

ACTESA charts long term agenda

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA)'s work on its 10 year strategy has reached an advanced stage after development partners and the ACTESA Advisory Committee discussed it during a series of meetings in Lusaka, Zambia.

Development Partners met on March 16 2011, while the ACTESA Advisory Committee met on March 17 to give their inputs on the strategy. The strategy will be tabled before the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture at their May 19-20 meeting in Swaziland.

The Strategic Plan defines the focus and approach adopted by ACTESA to achieve better development effectiveness and results towards its vision of realising a robust, modern and prosperous agricultural sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region.

It draws from, and builds upon ACTESA's original design plan, experiences and lessons learnt since the Alliance's launch in September 2008.

The strategy reinforces ACTESA's commitment to realising the market expansion, food and nutrition security objectives of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

ACTESA Advisory Committee expanded

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Director of Gender, Ms. Emiliana Tembo and the Head of the COMESA Technical Committee of Agriculture, Mr. Bongani Masuku have been added to the list of the ACTESA Advisory Committee, bringing the number of institutions on the Committee to 8.

The addition of the new members is in line with the initial design plan of ACTESA. Other institutions on the board include United States Agency for International Development (USAID), East African Farmers Federation (EAFF), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), World Food Programme (WFP), East African Grain Council (EAGC), and Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU).

ACTESA to establish an irrigation fund

Following the conclusion of the draft ACTESA strategic plan which was overwhelmingly supported by the ACTESA Advisory Committee, ACTESA CEO led a mission to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to discuss the establishment of an Irrigation Fund.

The Irrigation Fund is aimed at promoting and supporting irrigation investment in the ESA region.

The establishment of an Irrigation Fund is a follow up action to the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture



ACTESA CEO, Cris Muyunda with Advisory Committee Chairperson Philip Kiroo during the partners meeting



ACTESA Advisory Committee Chairperson Philip Kiroo with development partners during the meeting

and Environment and Natural Resources decision to accelerate irrigation investment in the region.

The thrust of the fund will be to strengthen and develop a supply chain of irrigation equipment with a view to improve the availability of low cost and adaptable irrigation inputs in the region.

Currently, only 6 percent of land in the ESA region is under irrigation. Climate change, with its characteristic droughts and poor rain fed agriculture practices and low attainable yields all merit the need to fast track irrigation development especially among smallholder farmers.

The establishment of an Irrigation Fund will compliment ACTESA activities that enhance the commercialisation of smallholder agriculture and expand their linkages to national and regional markets.



ACTESA joins AU /NEPAD to lobby US Congress

ACTESA CEO, Cris Muyunda, made a presentation at the United States of America Congress to articulate the importance of US-Africa partnership in food and nutrition security and strengthening agricultural markets.

As part of the AU/NEPAD led African team to the USA, Dr. Muyunda highlighted that key areas of partnership with the US included:

- i. Assisting African Institutions to strengthen policy frameworks for trade;
- ii. Building market institutions and risk mitigating mechanisms;
- iii. Strengthening farmer organisations;
- iv. Helping to harmonize regional grades and standards;
- v. Strengthening regional integration.

Before his address to Congress, Dr. Muyunda spoke on expanding Private Sector Investment and PPPs in African agriculture and nutrition at the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty's annual US-Africa Conference on Food Security.

FEMCOM and ACTESA hold consultative forum on food security and women in business for Eastern and Southern Africa

The Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM) in collaboration with the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), from March 28-30, 2011, held a regional consultative forum on food security and women in business.

Participating countries included; Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe and the host Malawi.

FEMCOM is one of the umbrella associations involved in the implementation of the European Union supported COMESA Regional Agro Inputs Programme (COMRAP).

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) has the mandate to coordinate COMRAP implementation and is working closely with FEMCOM in this regard to ensure appropriate gender main streaming in the COMRAP and other ACTESA led initiatives.

COMRAP has the overall objective of contributing to improving rural food security and livelihoods in the COMESA region through training and capacity building of national and regional input providers and harmonization of related regional legal frameworks.

The consultative forum provided a conducive environment for COMESA member States to deliberate on appropriate programmes to integrate women into trade and development through COMRAP activities within the region.

Further, the meeting was a step towards contributing to the overall objective of ACTESA in the agriculture sector which, is to improve agriculture production and enhance food security within the region.

FEMCOM is a COMESA institution, established in July 1993 under Article 155 of the COMESA Treaty and the Secretariat is hosted in Malawi

The main objective of FEMCOM is to promote programmes that integrate women into trade and development activities in the region, in particular, in the fields of agriculture, industry, trade, services, fishing, mining, energy, transport, communications and natural resources.

FEMCOM was founded on the idea that regional economic integration cannot be seen to have succeeded if it did not involve the full and equal participation of women in business.

The consultative forum attracted 60 participants from COMESA member States including representatives of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), Regional Food Security and Risk Management Programme (REFORM) and Women in Agri-business in Sub Saharan Africa Alliance (WASAA).

Others were from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Market Linkages Initiative (a USAID funded project) and Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa (ACE).

The major expected outcome of undertaking the consultative forum was to concretize strategies for enhancing partnerships, defining areas of collaboration and harmonizing programs for strengthening women networks among farmers, agro-dealers, agents and producers at regional and national levels.

Upcoming events

ACTESA meet the media regional conference, April 11-12, 2011, Zambia;

ACTESA Regional Farmers meeting, April 13-15, 2011, Zambia;

AAMP Policy Seminar and Training Workshop on Smallholder Commercialisation: April 18-22, Rwanda;

COMRAP Regional Weather Index Conference, April 28-29, Zimbabwe.