

SACAU gathers leaders to discuss the future of agriculture

The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) is gathering presidents and deputy presidents of regional farmers' organisations to explore a wide range of issues that agriculture is grappling with, from trade policies, extension services, gender and youth, and good governance, to the nature and type of farmers' organisations and farmers that can transform and advance the sector.



This three-day consultative meeting will include leaders from Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe who will convene in South Africa from 13 October at the Centurion Legacy Lake Hotel in Pretoria. SACAU Chairperson, Dr Theo de Jager, will lead the discussions.

SACAU CEO, Ishmael Sunga explains that the consultative meeting seeks to establish and improve on a number of areas that can result in better service delivery to farmers and industry stakeholders. "This is a meeting of the 'captains of industry' to borrow from a generally used mining headline phrase. The world is changing, agriculture is changing, and as farmers' organisations we need to find new ways to respond to the complex challenges from the sector," Sunga said.

Challenges and opportunities

The meeting comes against the backdrop of various global and regional issues facing the sector, which include the impact of climate change on agriculture, a demand for food, changing consumer preferences; a lack of access to land, a need for youth inclusion in agriculture development and innovation. Delegates will provide an overview and first impressions of agricultural developments in their respective countries.

The United Nations declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) has put the world attention on the crucial role of family farming and smallholder farming as providers of food security and nutrition, which is the backbone of Africa's agricultural sector.

Furthermore, African Heads-of-State and government leaders committed themselves in June this year to The Malabo Declaration 2014 on *Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods*. The roadmap aims to integrate measures for increased agricultural productivity with social protection initiatives

focusing on vulnerable social groups through committing targeted national budget lines and facilitating increased consumption of locally produced food items.

SACAU will share its outlook plans with the delegates, as well as its collaborative activities with its key regional and global partners. A press conference will be held on Thursday, 2 October 2014 (10:00-11:00), led by Dr De Jager and SACAU Vice-Chairperson, Shalum Shamte.

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