological land use planning and management.

## Farmers are the biggest resource for African nations



**A farmer in rural Africa**

It is the start of the New Year and with it comes new thinking; or maybe not. My new year comes with a new reflection of the role of the farmer in African economies. I visualize a community set up in rural Zambia, Lesotho, Rwanda, Tanzania or Togo; wherever your imagination takes you dear reader. I look around communities and see how the lives of the people are; immediate neighbour and his/her neighbour all farmers; isn't that local school teacher, church preacher; village nurse also a farmer. Albeit in a small way but some kind of farming is taking place. So how come they are involved in farming while living in areas endowed with vast natural resources which could be exploited to make lives better.

Well the truth is, that the natural resources – gold, diamond, copper, oil, forests, game reserves all belong to the government to the extent that when these resources are located underneath the land we occupy, the first thing government does is to reposes the land and evict us. That makes agriculture the only resource and perhaps the land on which it is practiced, the two biggest resources a farmer has. To explain my thinking further, when governments exploit these natural resources, how much money is paid to the farmers or local communities around the mining area or around the national game park or those who previously occupied the mining lands? I highly doubt anyone has received any monthly or annual returns from government. What we have been told is that the funds from the natural resources are going to government so that it provides social services and infrastructure development to us the citizens but look around, how is your local road, what state is your local hospital in if you have one anyway; what state are the local schools in. These are the things government said they were investing money earned from these natural resources into, well on a scale of 1 to 10, rate the government services and compare the services with the value of the oil, gold, timber, copper that is mined.

A second avenue to look at is the tax levied on the activities you undertake. Some of the taxes are direct like trading licences, market dues, stamp duty, and pay as you earn (if you are

employed by a company) and other taxes are indirect like the percentage taken when you buy salt, sugar, paraffin, bread and all good produces from industries; this indirect tax is commonly called Value Added tax. Now please think about the state of life in your community and see if government has been able to return this money to the community as community development projects. Of course the government will argue that the country is large and many people don't pay taxes but also the amount of funds generated from the natural resources and the taxes are not enough to provide all the required services to the required standard and perhaps government is correct. But what does this picture show; where is the farmer in all of this; how has the farmer benefitted? You tell me!

But here are a few interesting facts, more than 70% of the citizens in your country (if you are African) are farmers which means that government doesn't employ them or pay them anything at the end of the month (in most cases). Secondly, agriculture is the easiest way to eradicate poverty and lift the majority of citizens (who are the 70%) out of poverty. Thirdly, agriculture is guaranteed to have more returns on investment if conducted with the right technology, at the reasonable scale (on larger acreage), if prices remained predictable (not constant) and markets were available.

Therefore, the new thinking for this year is simple; agriculture is the single most dominant activity in Africa and it employs majority of the citizens and it is the easiest way to get the citizens out poverty. This to the farmers especially the small scale farmers is the point; people you will rise out of poverty if governments take agriculture seriously and improved the means of production; access to the factors of production (land, water, capital, etc), had a favourable market environment (stable prices, industry to take extra produce and market for the produce). This will surely eradicate the poverty but it is up to the farmer to demand governments to make the conditions favourable for the practice of agriculture to flourish.

The second set of thinking is for governments to reflect upon where they invest money generated out of the natural resources, and taxes. Can that money not be lost or wasted on non productive ventures such as political campaigns, corruption, lavish lifestyles (big cars, big mansions) and on maintaining the ruling governments in power. The investment priorities should be to the majority of the citizens of the country who are farmers and this includes all sectors, health, education, security because it is them who need the health facilities, the schools for their children and the infrastructure for making life easy. Therefore, if these were done well, the lives of farmers would improve and our African economies would be transformed. But that is not all.

The last is that the biggest resource of the nation is its people. The Asian tigers, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia did not have vast natural resources at all, their only resource was its people but look where they are, these countries have become developed and they didn't need to invade other countries to get natural resources, or invest new ways of creating wealth. It

was simple for them really, they invested in themselves by supporting the farmers to produce better, they equipped their children with the right skills, provided high class health and infrastructure services (electricity, roads, water supply) and this caused them to turn the situation around. They had their population engaged in manufacturing industries, in the construction of all the infrastructure development projects, they used every opportunity to make sure that their citizens were beneficiaries of all the development generated, even the cities that emerged are occupied by all including the poor. The lesson is simple; governments must invest in the people. The people must also work hard because it is the money you earn out of the works of your hand that you use to develop yourself, you cannot not buy land, construct a home, pay school fees etc without money, and you cannot get money without working for it and when you earn it, it must not be wasted on non productive things like televisions, taking a second wife, trips to city entertainment centres and whatever you do that wastes your money.

Development will only occur when the farmers earn enough money which they can invest and also use to purchase the services they need. Governments must invest in their people and stop wasting the money from taxes and natural resources and the greatest resource that any country has is its people. So development occurs when the people develop and the people we mean in our African context are the small scale farmers.

We the small scale farmers are the wealth of our nations, can we become and push for the change we want to see in 2015 going forward.

**NB: This is an opinion piece. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of ESAFF**

## ESAFF Lesotho conducts training on CAADP processes



### **Mr Maoala Khesa from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security**

Africa, particularly the Sub Saharan region, is facing a myriad of challenges among them regional conflicts, climate change, economic down turn and dwindling donor funding. These sentiments were expressed by ESAFF Lesotho chairperson Mrs. M'amalefetsane Phakoe during a training workshop organized by ESAFF Lesotho in Maseru. The participants included 20 small scale farmers from different organizations and other stakeholders from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food security and other development organizations such as Campaign for Education Forum that presented the Budget circle and Basotho Enterprise Development Corporations (BEDCO). Mrs Phakoe further emphasized that to combat the high rate of poverty in Lesotho and Africa as a whole, citizens should engage the promotion of all constitutional rights and society must work together.

Speaking at the same training, Mr Maoala Khesa Chief Economic Planner and CAADP country team member from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security informed that participants that Lesotho has launched and signed CAADP. However, he emphasized that CAADP is neither a project nor study, but a programme and it is therefore an ongoing process which has been adopted for Farmers to benefit, as they are the drivers of the economy. While CAADP

advocates for 10% allocation of total budgets to Agriculture, Lesotho has never archived that as it is still below 5%. Participants called on the Lesotho government to uphold its commitments to fulfil CAADP guidelines

For any enquiries/comments/clarifications, please feel free to contact us on [esaff@esaff.org](mailto:esaff@esaff.org)