



SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL UNIONS

MEDIA RELEASE

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SACAU ELECTS FIRST PRESIDENT FROM SMALLHOLDER FARMING SECTOR

The Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) has made an historical move towards smallholder farmer leadership with the election of Felix Jumbe, president of the smallholder farmers-based Farmers Union of Malawi, as its president.

Jumbe replaced Douglas Taylor-Freeme of the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe at SACAU's Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was held in Antananarivo, Madagascar on May 30, 2012. Taylor-Freeme, who served as president for three terms, was awarded honorary SACAU membership in recognition of his remarkable contribution.

Dr Theo de Jager of Agri-SA remains the vice-president, while Hajasoirina Rakotomandimby from Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar (CPM) was elected as a Board member for his first term. The other board members are Salum Shamte of the Agricultural Council of Tanzania and Ishmael Sunga who is Secretary to the Board and CEO of SACAU. The new SACAU board has balanced representation from both small and large-scale farming sectors.

Newly-elected Jumbe pledged support for farmer sustainability: "The strength of SACAU is dependent on strong national farmers' organisations. Our point of emphasis will be to look at sustainability of the farmer on the ground. Is the farmer making money out of what he or she is doing, because that is what matters and that is what will build our organisation."

Jumbe also emphasised a focus on building capacity of farmer organisations in the region: "We will also look at sustainability of national farmers' organisations. If the national organisations are not able to influence policy in their countries, it will not be possible for SACAU to achieve its goals."

Outgoing president Taylor-Freeme paid tribute to SACAU and urged the membership to advocate for their concerns: "I really believe that SACAU is a wonderful organisation to make agriculture work. To the membership I want to say that you are here in SACAU and do not be scared to push for your requirements."

"The election of a president from the smallholder based national farmers organisation is a historical development in SACAU's efforts to strengthen interactions and sharing of capacities between smallholder farmers and large-scale farmers in the region," said SACAU CEO Ishmael Sunga.

"The election of a new Board is in keeping with SACAU's respect for good corporate governance, which is absolutely critical in membership-based organisations. We remain bullish on our growth prospects and our future development, and the provision of market-based services to our members will continue to play a critical role in this regard," he added.

The AGM adopted five key resolutions that identify priorities for SACAU's work in the coming year. These included:

- Researching, designing and establishing agricultural fund to create access for farmers in Southern Africa to financing;

- Providing support to National Farmers organisations to engage with their governments on policy matters; and,
- Reviewing regional bilateral agreements on agricultural trade and the protection of investments in agriculture.

The AGM followed SACAU's annual conference under the theme *Connecting Farmers to Agricultural Value Chains*. Presentations made by some of the leading agricultural procurement agri-businesses and discussions focused on sharing some of key developments and issues related to value chains in Southern Africa Region.

The conference is aligned to SACAU's aim to strengthen its relationship with agribusinesses and create an environment that allows farmers to be well informed about value chain issues with respect to trading/marketing, retailing, direct production, storage, financing, processing, input supply and others. SACAU views this as a development that will contribute to employment creation, GDP, export earnings, incomes earnings, economic growth and poverty alleviation in the region.

SACAU notes that increased competition in the agribusiness sector will result in improved efficiencies and more competitive pricing of both agricultural inputs and commodities. Perhaps more importantly, increased agribusiness activity can be a key driver towards the deepening and broadening of the commercialisation of primary production, and especially of the smallholder sector. Core areas of agreement between farmers and agribusiness from the conference will be used by SACAU to develop its positions on the sustainability of agriculture, especially from the perspective of agriculture primary producers in the region.

Editors' note

SACAU was established in 1992. Its Secretariat is based in Centurion, South Africa. Its membership is open to national farmers' unions and regional commodity associations in Southern Africa. SACAU is involved in agricultural development in the region through strengthening the capacities of farmers' organisations, by providing a collective voice for farmers on regional and international matters, and by providing agricultural related information to its members and other stakeholders.

Membership

SACAU now has 16 members in 12 countries in southern Africa:

Botswana	Botswana Agricultural Union (BAU)
Lesotho	Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU)
Madagascar	Coalition Paysanne de Madagascar (CPM) Confédération des Agriculteurs Malagasy (FEKRITAMA)
Malawi	Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) National Smallholders Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)
Namibia	Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU) Namibia National Farmers' Union (NNFU)
Seychelles	Seychelles Farmers Association (SEYFA)
South Africa	Agri South Africa (AgriSA)
Swaziland	Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU)
Tanzania	Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT)
Zambia	Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU)
Zimbabwe	Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU).
Mozambique	Mozambique Uniao Nacional de Camponeses (UNAC)

SACAU has also started working with farmers' representatives in Mauritius, Comoros and the DRC.

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