

07 June 2019



## PRESS STATEMENT

### JOINT MEETING OF SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY, AND FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

07 JUNE 2019  
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

1. SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, Fisheries and Aquaculture met in Windhoek, Namibia on 07 June 2019, to review the overall regional food security situation, progress made in the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) and implementation of Ministers Decisions from previous meetings. The meeting was co-chaired by Honourable Alpheus G. !Naruseb, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and Honourable Bernard Esau, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, both of the Republic of Namibia.
2. The SADC Deputy Executive Secretary (Regional Integration), Dr. Theminkosi Mhlongo, informed honourable Ministers on the importance of this meeting in reviewing SADC Programmes, Projects and related strategies on Agriculture and Food Security and Fisheries and Aquaculture as they relate and contribute to the Region's top priorities of Industrial Development and Market Integration and Infrastructure Development to facilitate competitive and diversified industrial development for deeper regional integration and poverty eradication. He noted that the Regional food security situation was not looking good due to impacts of cyclones, floods and drought.
3. In his remarks, Honourable Esau welcomed everybody to the meeting and emphasised the importance of this meeting in advancing regional integration agenda. He also emphasised the need for effective monitoring of implementation of decisions of previous and current Ministerial meetings at Member State level. His remarks were followed by the keynote address from Honourable !Naruseb, who noted that the meeting came at the right time to provide policy decisions for the future of Agriculture as the region was facing challenges that included cyclones, droughts, disease outbreaks and food shortages, which further exacerbates poverty and inequality in the region.
4. The Honourable !Naruseb also indicated the need to put in place policies and strategies to reduce and mitigate the impact of drought and floods, and to make

the agriculture and fisheries sectors in the region more resilient to adverse climatic conditions.

5. Honourable Ministers noted the humanitarian situation as a result of several cyclone systems that caused extensive flooding in Member States, between January and April 2019. Due to the severe and devastating impacts of cyclones in particular Idai and Kenneth, over 3.3 million people were affected and required immediate humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter, clothing, potable water, sanitation and medical support. In total the regional disasters killed over 1,000 people; injured an estimated 3,000, damaged economic infrastructure, education and health facilities and destroyed over 800,000 hectares of cropland as well as crops and seed stocks.
6. Honourable Ministers considered a report on regional plant and animal transboundary pests and diseases affecting the Region, and agreed to continue prioritising the control of these diseases, and reiterated the need to improve coordination in their management for improved food security and facilitation of trade.
7. Honourable Ministers noted the multi-sectoral approach to attain food security in the region through adopting the Water, Energy and Food (WEF) Nexus concept. The approach enhances synergies through collaborative efforts with water, energy and food sectors, in order to break silo approach in the sustainable economic development and optimal use of natural resources for improved agricultural performance, in the context of climate changes.
8. Honourable Ministers noted a report on the status on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries and encouraged Member States to further strengthen implementation of this protocol through regional programmes, especially aquaculture and the establishment of the SADC Monitoring Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre in Maputo, Mozambique. Ministers also approved the following documents: (i) a report on “Contribution of fisheries to food and nutrition security in the SADC region”, (ii) the Monitoring tool for the Protocol on Fisheries, as well as (iii) the Guidelines for Aquaculture Management in the SADC region.
9. Honourable Ministers considered progress from meeting of Ministers of Justice/Attorney Generals regarding MOU establishing the SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre (SPGRC). Honourable Ministers noted the relevance and importance of the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development in Southern Africa (CCARDESA) and implored Member States to continue supporting the institution.
10. Finally, Ministers thanked His Excellency President Hage Geingob, the Government and the people of the Republic of Namibia for hosting the meeting of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, and Fisheries and Aquaculture, during the year, as Chair of SADC, and for the warm hospitality accorded to them and their delegations.