



Statement

**SADC CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO
THE IMPACT OF EL NIÑO ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION
SECURITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
25 – 26 FEBRUARY 2016
SOUTHERN SUN OR TAMBO AIRPORT
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

1. The SADC Consultative Meeting on Preparedness and Response to the Impact of the 2015/16 El Niño on Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in Southern Africa was held from 25th to 26th February 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).
2. The meeting was attended by senior officials from 13 SADC Member States namely; Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the humanitarian, development and donor communities, academia, NGOs, farmer unions and the private sector and the UN.
3. The meeting was opened by the representative of the Chairperson of SADC, Mr. Boweditswe Masilo. Also speaking at the official opening were Mr. Khathutshelo Neluheni of South Africa Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, who welcomed delegates to South Africa; Mr Chris Nikoi, WFP Regional Director; Dr David Phiri, FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for Southern Africa and Dr Thembinkosi Mhlongo, the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, who gave the keynote address.
4. The overall objective of the meeting was to create a common understanding of the effects of the current El Niño event from a regional and country perspective and agree on essential actions and commitments.
5. The meeting noted that the Strong 2015/16 El Niño has resulted in one of the driest rainfall seasons in over 35 years in Southern Africa. This will have the following implications:
 - a. low production of the 2015/16 agricultural production season leading to further declines in food production and regional cereal supplies.
 - b. higher prices of maize and other cereals, livestock and livestock products and other food products.

- c. increased hunger and malnutrition given that approximately 70% of the region's population are either directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture.
 - d. increased number of people vulnerable to food insecurity, particularly women, children and HIV affected people.
 - e. adverse effect on water, energy, education, and health sectors.
6. The meeting noted that SADC Member States, Cooperating Partners and the SADC Secretariat are undertaking a number of regional initiatives in disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response. However, the magnitude of this disaster requires additional measures to reduce the impact of El Niño on lives and livelihoods of affected population and ensure that development gains registered in the past are not reversed. This may scuttle the global Sustainable Development Agenda.
7. The meeting acknowledged that the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon will continue to recur hence agreed on the immediate implementation of the following short, medium and long-term measures in a collective and coordinated manner to minimize the impacts on the communities.

In Short-Term:

- a. Member States to provide preliminary data on the number of people affected, cereal and other food deficits for planning and resource mobilization.
- b. Members States with the support of cooperating partners to provide immediate relief to meet the food and non-food needs of more than 28 million vulnerable population who were affected by the previous poor season. The numbers are likely to increase in view of the current El Niño.
- c. Member States to scale-up on-going social protection/safety nets and to provide capacity needs for support by international cooperating partners.
- d. Member States and partners to increase budgetary allocation for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response.
- e. Member States and partners to maintain accessible, affordable and quality basic social services for the most vulnerable.
- f. Member States and partners to support male and female small-holder farmers to produce in the next production season.
- g. Member States and partners to provide targeted support to the vulnerable people to assist in recovery and build resilience.
- h. Member States and partners to establish logistics/transport task team to evaluate the available logistics capacity, procurement options, bottlenecks to free flow of food, coordinate and facilitate food commodity importation.

- i. Member States and partners to ensure swift imports of food and essential non-food items into the region.
- j. Member States and partners to establish El Niño specific coordination centre at the SADC Secretariat for this crisis.

Medium/Long-term

- a. Member States and partners to develop a regional resilience and M&E frameworks.
- b. Member States and partners to promote and scale-up appropriate technologies to adapt and mitigate against climate variability and change.
- c. Member States and partners to scale-up provision of primary health care services, including nutrition, HIV treatment, water and sanitation in line with approved regional strategies.
- d. Member States and partners to scale-up implementation and strengthen disaster risk reduction strategies for preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.
- e. Member States and partners to implement regional agricultural policies that promote production, productivity, competitiveness and improve access to markets and promote private sector participation.
- f. Member States and partners to use risk financing instruments to manage disasters.

26th February 2016
Johannesburg, South Africa