

AD HOC EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON “CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE RURAL ECONOMY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA”

REPORT OF THE AEGM

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Economic Commission for Africa
Subregional Office for Southern Africa



Economic Commission for Africa

Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on “Climate Change and the Rural Economy in Southern Africa”

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACCE:	Africa Carbon Credit Exchange
ACPC:	African Climate Policy Centre
AEGM:	Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting
CDM:	Clean Development Mechanism
COMESA:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSA:	Climate smart agriculture
EAC:	East African Community
ECA:	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECA-SA:	Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa
ESAANet:	East and Southern Africa Agribusiness Network
FAO:	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FSSDD:	Food Security and Sustainable Development Division of ECA
GDP:	Gross domestic product
GKI:	Green Knowledge Institute of ACCE
MDG:	Millennium Development Goal
NAPA:	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NAT:	Nutri Aid Trust
REC:	Regional economic community
REDD+:	Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
Rio+20:	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2012)
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
UN:	United Nations
WLWRA:	Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa.

Executive summary

This is the report of the Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting (AEGM) on “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa”, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 22-24 August 2012.

The main objective of the AEGM was to strengthen strategies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and to sensitize and build awareness of the impact of the global warming on the rural economy in Southern Africa. The AEGM also aimed to strengthen the capacity of the subregion to respond effectively to climate-change threats and opportunities.

The AEGM was organised by the Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-SA), in collaboration with the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), the ECA Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The experts discussed issues and challenges faced by SADC countries in addressing the impact of climate change on their rural economies and reviewed an ECA-SA issues paper on “Climate Change and the Rural Economy in Southern Africa: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities”.

Based on the findings of the issues paper, the experts assessed the impact of climate change on agricultural development, food security and the rural economy as largely negative. They discussed its effects on selected sectors such as health, water and sanitation, natural resources and ecosystems management. They highlighted opportunities arising from the global development agenda related to climate change.

The meeting emphasized that climate change was being treated as an issue affecting a single sector and there was weak coordination and dialogue between key ministries and stakeholders which led to fragmented interventions which were not comprehensive. Declining budget support to agriculture and rural development has hampered the capacity of rural dwellers to cope with climate change and to promote innovative interventions in response.

The subregion needs to capitalize on its natural resources and to take advantage and harness the benefits offered by the “green economy” concept for fostering food security and poverty alleviation, building resilience and promoting a low-carbon, inclusive rural economy.

While there is a strong gender dimension to climate change and its impacts on the rural economy, most rural development policies and programmes are not yet gender-mainstreamed and women’s participation in major discussions on climate change is still at a low level or weak.

Member States need to take a proactive approach and mainstream climate change into development plans and policies and make sure that vulnerable people, especially rural poor female farmers, have access to information, training and finances. This segment of the population will bear the brunt of the effects of climate change.

ECA, regional economic communities (RECs) and other stakeholders need to promote and strengthen capacity-building initiatives on climate change and the rural economy. These should be inclusive and involve policymakers, extension staff and other advisory institutions, local leaders, the media and farmers. They should focus on mobilizing domestic and external resources, technologies and approaches; gender-mainstreaming; scaling up application of best-practice interventions; promoting technologies that ease the burden on women and other vulnerable groups; and incorporating mitigation strategies relevant to the social sector.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Global warming is already affecting Africa and other regions and is expected to worsen in the coming decades. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) subregion is among the most affected parts of the world. Rural economies in Southern Africa are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, due to their high dependence on natural resources. The majority of rural populations are poor and highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, within a context of low rural economic diversification and weak coping strategies. Several sectors of the rural economy and important resources for rural development are already directly affected by climate change, particularly agriculture, water resources, health, ecosystems and biodiversity.

The subregion is vulnerable to climate change, due to: the extreme poverty of many of its people; a high burden of existing disease; gender inequality; lack of access to resources and services; limited technological means; lack of efficient governance; conflicts and wars; fragmented health services; low levels of education; water and food insecurity; frequent natural disasters, such as droughts and floods; and agricultural systems which are heavily dependent on rainfall.

Over 50 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of SADC member States comes from primary and climate-sensitive sectors of production, such as agriculture, mining, forestry and wildlife. Many people in the subregion depend directly on agriculture as their primary source of food. Agriculture constitutes the primary source of subsistence, employment and income for 61 per cent or 142 million of the subregion's total population of 232 million. Agriculture accounts for close to 8 per cent of the subregion's GDP (Chilonda and Minde, 2007) and the sector is instrumental in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In much of Southern Africa, agriculture is a strong option for spurring growth, overcoming poverty and enhancing food security. It has upstream linkages on the supply side and downstream linkages on the manufacturing side and these further increase the expected impacts of climate change on the economy of the subregion.

A negative impact of climate change on agricultural productivity and production will affect the overall rural economy at the local level, leading even to macroeconomic vulnerability in some countries that are highly dependent on agriculture. One example is Malawi, which generates up to 70 per cent of its foreign-exchange earnings from agriculture and 85 per cent of the country's population depend on the land for their livelihood.

It is projected that in the next 20 to 30 years, three or four SADC member States will face serious water shortages if nothing is done to change the current patterns. As economic growth progresses and populations increase, several of the States are predicted to become “water stressed” by 2025. The subregion is also experiencing high prevalence of droughts and floods and low access to safe drinking water and sanitation. This brings further concerns as climate change may lead to altered water regimes which, coupled with increased demands, may lead to water scarcity.

Climate change will also have negative effects on human health in the subregion. Where malaria is not adequately controlled, the seasonality of climate greatly influences the seasonality of malaria transmission. Epidemics of Rift Valley Fever associated with flooding could increase with a higher frequency of El-Niño events, as well as other waterborne diseases. Heat stress and drought are likely to have a negative impact on animal health, dairy and meat production, and livestock reproduction in the subregion.

Southern Africa is renowned for its rich and diverse biological resources. These natural systems form the foundation of the economies of most of the countries and the majority of the population, especially in rural areas, derives their livelihood from them. Threats to terrestrial and marine ecosystems will translate into threatened livelihoods in the subregion.

It is against this background that the Office for Southern Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-SA), in collaboration with the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), the ECA Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD) and SADC, organized the Ad hoc Experts Group Meeting (AEGM) on climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa. The experts discussed issues and challenges faced by SADC countries in addressing the impact of climate change on their rural economies and highlighted opportunities arising from the development agenda linked to climate change. They also reviewed the ECA SRO-SA issues paper titled “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities”.

1.2 Objectives and aims of the AEGM

The specific objective of the AEGM was to strengthen strategies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and to sensitize and build awareness of the impact of the global warming on the rural economy in Southern Africa. The AEGM also aimed to strengthen the capacity of the subregion to respond effectively to climate-change threats and opportunities.

Based on the findings of the issues paper, the AEGM:

- » Assessed the largely negative impact of climate change on agricultural development, food security and rural economy, and discussed its effects on selected sectors such as health, water and sanitation, natural resources and ecosystems management, as well as the vulnerability of the subregion to natural disasters;
- » Highlighted opportunities arising from the global development agenda related to climate change through initiatives such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and other financing mechanisms, and identified ways of enhancing access to such facilities within SADC, especially for its rural population.
- » Discussed measures taken by the subregion towards mitigating and reducing the impacts of climate change and mainstreaming it in rural development policies, and indicated how these initiatives can be further strengthened to improve the subregional response to the global threat; and
- » Identified key capacity-building needs and pertinent issues at the subregional and national levels to enable decision makers and other stakeholders to promote long-term, planned adaptation strategies and to build inclusive rural economies that would be resilient to climate change.

1.3 Attendance

Participants at the AEGM included 25 experts on climate, agriculture, agribusiness, environment, natural-resources management and rural development from government institutions, ministries, the private sector, academia and civil society.

Organizations represented at the meeting included: Africa Carbon Credit Exchange - Green Knowledge Institute (ACCE-GKI); Rural Self-Help Development Association; United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions; the joint Climate Change Initiative between Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) and SADC; Coping with Drought and Climate Change; African Climate Change Fellowship Programme; Ministry of Economic Planning (Malawi); Botswana College of Agriculture; Leadership for Environment and Development Southern and Eastern Africa; Department of Rural Economy of the Université Évangélique en Afrique; Nutri Aid Trust (NAT); East and Southern Africa Agribusiness Network (ESAANet); and Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa (WL-WRSA).

2. Opening session

2.1 Opening remarks

Opening statements were delivered by Sizo Mhlanga (ECA-SA Senior Economic Affairs Officer), Jaba-vu Nkomo (Senior Economist from ACPC) and Alessandra Sgobbi (Economic Affairs Officer from FSSDD).

Mr. Mhlanga welcomed all the participants and thanked them for finding time to attend the meeting. He noted that agriculture, particularly rain-fed farming by smallholders, was the backbone of the SADC rural economy and said that only 3.5 per cent of the arable land in the subregion was under irrigation at that time.

He emphasized that climate change would have a negative impact on agricultural productivity and production and that this would affect the overall rural economy and the majority of the population in SADC. He further highlighted that three or four SADC member States would face serious water shortages in the next 20-30 years if nothing was done and noted that the subregion was already experiencing a high prevalence of droughts and floods.

He said that SADC's political leaders were paying increasing attention to issues of climate change and environment sustainability and recognized that the subregion had adhered to major global initiatives on adaptation and mitigation. SADC was putting in place pertinent policy frameworks and other instruments aimed at reinforcing rural livelihood resilience at local, national and subregional levels.

He urged participants to come up with innovative ideas for building strategies for long-term adaptation and enhancing the resilience of the rural economy in SADC to climate change. He wished them fruitful discussions.

Mr. Nkomo thanked ECA-SA for inviting ACPC to be part of the AEGM. He emphasized the role of the centre in addressing climate-change mitigation and adaptation in the African region and said that it was a forward-looking policy think-tank established by ECA to address the impact of climate change by assisting member States in mainstreaming climate change into their development strategies and programmes.

He said that climate change should be looked at as a development issue and urged SADC countries to formulate policies aimed at strengthening adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate

change on the subregion. He said that he expected that the workshop would allow rich discussion between practitioners and researchers on climate change, agriculture and the rural economy. This would narrow the gap between them and would also enhance the resilience of vulnerable groups in the subregion.

Ms. Sgobbi also expressed her gratitude to ECA-SA for allowing FSSDD to be part of the discussions. She informed the meeting that the outcome of the AEGM was expected to enrich the global discussions including the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which happened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012 (“Rio+20”), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the 18th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, due to take place in Doha in November 2012.

She noted that climate change was already having an impact on SADC’s rural economy and urged the AEGM to identify ways to strengthen the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development in order to enhance the subregion’s resilience to climate change.

She added that the meeting was an opportunity for ECA to understand member States’ needs and sharpen its support for efforts to mainstream climate change in development policy and strategies. She encouraged experts to define clear ways of mobilising domestic resources for adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. She said she had high expectations for the outcome of the meeting, given the quality and rich expertise of the participants, and wished them fruitful discussions.

2.2 Organizational matters

Election of the bureau

The meeting unanimously elected the following participants to constitute the bureau with the sole purpose of guiding the deliberations:

Professor Lloyd Chingambo (from ACCE-GKI) was elected as Chairperson, and Pamela Mulozi (from NAT and ESAANet) as Rapporteur.

The bureau was supported by the ECA Secretariat in capturing the salient points arising from the discussions.

Adoption of the agenda and programme of work (Agenda Item 3)

The meeting adopted the proposed agenda as follows:

- » Opening remarks
- » Presentation and discussion of a draft report titled “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities - agriculture, food security and human development”
- » Presentation and discussion of a draft report titled “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities - water and sanitation, ecosystems and recommendations”
- » Presentation and discussion on the ACPC and its responses to climate-change impact on rural economy in Africa
- » Presentation on building a climate-resilient rural economy in Southern Africa: the vision and role of the COMESA-EAC-SADC initiative
- » Presentation by the panelists
 1. Climate Smart Agriculture Programme: issues, challenges and opportunities for rural economy - the case of Malawi
 2. Climate-change impacts on rural women in SADC
 3. Agricultural value-chain development, rural economy and climate-change threats
 4. Africa Carbon Credit Exchange and opportunities for the SADC rural economy
- » Group work and presentations
- » Discussion and adoption of the outcome statement
- » Closure of meeting.

3. Presentation of issues paper on “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa”

3.1 Presentation of draft report “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities - agriculture, food security and human development”

Jean Luc Mastaki Namegabe (ECA-SA Economic Affairs Officer), made a presentation on “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities - agriculture, food security and human development”.

The presenter spoke about the impacts, which were largely negative, of climate change on agricultural development, food security and rural development. He noted that the majority of the poor in the subregion live in rural zones and that agriculture, which is their main activity, has the greatest potential to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. He said that sector was the primary source of subsistence, employment and income for 156 million people, despite the low allocation of the public budget to it.

He explained that small-scale and subsistence farmers on rain-fed farms constituted the majority of rural farmers in the subregion. This segment faced the most serious and immediate risks related to climate change because of its high reliance on ecosystems. Climate change would worsen the food-security situation, poverty and human development in the subregion through its effects on agricultural productivity, production and farmers’ incomes.

He noted that climate change was already a reality in the subregion. A trend of increasing temperature had been confirmed in different zones and climate variability and extreme weather events were increasing, while evidence pointed to increased variability in rainfall from one year to another. He said that women would bear the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change and suggested that gender perspectives should be mainstreamed into national policies on sustainable development and climate change.

On a positive note, the presenter noted that smallholder agriculture had a rich and untapped potential to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases through innovative activities such as agroforestry, better land-management practices and reforestation. He urged the subregion to explore the potential of carbon markets for creating incentives to avoid deforestation and to mobilize carbon finance to support the restoration of degraded grasslands, generating benefits for adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change and for environmental sustainability and diversifying sources of rural incomes. He encouraged the subregion to develop its capacity towards taking advantage from the REDD+ initiative and the green economy framework.

3.2 Presentation of draft report on “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: issues, challenges and opportunities – water, sanitation and ecosystems”

Benjamin Banda (ECA-SA Economic Affairs Officer), made a presentation on “Climate change and the rural economy in Southern Africa: Issues, challenges and opportunities - water, sanitation and ecosystems”. He outlined the impact of climate change on the water sector and on biodiversity in Southern Africa. He noted that southern Africa was already experiencing water problems as a result of climate change, with some countries already experiencing pressure on transboundary water resources as fluctuations in water availability and water quality had become more pronounced. He emphasized that sanitation issues did not receive sufficient attention in policy debates in Southern Africa. The subregion scored very badly in terms of access to improved sanitation facilities and its rural areas faced the most serious problems in access to clean water and sanitation coverage.

He said that climate change could lead to increased episodes of sanitation-related diseases, such as cholera, malaria and other waterborne diseases, and this would expose countries to secondary disasters within a context of weak capacity to mitigate the risk of sanitary contamination from water, solid waste and human waste. He outlined the consequences of unmitigated climate change on ecosystems and said this would lead to alarming consequences for fisheries and tourism, and thus for rural economies and much-needed diversification of sources of rural incomes.

The presenter also talked about subregional initiatives aimed at responding to the impacts of climate change on water, including the SADC Regional Strategic Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Development and Management (1999-2004), the SADC Regional Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (developed in 2004), and countries efforts’ to harmonize systems for water governance and management in the subregion. At national level, the processes included formulating and implementing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Water Acts.

He urged SADC countries to shift from reactive disaster management to preventive initiatives which brought several sectors together and reduced risks of disaster. He encouraged the SADC Secretariat, ECA and other stakeholders to strengthen member States' capacity to meet the conditions set out for benefiting from the CDM.

In the plenary discussions following the presentations on the issues paper, experts identified pertinent issues that the paper should adequately address, including issues about agribusiness, urban-rural linkages and post-harvest losses. These issues should be addressed using the value chain approach in order to identify the power nodes or points, within the context of the impact of climate change on rural economies.

The experts at the meeting emphasized that the report should incorporate other issues, including: energy access and economic development in rural areas; cross-cutting issues related to development of rural infrastructure and its links to climate change; cultural dimensions related to climate change adaptation and mitigation; and diversification of the rural economy.

Experts noted that other segments of the report should be strengthened and restructured. The report's section that analyzes biodiversity should be a stand-alone chapter and its analysis on water for productive uses and ecosystems should be moved to the chapter on water. The meeting urged the Secretariat to update underlying data sources and to identify short-, medium- and long-term actions which would strengthen rural adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In the discussions, they said the section on opportunities for climate-change mitigation and adaptation needed to be strengthened and it should provide more information on how activities in rural areas could be developed and used to access carbon markets and other financing mechanisms related to climate change, based on concrete case studies and good practices on the ground.

The experts advocated better characterisation of rural economies, drawing out similarities and differences across countries but also pointing out the critical role of agriculture for all rural economies, using an approach based on agro-ecological zones. The meeting called for a clear dissemination strategy for the report, ensuring that the message is properly packaged to make sure it reached policy-makers and other stakeholders, especially farmers. ECA was advised to use pamphlets, policy briefs and booklets, and other communication tools for that purpose.

On the issue of national adaptation plans and global funds such as the Green Climate Fund, the meeting observed that there had been very little in terms of disbursements, compared to the commitments made. The experts identified the energy sector and agro-forestry as key entry points through which Southern African countries should benefit from the CDM and urged the subregion to tap the high

potential for agro-forestry to sequester carbon in the soil as a component of its strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change.

They also observed that weather information systems were usually based on global or regional models which were not useful for farmers in rural areas and they urged member States and RECs to promote data/information on weather and climate change that had been disaggregated and to scale information down to the local level for the benefit of farmers and other stakeholders.

They noted there was low interaction between policymakers, researchers and farmers. They recommended blending traditional and scientific information as part of analyzing and disseminating climate data. Local knowledge networks and institutions should be used for generating and disseminating information on climate change.

On linkages between climate change and water resources, they said the study needed to be strengthened in sections addressing issues of ecosystem services and should differentiate countries with high potential water supplies from countries with less water resources. In sections discussing water scarcity, questions related to management and utilization should be differentiated from issues of water supply.

Experts pointed out that the section on biodiversity put more emphasis on species rather than on ecosystems and they urged that the report should use an ecosystem approach when analyzing biodiversity losses due to climate change. This approach should lead to assessing willingness to pay for ecosystem services as well as designing appropriate public-private partnerships that could be used to conserve biodiversity.

Participants underscored the need to highlight the cost of droughts and floods and the related adaptation responses as a strategy to advocate strengthening climate-change adaptation and mitigation in southern Africa. They urged the subregion to promote the involvement of the media in building awareness and disseminating climate information.

4. Presentation on “The ACPC and its responses to climate change impact on rural economy in Africa”

Mr Nkomo made a presentation on “The ACPC and its responses to climate change impact on rural economy in Africa”. He noted that it could be argued that Africa was the “green” continent, given the low average level of its greenhouse gas emissions compared to other regions, but it was also among the zones most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It was home for 14 per cent of the global population, but responsible for only 2.4 per cent of world emissions of greenhouse gas.

Africa was now growing rapidly, after a period of stagnation, and this could increase the continent’s emissions due both to rising incomes and to increasing intensity of emissions. He raised a serious concern that Africa has the lowest average levels of capacity to adapt and was least able to cope with the impacts of climate change.

The presenter said that Africa’s unusually high level of vulnerability arose from the region’s fragile natural ecosystems; its exposure to increasingly frequent natural disasters, mainly droughts, fires, and floods; and its strong reliance on activities that were highly sensitive to climate. He identified the socioeconomic impacts of climate change on the SADC rural economy including increased water and food insecurity, threatened human settlements and livelihoods, adverse impacts on health and education, negative impacts on economic growth (in terms of less productive agriculture and damaged infrastructure), and destroyed biodiversity and ecosystems.

He urged member States, RECs and other stakeholders to enhance countries’ adaptive capacities within a multi-pronged approach and to sustain developmental activities in the face of climate change, taking into account the importance of gender issues.

Mr Nkomo highlighted the ACPC ClimDev-Africa Programme and its activities and achievements. He said the programme was constructing a solid foundation for the response to climate change through building a solid science and observational infrastructure and enabling working partnerships between government institutions, the private sector, civil society and vulnerable communities.

He said that ACPC has been involved in many activities, including Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions; climate finance; energy and access to energy; climate and water; climate and agriculture; low-carbon development; the economics of climate change; climate change and health; and monitoring and evaluation of adaptation at country, subregional and regional levels. He encouraged member States and other stakeholders to partner with the centre in strengthening the resilience of the rural economy of the SADC subregion to climate change.

5. Presentation on “Green economy and green growth: opportunities for rural economies in Southern Africa”

Ms. Sgobbi made a presentation on “Green economy and green growth: opportunities for rural economies in Southern Africa”.

She stated that, although the world collectively was on an unsustainable path in terms of its development process, Africa’s ecological footprint was still low. She said that the region was not yet meeting the basic needs of its people. Although the region had enjoyed fast economic growth in the previous decade, this had not resulted in the creation of sufficient jobs and the eradication of poverty. Environmental degradation continued unabated.

She defined “green economy” as one of several approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, integrating economic growth with environmental sustainability and social development in order to decouple economic growth from social inequities and inequalities, and from environmental degradation. She said that a green economy should be based on the Rio principles; respect national sovereignty on natural resources; be supported by an enabling environment and well-functioning institutions; address concern about inequality and promote social inclusion; and help bridge the technological gap while promoting sustainable consumption and production. She outlined challenges related to a green economy including the need for strong institutions, functioning markets and human, financial and technological resources.

She highlighted selected green economy good practices in the subregion including: climate-smart and green agriculture projects in Malawi and Zambia; agriculture that is linked to conservation in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe; feed-in tariffs in Mauritius; and renewable energy investments in South Africa.

The presenter urged member States to adopt measures aimed at spurring green growth in Southern Africa including putting in place enabling policies, regulatory frameworks and institutions, improving governance, accountability and institutional innovation. She encouraged countries to channel domestic and external financing to sectors with the highest potential for green growth, to build the necessary capacity and to harness international cooperation and technology transfer. In concluding, the presenter assured member States of ECA’s support towards achieving sustainable development, including through developing policy relating to the green economy.

In the ensuing discussions, the experts noted that green economy was not just about low-carbon growth or mitigation. It encompassed broader issues including green jobs and sustainable production and consumption.

The meeting noted there was frequent confusion between the green-economy approach and sustainable development. Staff from the Secretariat explained that the green economy was a tool for attaining sustainable development. They also explained that the African position at the Rio+20 Summit coincided with the outcomes of the summit in most sectoral issues including agriculture, institutional frameworks and the framework for attaining sustainable development.

Meeting participants noted the concern of African countries about the green economy becoming the new development paradigm because of weak markets and institutions, and lack of access to technologies. It was therefore recommended that discussion should focus on the process of transitioning to a green economy rather than on replacing the development discourse altogether.

It was suggested that the high proportion of people living on degraded land should be looked at as an opportunity to make those areas better and productive within the framework of the green economy and natural resources restoration. Stakeholders were urged to tackle the restoration of degraded land through their participation in carbon markets, reforestation initiatives, renewable-energy innovations and green employment to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods. The experts further emphasized the need to recognize the economic importance of natural capital in policies dealing with wealth-creation.

They observed that NAPAs are important frameworks for addressing concerns about domestic adaptation but there was still an issue because of their high reliance on external resources. RECs and other stakeholders were urged to support climate-investment frameworks and climate-response strategies and to promote mobilization of domestic resources to complement the external funding. Member States were urged to embark on mainstreaming climate change into government programmes and to involve the private sector and traditional leaders in the process.

It was further noted that some African countries were already implementing some pilot projects for green growth. However, it was necessary to secure adequate means from developed countries and internally in order to implement the green economy.

6. Presentation on “Building a climate resilient rural economy in Southern Africa: the vision and role of the COMESA-EAC-SADC initiative”

Chikakula Miti (Climate Change Coordinator, COMESA-EAC-SADC Climate Change Initiative) made a presentation on “Building a climate resilient rural economy in Southern Africa: the vision and role of the COMESA-EAC-SADC initiative”.

The presenter noted that climate change is a major threat to sustainable growth and development in Africa and the attainment of the MDGs. He recalled the commitment of African leaders made at the eighth African Union Summit in January 2007 to integrate strategies for adapting to climate change into national and subregional development policies, programmes and activities.

He said that the COMESA-EAC-SADC Climate Change Initiative aims to achieve economic prosperity and protection from the bad effects of climate change and had an overall objective of addressing climate change and its impacts in a manner that builds economic and social resilience for present and future generations.

The presenter emphasized the initiative aimed to consolidate a shared vision for Africa on climate change and a common and informed voice for the continent in negotiations on limiting greenhouse gases after the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol, and in other forums. He urged member States and other stakeholders to join the initiative, as it is fostering regional and national cooperation to address climate change and its impacts and to promote integration of climate-change considerations into regional and national policies, sectoral planning, development and budgeting.

He informed the participants about the COMESA-EAC-SADC carbon fund set up to support projects that help member States lessen the effects of climate change on food security and help reduce the impact of changing weather patterns on livelihoods. The fund would support activities such as afforestation and reforestation, agriculture linked to conservation, irrigation, research on drought-tolerant crops, and other projects that help mitigate the effects of climate change. In concluding, the presenter urged stakeholders to promote and enhance collaboration and synergy and to foster partnerships between governments, the business community, civil society and other stakeholders in tackling the issues related to climate change in the subregion.

In the discussions that followed the presentation, the meeting participants urged COMESA to strengthen the synergy between the COMESA-EAC-SADC initiative and other programmes and initiatives in the SADC subregion. They suggested that COMESA, EAC and SADC should go beyond the usual top-bottom approach in fostering subregional integration, but instead should sensitize and actively involve different stakeholders in the climate-change initiative and make sure its agenda is owned by the beneficiaries and driven by their demands.

Participants encouraged the COMESA-EAC-SADC Carbon Fund to provide support for developing project proposals, as many member States may have needed help in building capacity for preparing projects if they were to be successful in accessing the funding. It was further advised that countries should strengthen mobilization of domestic resources, in addition to efforts by donors to finance climate-change initiatives in the subregion.

Given the high number of initiatives on climate change within the subregion, the COMESA-EAC-SADC initiative was encouraged to take the leadership role in terms of championing and coordinating the different initiatives and harmonizing the different governance set-ups within the different countries.

7. Panel presentations and discussions

The panel discussions focused on presentations on: (1) “Climate smart agriculture: capturing the synergies between food security, adaptation and mitigation. Opportunities for rural economy and related issues in Malawi” made by FAO-Malawi, (2) “Climate change impacts on rural women in the SADC region” by WLWRSA, (3) “Agriculture value chain development, rural economy and climate change threats” by Nutri Aid Trust (NAT) and (4) “Africa Carbon Credit Exchange and opportunities for the SADC rural economy” by the Green Knowledge Institute.

7.1 “Climate smart agriculture: capturing the synergies between food security, adaptation and mitigation. Opportunities for rural economy and related issues in Malawi”

Mutie Kachulu (FAO-Malawi Technical Coordinator), made a presentation on “Climate smart agriculture: capturing the synergies between food security, adaptation and mitigation-opportunities for rural economy and related issues in Malawi”. He highlighted converging trends in the agricultural sector in Malawi. The sector was subject to varying rainfall and persistent droughts and floods. It contributed up to 35 per cent to GDP and 83 per cent of foreign-exchange earnings, while providing employment to 85 per cent of the labour force and supporting 80 per cent of the population, who were mostly based in rural areas.

The presenter emphasized that climate change was already having an impact on the agricultural sector and the rural economy in Malawi. He defined “climate smart agriculture” (CSA) as “interventions that increase agricultural productivity and resilience (adaptation), reduce/remove greenhouse gases (mitigation) while enhancing national development goals”. He added that CSA had to be context-specific and evidence-based and had to assess synergies and trade-offs across multiple objectives. CSA offered triple wins for food-security, adaptation and mitigation, and therefore contributed to eradicating poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

He noted that CSA in Southern Africa needed to promote energy-saving technologies, processing techniques aimed at reducing post-harvest losses, agroforestry and REDD+ initiatives for sequestering carbon. He underscored challenges faced for the development of CSA in the subregion including: lack of coherence in policy documents; inconsistent targets between national instruments; low capacity for managing and disseminating information; weak climate-change and agricultural extension management structures; and unsustainable public and private financing mechanisms. He concluded

by saying that agriculture had not featured prominently in negotiations on issues related to climate change and urging southern African countries to advocate the full inclusion of agriculture, food security and land issues in the climate-change negotiations.

7.2 “Climate change impacts on rural women in the SADC region”

Abby Taka Mgugu Mhene (Director WLW RSA) made a presentation on “Climate change impacts on rural women in the SADC region”. She stated that climate change was a big threat for the rural economy in the SADC subregion and had been recognised as having devastating impacts on different population groups in SADC. The rural poor, who are mainly women farmers, would bear the brunt of climate change as they are highly dependent on climate-sensitive resources.

She emphasized that the changing rainfall patterns and the recurrent droughts and floods in the sub-region would have an effect on rural women’s ability to maintain food security for their households, as they were dependent on rain-fed agriculture. This would result in increased incidences of malnutrition and waterborne diseases. She further noted that climate change was already increasing the workload of rural women.

In concluding, the presenter urged member States to take a proactive approach, to mainstream the gender dimension within plans and policies related to climate change and rural development, and to make sure vulnerable people - especially poor female farmers in rural areas - had access to information, training and finances, as this segment of the population would pay the price of climate change.

7.3 “Agriculture value chain development, rural economy and climate change threats”

Pamela Mulozi (Program Manager - Business Unit, Nutri Aid Trust, Zambia) made a presentation on “Agriculture value chain development, rural economy and climate change threats”. She presented her organisation as a Zambian company providing effective solutions towards developing and promoting affordable, reliable, and easily operated small-scale rural enterprises. She highlighted that NAT was currently providing the last-mile approach on the agricultural value chain in the provision of business development services to agro-dealers for the benefit of smallholder farmers in three districts of Zambia, namely Nyimba, Mkushi and Kalulushi.

The presenter noted that climate change was one of the threats faced by agro-dealers in rural zones as it was discouraging farmers from adopting new technologies and modern inputs. In turn this had the effect of reducing agricultural productivity, which affected food security.

In concluding, she underscored the need for rural actors to access information on practices that could assist in improving their livelihoods and reducing the negative effects of climate change. Development of agribusiness was part of the solution and should be promoted accordingly.

7.4 “Africa Carbon Credit Exchange and opportunities for the SADC rural economy”

Billy Katontoka (Director Projects and Operations, GKI) made a presentation on “Africa Carbon Credit Exchange and opportunities for the SADC rural economy”. He introduced the ACCE organisation and said its objective was to “unlock low-carbon Africa” through locally appropriate projects and opportunities. He noted that ACCE was headquartered in Lusaka but that its mandate covered the entire African region.

He said that southern African economies were sensitive to the direct impacts of climate change because of their heavy dependence on agriculture and ecosystems and because smallholder agriculture was the main source of incomes and livelihoods for the poor in the region.

He outlined the opportunities offered by carbon trading for the rural economy in SADC and noted that sustainable livestock management; manure and bio-solid management; bio-energy development; and grazing-land management, pasture improvement, management of organic soils and restoration of degraded lands could contribute to mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions by the agricultural sector.

He highlighted selected projects promoted by ACCE, including tree-planting by Mitengo Zambia and a programme of conservational agriculture. Efforts to link farmers to the carbon market were facing challenges related to lack of credible standards, weak organizations for small-scale farmers, lack of precise data on carbon sequestration, and issues around forestry definition in countries. There was a need to utilize small-scale afforestation and reforestation projects for carbon sequestration under the CDM.

He concluded that the private sector had an instrumental role in development processes linked to the carbon market, and he based this on ACCE’s partnership with cotton company Dunavant Zambia (Pty) Ltd and COMACO Ltd. (Community Markets for Conservation). He urged member States to develop further both physical infrastructure and extension services for rural economic development and to mainstream climate change in policies and programmes.

In the discussions that followed the panel presentations, the experts emphasized the need to integrate population dynamics, food security, poverty and climate change, while promoting CSA. It was further

noted that adoption of technologies related to CSA had been relatively low, despite their benefits, and this indicated the need to understand the benefits, costs and barriers to adoption of these innovations.

Participants noted that more attention should be paid to CSA at national and subregional policy levels and more effort was needed to identify and scale up best practices, build capacity and experience, and help clarify future choices. It was important to highlight practical activities that could be undertaken to mitigate climate change in rural areas.

The meeting underscored that climate change was only one of many contributing factors that were leading to a decline in agricultural productivity in southern Africa. Efforts should be made to isolate the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity and to highlight the role played by other factors, such as declining public investment in the sector and poor farming practices.

It was noted that women were the most affected by climate change and were also fundamental to actions against it. The meeting urged member States and other stakeholders to design gender-sensitive capacity-building activities to maximize women's contribution to climate solutions. Deliberate efforts should be encouraged to strengthen their access to land and financial services.

Participants observed that investors used scientific climate information for making decisions but that the same information was not accessible or easily understood by farmers. It was recommended that climate information should be scaled down and disseminated in a manner that would make it easily used by every stakeholder, especially poor farmers.

Discussants said there was frequently a lack of coordination between sectoral policies dealing with agriculture and climate change and urged member States not only to develop new policies but also to ensure that existing ones took account of the effects of climate change. Member States should re-vamp extension services and strengthen capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving agricultural productivity.

It was observed that Africa always relied on external expertise for addressing most capacity requirements on climate change. A vast pool of capacity was available in Africa and the experts called for the harnessing and coordination of the available capacity, as well as coordination of policymaking at the level of member States, including reforms in public-sector institutions.

They noted that there was inequality in terms of the income going to agro-dealers as compared to that going to farmers and recommended filling the gap in management capacity between farmers and agribusiness actors in order to strengthen farmers' bargaining power within agricultural value chains. Some institutions were using training to enable partnerships between agro-dealers and farmers, while

governments in some countries were providing subsidies through inputs and buying produce, thereby reducing the direct interactions between processors and small-scale farmers.

It was observed that unethical business practices were increasing smallholder farmers' vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Training of agribusiness dealers was one way of improving relations between smallholders and businesses. However, there was need for governments to enhance their capacity to regulate agribusiness in SADC countries.

Uptake of the CDM in Africa had been low and the experts said it was necessary to discuss factors which would enable African countries to participate in the process. Least-developed countries were missing the opportunities in the carbon-market system, particularly because of lack of understanding of the process, methodologies and trading instruments. There was a need to develop capacity on CDM by facilitating and developing the capacity of African countries to participate in the carbon market.

8. Presentation of group work to plenary

The plenary session was divided into three discussion groups focusing on the following nominated discussion themes:

- (1) Climate change : opportunities for the SADC rural economy
- (2) Climate change, food security and rural poverty
- (3) Climate change, human development and gender

The focus of the group work was to identify and discuss important issues and challenges pertinent to the thematic areas allocated to each group and to make detailed recommendations, as well as providing general comments on the issues paper and identifying areas for building capacity for different stakeholders.

9. Adoption of findings, recommendations and conclusions

The outcomes of the meeting, including the plenary discussions and the group work, were issues, challenges and recommendations on climate change and its linkages with the rural economy in the SADC subregion.

9.1 Issues and challenges on climate change and the rural economy

- i. Droughts and floods are major events affecting rural economies, but early-warning systems and mechanisms to produce and disseminate information on the weather are still weak. This leads to low awareness and uptake, especially in rural areas. The data and information produced and disseminated by meteorological institutions are highly aggregated and global in outlook, and it did not address the specific needs of localized agro-ecological zones.
- ii. Climate change is currently being treated as an issue affecting only one sector at a time and there is weak coordination and dialogue between key ministries and other stakeholders, including non-state actors, which leads to interventions that are fragmented and not comprehensive.
- iii. Declining budgetary support to agriculture and rural development, and slow progress in Southern Africa in attaining the Maputo Declaration pledge of 10 per cent of the public budget allocated to agriculture and rural development have hampered the development of rural infrastructure and the capacity of people who live in rural areas to cope with climate change and to promote innovative interventions.
- iv. There is a strong gender dimension to the impacts of climate change on the rural economy but most rural development policies and programmes are not yet gender-mainstreamed and women's participation in major climate-change discussions is still low and weak.

9.2 Recommendations

Harnessing the opportunities offered by climate change

- i. Climate change, as a long-lasting phenomenon, has largely negative impacts on the Southern African rural economy. Stakeholders need to explore innovative ways of changing such adversities into opportunities. ECA and the RECs need to champion the change of mindset through providing guidance on policy, strengthening carbon markets and trading systems, and identifying champions both at national and subregional levels.
- ii. Populations are living on degraded land and are therefore highly vulnerable to climate change. There is an opportunity to bring development to these areas through restoring land for wealth creation. ECA and the RECs need to assist countries' investment frameworks to assist in prioritizing and developing degraded lands in order to alleviate poverty. Countries need to identify opportunities for green jobs and value chains, and this will help alleviate poverty while building the resilience of such zones, using the financial opportunities offered by the financing mechanisms set up in response to climate change.
- iii. The subregion needs to capitalize on its natural capital and take advantage of and harness the benefits offered by the concept of green growth in fostering food security and poverty alleviation, building resilience and fostering a low-carbon, inclusive rural economy. Great benefits can be harnessed by exploiting local comparative advantage, including increasing the use of organic inputs and renewable energy, developing local, national and subregional biodiversity industries for rural development and generating incomes, and promoting initiatives to sequester soil carbon.
- iv. Member States and RECs should create structures that utilize public-private partnerships as agents of change and strengthen them, where they exist, so they can foster adaptation and mitigation activities for rural development.
- v. The subregion has already taken initiatives to promote adaptation to climate change. It is necessary to invest more in mitigation, focusing on opportunities offered by REDD+, sustainable land uses and management of water resources.
- vi. The subregion needs to harness opportunities offered by ICT to disseminate climate-change information effectively to all stakeholders and to enhance the efficiency of its early-warning systems as part of a global strategy to reduce risks of disasters.

Awareness-building, sensitization and knowledge management

- i. ECA and the RECs should build policymakers' awareness on issues about climate change and rural development, and should ensure that climate change is fully mainstreamed into rural development policies, programmes and strategies in the subregion.

- ii. SADC should involve local, national and subregional media institutions in the processes of building awareness and sensitization. Media capacity needs to be enhanced accordingly for disseminating information on climate change and rural development.
- iii. ECA, RECs and other stakeholders should be engaged in programmes and activities that aim to strengthen the knowledge base on key issues related to climate change. They should use local knowledge resources such as universities, researchers and other stakeholders to when they are addressing the impact of climate change on rural economies. Special attention should be given to combining inputs from traditional sources of knowledge and information with those from conventional sources as part of a strategy of harnessing knowledge on climate change and the rural economy.
- iv. Member States, RECs and other stakeholders should strengthen the general public's understanding about the nexus between climate change and the rural economy at community level. This can happen through engaging traditional leaders, farmers and policymakers and mainstreaming climate change in both formal and informal education, among other measures.
- v. Member States should build links through the interface between science and policy so as to ensure that policymakers are able to make use of research results for development and to engage local centres of knowledge, such as universities and research institutions, in demonstrating good practices and harnessing opportunities from the carbon markets.
- vi. ECA, RECs and other stakeholders should strengthen their efforts to cost the impacts of climate change on various socioeconomic sectors in rural zones and to cost the necessary adaptation and mitigation actions. The results of this exercise should be used to market adaptation and mitigation activities and strategies to policymakers and other stakeholders through easily understandable analyses of costs and benefits.

Institutional framework and arrangements

- i. The subregion should tackle issues on climate change and the rural economy in a coordinated manner by putting in place and/or strengthening related inter-ministerial committees at national and sub-national levels, involving all stakeholders including non-state actors, academia and the private sector in a manner that is comprehensive, holistic and gender-sensitive.
- ii. ECA, RECs and other stakeholders need to promote and/or strengthen capacity-building initiatives on climate change and the rural economy which should be inclusive and involve policymakers, extension staff, other advisory institutions, local leaders, the media and farmers. They should focus on mobilizing resources (both domestic and external), technologies and approaches; mainstreaming gender; scaling up use of best practices; promoting technologies

that ease the burden on women and other vulnerable groups; and incorporating mitigation strategies relevant to the social sector.

10. Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, Mr. Nkomo thanked ECA-SA on behalf of ACPC. He emphasized the high quality of the deliberations during the AEGM and noted that the recommendations made during the meeting will allow ACPC to enhance the quality of its services to member States. He also said that climate change was a developmental issue and that it should be tackled by applying the lessons shared during the meeting. He thanked all the experts for the rich contributions and encouraged them to keep in touch and to network in order to advance Southern Africa's resilience to climate change.

Ms. Sgobbi from FSSDD thanked the participants for the rich discussions and informed the meeting that the outcome of the discussions would be an input into the follow-up discussions after the Rio+20 summit and the High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development.

Mr. Miti, COMESA Climate Change Coordinator, also thanked ECA-SA for extending an invitation to his organisation and expressed his gratitude to the participants for the high-level discussions held during the three days. He noted that the recommendations made by the experts were very informative for the tripartite organization and he assured ECA and other partners of his organisation's availability to foster a partnership to build subregional resilience towards the effects of climate change.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Mhlanga thanked the participants for the rich discussions and the inputs to the ECA-SA issues paper. He underscored that the recommendations of the meeting would inform the ECA-SA programme of work, which was being prepared, and noted that climate change will be given due consideration in the coming biennium. He further expressed the gratitude of ECA-SA for the contribution made by the able Bureau to the success of the meeting, wished the participants safe trips home and declared the meeting closed.

List of participants

1. Prof. Elenimo B. Nkhonga

Dean, Faculty of Agriculture
Botswana College of Agriculture

Private Bag 0027,

Gaborone, Botswana.

Telephone: +267 365 0103

Fax: +267 392 8753

Email: ebkhonga@bca.bw/ ebkhonga56@gmail.com

2. Mr. Fabrice L. Nfuamba

Université Évangélique en Afrique (UEA)

Faculté de Sciences Économiques et de Gestion

Chercheur au Bureau d'Études Scientifiques et Technique (B.E.S.T.)

Bukavu, Sud-Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Telephone: +243 991 76 7000

Email: fabricelukeba@yahoo.fr

3. Ms. Grace Gondwe

Economist

Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

Development Planning Division - Rural Vulnerability Task Force

P.O. Box 30136,

Lilongwe, Malawi.

Email: gondwe.g@gmail.com

4. Mr. Welton L. Phalira

Programme Manager

Leadership for Environment and Development, Southern and Eastern Africa (LEAD-SEA)

Chancellor College

P.O. Box 280,

Zomba, Malawi.

Telephone: +265 1 525 898/988

Mobile: +265 888 308074

Fax : +265 1 524251

Email: w.phalira@yahoo.com

5. Mrs. Mampho Ntatoleng F. Thulo
Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA)
P.O. Box 0523,
Maseru West 105,
Maseru, Lesotho.
Telephone: +266 22 31 1279/31 0458
Mobile: +266 5884 3517
Email: mfthulo@gmail.com, thulom@rsda.org.ls, rsda@rsda.org.ls

6. Dr. Chipo Plaxedes Mubaya
Senior Programme Officer
African Climate Change Fellowship Programme
Institute of Resources Assessment
University of Dar-es-Salaam
P.O. Box 35097,
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.
Telephone: +255 22 2410144
Mobile: +255 688 500436
Fax: +255 22 2410393
Email: mubayacp@yahoo.com

7. Mr. Felix Chizhuka
Chief Executive Officer
East and Southern Africa Agribusiness Network (ESAANet)
P. O. Box 32758,
Plot 100/655, Ibex Hill, Off Lake Road,
Lusaka 10101, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 262936
Fax: +260 211 262950
Email: felix@esaanet.com

8. Ms. Pamela Mulozi
Programme Manager-Business Unit
Nutri Aid Trust
Agribusiness Forum Building
Plot 100/655, Off Lake Road, Ibex Hill
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 262936

Mobile: +260 9 77 772357
Fax: +260 211 262950
Email: pamela@nat.org.zm, pamelamulozi@yahoo.co.uk

9. Prof. Lloyd John Chingambo
Chair
Africa Carbon Credit Exchange (ACCE)
4th Floor, Godfrey House
Cnr Kabelenga and Longolongo Roads
P.O. Box 390035,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 238473
Fax: +260 211 238472
Mobile: +260 955 771077
Email: lchingambo@africacce.com, lchingambo@lloydsfinancials.co.zm,
lchingambo2@yahoo.com

10. Mr. Billy Katontoka
Director Projects and Operations
Green Knowledge Institute
4th Floor, Godfrey House
Kabelenga Road
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 975 366274
Email: katontoka@gmail.com

11. Dr. Abigail T. Mgugu-Mhene
Director
Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa (WLWRSA)
Harare, Zimbabwe.
Telephone: +263 772 804 719
Email: amhene@gmail.com

12. Mr. Manyewu Mutamba
Analyst: Economics and Policy
Southern African Confederation of Agriculture Unions (SACAU)
Unit 11, Central Office Park
257 Jean Avenue, Centurion,
Pretoria, South Africa.

Telephone: +27 12 644 0808
Email: mmutamba@sacau.org

13. Dr. Shuni L. Uganai
Project Manager
Environmental Management Agency
Makombe Complex, Block 1
Harare Street, H. Chitepo Avenue
P.O. Box CY 385,
Harare, Zimbabwe.
Telephone: +263 4 705673
Fax: +263 4 793123
Email: lunganai@yahoo.com, cwd@ecoweb.co.zw

14. Mr. Chikakula Miti
Climate Change Coordinator
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa-EAC-SADC Climate Change Initiative
COMESA Secretariat
P.O. Box 30051,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 229725/32
Mobile: +260 977 805075
Fax: +260 211 225107
Email: info@comesa.int, mitichiks@yahoo.com, cmiti@comesa.int

15. Mr. Mutisungilire Kachulu
Technical Coordinator: Climate Smart Agriculture
UN Food and Agriculture Organization
P.O. Box 30750,
Lilongwe, Malawi.
Telephone: +265 1 773 255
Mobile: +265 999 357 110
Email: Mutisungilire.Kachulu@fao.org, mutiekachulu@gmail.com

16. Dr. Lewis Hove
Regional Conservation Agriculture Coordinator
UN Food and Agriculture Organization
Merafe House, 11 Naivasha Road
Sunninghill, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Telephone: +27 11 517 1627
Mobile: +27 82 9081470
Fax: +27 11 517 1549
Email: lewis.hove@fao.org

17. Mr. Sina W.S. Luchen
Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Agronomist
UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FAO Disaster Risk Reduction Office for Southern Africa
Merafe House, Naivasha Road
Sunninghill, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Telephone: +27 11 5171 500
Fax: +27 82 908 1330
Email: sina.luchen@fao.org

Eca Secretariat

18. Mr. Sizo Mhlanga
Senior Economic Affairs Officer
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office (UNECA-SA),
P.O. Box 30647,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 228502
Fax: +260 211 236949
Email: srdcsa.uneca@un.org, smhlanga@uneca.org

19. Jean Luc Mastaki Namegabe
Economic Affairs Officer
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office (UNECA-SA),
P.O. Box 30647,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 228502
Fax: +260 211 236949
Email: jnamegabe@uneca.org

20. Ms. Alessandra Sgobbi
Environmental Affairs Officer
Environment and Sustainable Development Section
Food Security and Sustainable Development Division

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
P.O. Box 3005,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Telephone: +251 11 5445228
Email: asgobbi@uneca.org

21. Mr. Benjamin Banda
Economic Affairs Officer
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office (UNECA-SA),
P.O. 30647,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 228502
Fax: +260 211 236949
Email: bandab@un.org

22. Mr. Jabavu Nkomo
African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC)
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
P.O. Box 3001,
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Telephone: +251 115 44 5244
Mobile: +251 911 039640
Email: jnkomo@uneca.org

23. Ms. Anne Mwansa
Staff Assistant
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office (UNECA-SA),
P.O. Box 30647,
Lusaka, Zambia.
Telephone: +260 211 228502
Fax: +260 211 236949
Email: mwansaa.uneca@un.org

