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Ministerial Meeting for the First High-Level Learning Event on the Food Systems Resilience Program for Eastern and Southern Africa

March 6, 2025 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia): Ministers and senior representatives from Eastern and Southern Africa convened at the **High-Level Learning Event on the Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP)** to reaffirm their commitment to strengthening regional trade integration, advancing food security, and enhancing the resilience of food systems across the region.

The ministerial meeting followed a two-and-a-half-day technical learning session, where experts explored key challenges and opportunities in food systems resilience under three thematic areas:

- Empowering African Food Systems with Digital Technologies – Examining the role of precision agriculture, real-time climate data, and AI in boosting productivity and reducing post-harvest losses.
- Strengthening Trade Integration – Leveraging trade scorecards and addressing Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures to improve agricultural trade.
- Learning Processes – Facilitating knowledge-sharing among countries to drive sustainable solutions.

The meeting brought together key ministers and officials, including:

- Hon. Samuel Dalitso Kawale, Minister of Agriculture, Malawi
- M. Ramindo Gaëtan, Secretary General and Chairman, FSRP-Madagascar Steering Committee, MADAGASCAR.
- H.E. Ibrahim Elmi Mohamed, Secretary General, Ministry of Agriculture, Djibouti.
- Hon. Dr Bright Kanyontore Rwamirama, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda
- H.E. Ibrahim Tanimu, Representative of the Minister of Agriculture, Nigeria.
- H.E. Fry Kouame Andre, Deputy Chief of Staff- REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, Côte d'Ivoire
- Amb. Assoumani, Ambassador of Comoros to Ethiopia and African Union
- Prof. RAZAFINJARA Aimé Lala, Chairperson of CCARDESA Board of Directors
- Dr. Girma Amente, Minister of Agriculture of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Excellency and Honourable Asad Abdirizak Mohamed, State Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, State Minister of Agriculture Federal Government of Somalia, SOMALIA
- Excellency and Honorable Dr Girma Amante, Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture, ETHIOPIA
- Priscilla Muiruri, National Project Coordinator - FSRP, KENYA.
- H.E. Assoumani Mondoha, Ambassador to AU and Federal Republic of Ethiopia, COMOROS

Addressing the Growing Food Security Crisis

At a time when food insecurity in Africa is reaching critical levels, ministers underscored the urgent need for regional cooperation, policy coordination, and innovative solutions to build more resilient and sustainable food systems. The combined impacts of climate change, protracted conflicts, economic instability, and global supply chain disruptions have intensified vulnerabilities in agricultural production, trade, and food access across the continent.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to:

Leveraging digital innovations – Investing in climate-smart technologies, precision agriculture, artificial intelligence (AI), and real-time data monitoring to optimize farm productivity, minimize post-harvest losses, and improve market efficiency.

- Strengthening regional trade integration – Enhancing cross-border trade policies, harmonizing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards, and improving infrastructure to facilitate the movement of agricultural goods across markets and reduce food supply chain disruptions.
- Promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural investments – Expanding access to finance, capacity building, and technology for smallholder farmers, ensuring they can adopt modern farming techniques and compete in larger markets.
- Fostering policy alignment and collaboration – Encouraging knowledge-sharing and joint initiatives among African nations to harmonize agricultural policies and accelerate the implementation of resilience strategies.

IGAD, in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), the World Bank, and the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), remains steadfast in supporting food systems resilience in Eastern and Southern Africa. These partnerships are instrumental in scaling up evidence-based interventions that enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen market linkages, and promote sustainable food production systems.

By working together, IGAD and its partners aim to bridge policy gaps, foster cross-border cooperation, and invest in climate-smart agriculture to equip farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to adapt to changing environmental conditions. The collaborative efforts also focus on improving access to finance for smallholder farmers, strengthening food value chains, and expanding digital innovations that can revolutionize agricultural practices across the region.

Additionally, ministers emphasized the importance of institutional capacity building and knowledge exchange to ensure that countries can effectively implement resilience-building strategies tailored to their unique challenges. Through sustained engagement and resource mobilization, stakeholders seek to establish a more coordinated and responsive regional food system, capable of withstanding future shocks and ensuring food security for millions.

The meeting served as a critical platform for reinforcing political will, securing long-term investments, and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships to drive Africa's food systems transformation.

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