



SOUTHERN AFRICA
FOOD AND CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMPAIGN
Our Land | Our Food | Our Life

24th August 2016

Your Excellences,
SADC Heads of States

We, small scale farmers, churches, rural women, media and civil society in Southern Africa hereby write to you ahead of the 36th Summit of the SADC Heads of States and Governments, taking place in Swaziland from 29th -30th August 2016.

Our organisations - which work together as the Southern Africa Food and Climate Justice Coalition – welcome the initiatives taken at regional level to respond to the devastating drought, and congratulate you on the approval of the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan.

We look forward to the Summit making further progress on these two important issues, which are key areas of engagement for our organisations. With this in mind, we would like to submit the following recommendations for your consideration:

1. Responding to the El Nino-related drought

Our organisations welcome the high-level political leadership in responding to the drought and related food crisis, as demonstrated by the SADC regional declaration of emergency, and the related national declarations. We fully support the SADC Regional Appeal to close the funding gap in Southern Africa of \$2.4bn. Many of our organisations are actively working to ensure that the region receives the support from the international community that this crisis urgently requires.

The current drought – although particularly severe – is not a one-off. As climate change takes grip, the cyclical El Nino phenomenon is becoming more frequent and more intense – affecting our same communities in Southern Africa again and again. In the context of this ‘new normal’, climate induced disasters need to be dealt with better. We know that early action prevents suffering, is significantly more cost effective, and prevents reversals in development gains. The UN Special Envoys for El Nino and Climate Change, Mary Robinson and Macharia Kamau, are working to set out a blueprint for how international institutions, UN member states and NGOs can respond more quickly and effectively to slow onset climate induced disasters around the world. Mary Robinson will be speaking at the SADC Summit about this, and will also raise the issue at the UN General Assembly in New York at the end of September. Some of our organisations have been working to support this process. **We look forward to your committed engagement with the UN Envoy’s proposals in Swaziland, and encourage you to lend your support to the initiative.**

2. Efforts to build a more resilient, food-secure region

Aside from dealing better with crises when they happen, a longer-term approach is needed to tackle the root causes of vulnerability. This must aim at building the resilience of small-scale agriculture. The region will continue to be badly hit by these crises, unless governments are serious about investing in smallholder agriculture, as contained in the Malabo Declaration. For this reason, we are encouraged by the approval of the Regional Agriculture Investment Plan, and now look forward to its swift implementation.

We call on SADC and its Member States to:

- Re-affirm, at the highest level, the commitment of the region to achieving the Malabo Declaration.
- Move urgently to implement the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP), and speed up the development of National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). Set timelines to allocate 10% of national budgets to agriculture.
- Enable the full participation of smallholders – especially women and youth – in implementation and monitoring. We commend the participatory nature of the development of the RAIP, and expect this will be extended to drafting the rules and regulations – the final step to operationalize the RAIP.
- Ensure not just the quantity but also the quality of investment, by targeting funds at the needs of smallholders – especially women and youth. We believe that government budget allocations are not currently benefiting poor rural women farmers, and that Farmer Input Subsidy Programmes in particular should be reformed with this in mind.
- Facilitate the transformation to climate-resilient agriculture, by supporting the diversification of agricultural production, and dedicating funds to enable smallholder farmers, especially women, to adapt in a changing climate.
- Acknowledge the central role of women in agriculture, and implement measures to ensure women's access, control and ownership of land and key productive resources.

To break the cycle of drought and food insecurity, a step change in ambition is needed. We call on SADC and its Member States to act now, not later. We stand ready to assist you in the critical task of building a more resilient and food-secure Southern Africa.

Yours faithfully,



Southern African Development Community
Council of Non-Governmental Organisations



Eastern and Southern Africa Small
Scale Farmer's Forum (**ESAFF**)



Economic Justice Network of the
Fellowship of Christian Churches
in Southern Africa (**EJN of FOCCISA**)



Rural Women's Assembly



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