

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AMA	Agriculture Marketing Authority
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CFU	Commercial Farmers' Union
COPA	Commercial Oilseeds Producers' Association
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDs	Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Infectious Disease
MAMID	Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEC	National Employment Council
NGOs	Non Government Organisations
SMS	Short message services
ZATG	Zimbabwe Association of Tobacco Growers
ZAIP	Zimbabwe Agriculture Investment Plan
ZCFU	Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZNFU	Zimbabwe National Farmers Union
ZimASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The symposium began with self-introductions of delegates. The farmers' Symposium was hosted by the farmers union's Joint Presidents Council, an umbrella farmers body representing Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union, Commercial Farmers Union, Zimbabwe Farmers Union and Zimbabwe National Farmers Union. The facilitator Dr. Mabel Hungwe listed the objectives of the symposium as follows:

- Exchange views on agricultural effectiveness in Zimbabwe;
- Exploring ways to strengthen the voice of farmers for improved agricultural practices in the country;
- Share background information from the national farmer unions in the country;
- Share farmers' union experiences in neighbouring Zambia and South Africa;
- Provide a way forward on how farmer unions could have stronger voices and advocacy as farmers' representatives in Zimbabwe.

About 50 people attended the symposium. They were drawn from the following sectors: Presidents of the Four Farmers Unions and their Executives, Commodity Associations Groups, Government, Agro-business (the Private Sector); NGO's, Development Partners and the Media.

The Joint Farmers' Union Presidents' Council of Zimbabwe is a lobbying platform that seeks to provide an opportunity for the various farmers unions to meet and discuss pertinent advocacy issues. The Chairmanship is done on a rotating basis in which each union chairs for three months in the year. The current chair of the Joint President's Council, the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union, represented by Mr. Edward Dune gave the opening remarks to the symposium. Mr. Dune welcomed participants to the symposium. He pointed out that the symposium came at a time when the country was experiencing a slow economy, low rainfall and many challenges in the industry. He encouraged delegates to stick to deliberations that enhance farming and livelihoods and increase resilience of farming communities in Zimbabwe.

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## SESSION I: OPENING REMARKS

### Remarks from the European Union Ambassador



"We will therefore have the means and the tools to support the various stakeholders in the implementation of the agricultural reform agenda and to help the agriculture sector to become again an engine of sustainable, socially equitable growth and development, and in this way also to help the agricultural sector contributing to the national healing and reconciliation process"- His Excellency AMBASSADOR PHILLIPE Van DAMME

In his opening remarks, The European Union Ambassador to Zimbabwe, His Excellency Phillippe Van Damme pointed out that it was an honor to share the opening remarks on behalf of the European Union at a farmers' symposium as it was important in the sense that all farmer's unions and some associations were represented. He noted that all the unions were defending the interests of small scale farmers and large scale commercial farmers regardless of their different opinions. There is however still the need for all the unions to be united as they think of ways to defend their collective interests as farmers. Ambassador Van Damme acknowledged the operational and the historical importance of farming in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector and in the development of the country, not only in terms of GDP contribution but to employment and export earnings. The Ambassador articulated that land had determined the way in which people interacted, acted and formed society. He pointed out that Zimbabweans need to accept this heritage but at the same time look ahead, to make history. He explained that as land and agriculture remained the cornerstone of the country, participants were urged to draw lessons from history but at the same time not to remain being determined by history.

Agricultural production, productivity and competitiveness had fallen drastically during the past few years. The Ambassador reminded the participants that Zimbabwe still had sound physical infrastructure, human skills, agricultural skills, good soils and thus as a country had the potential to bounce back and contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction and claim its role as a competitive producer of diversified crops and agricultural commodities.

The Ambassador however pointed out that there are a number of challenges that impede agriculture recovery and growth. Firstly, he outlined that the investment climate in the agricultural sector had to be improved and security of tenure was required to make sure that tenure is bankable as collateral in order to ensure access to indispensable investment credit. He further pointed out that it was imperative to fully implement the constitutional provisions

(Chapter 16) that affect agricultural land, security of tenure and to pay compensation to those whose land was acquired by the state. In addition he said the organisation of the agricultural sector had to be reviewed as well, as there were too many players intervening in a fragmented and uncoordinated way. One was to reassess the value chain to make sure it serves farmers and ensure that service driven institutions were accountable. Institutions were called to be service driven, accountable and responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders. He called upon the need for institutional and regulatory policies for stakeholders and guarantee respect of rule of law and remuneration of stakeholders in the agricultural value chain. To develop the agricultural sector the Ambassador called for transparency. Ambassador Van Damme explained that the European Union had been promoting value chains in agriculture and this included all stakeholders, supportive services and many others. It was important that stakeholders interacted among themselves for the industry to be competitive.

Second, the Ambassador noted that it was essential for all stakeholders to find their right place in the process, from the input suppliers, to the farmers, the intermediaries, the transformers, the vendors and distributors and all the supportive services in between. He further expounded that it is essential that all stakeholders interact and collaborate in a positive win-win spirit, aiming at economies of scale and efficiency gains throughout the value chain, for the benefit of all. He went further to suggest that there was therefore a need for the existence of strong interest groups or coalitions of interest groups with clear and sometimes divergent interests but common collective agenda, and a united voice on the essential messages. He noted the need for the creation of a platform to engage in serious policy dialogue with the various stakeholders and the government. The Ambassador noted that the farmers were the critical link in the process and farmers unions had a critical role to play but would only be capable of exercising this role if they were sufficiently organized to take up this challenge.

Third, Ambassador Van Damme explained that the European Union was ready to help the agricultural sector and its various stakeholders in achieving those required structural changes, infrastructural changes, institutional reforms and to rebuild value chains in a sustainable manner. He announced that the European Union had on February 16, 2015, signed the National Indicative Program worth €234 million. The program is to run until 2020 and would support interventions in health, agriculture (livelihoods) and governance and institutional capacity building. The Ambassador concluded by reminding delegates that the process they had embarked on was a very important process both symbolically and operationally. He hoped that the symposium was a step

that would produce a common vision for agriculture, a vision which many stakeholders and the European Union would rally behind and support.

## 2.0 Address by the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development, Permanent Secretary, Engineer Chitsiko

Mr. Wellington Chaonwa, from the Ministry of Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development (MAMID) read the speech by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Engineer Ringson Chitsiko. The Permanent Secretary noted that the symposium was especially important in that farmer unions had finally realised that they served the same farmer and were asking questions on how best they could serve their key stakeholder, that is, the farmer.

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*"The work of farmers unions is to create a conducive environment for farmers through representation, however as a result of freedom of association as provided by the Zimbabwe constitution farmers are not compelled to farmer's unions." - R. CHITSIKO PERMANENT SECRETARY (MAMID)*

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He noted that the symposium gave a rare opportunity for farmer organisations to openly discuss and give thoughts on how government, inputs suppliers, transporters, industry, development partners could interface with farmer unions and ultimately with the farmers at grass-root level.

According to the Permanent Secretary, farmer organisation was important for national economic development. Once farmers are better organized, service provision by government in terms of research, training and extension would be better facilitated. He added that it was also easy for the private sector to provide services to farmers who were organized into structures that start at grassroots level. In addition at policy level, government is able to get input from farmers through their farmer unions and vice versa. He urged farmers unions to have membership databases that are up to date. This helps to show who the unions are really representing. He argued that this gave them credibility and made their voice authentic as the numbers gave them the mandate to represent farmer's matters on development at national, regional and international levels.

The Permanent Secretary explicated that the relationship of farmers unions with the Government should be developmental, guided more by engagement rather than confrontation. He acknowledged the good cordial relationship that existed between the farmers unions and the government. He noted that they had worked together on important national programs such as the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) process which culminated in the development of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Investment Plan (ZAIP) and the subsequent signing of the CAADP compact. The farmers unions had been also visible in the development of the livestock policy and participated in the various Agricultural Boards and Committees in various capacities. Engineer Chitsiko noted that together, the government and the farmers unions could overcome the challenges in agriculture which ranged from droughts, lack of collateral security, high cost of money, unsuitable types of agricultural financing, under-developed agriculture value-chains, poor infrastructure, and incapacities in utility providers to meet demand for services in agriculture.

The work of farmers unions, according to the Permanent Secretary, was to create a conducive environment for farmers through representation. However, as a result of freedom of association as provided by the Zimbabwe constitution farmers were not compelled to farmer's unions. He noted that, that in itself provided some problems in that the benefits as a result of the work of the farmers unions do not necessarily accrued to members only, but in many instances were enjoyed by all farmers in Zimbabwe. He said it was his hope that the symposium would come up with recommendations that would see improved farmer representation and more importantly to improve the contributions of the agricultural sector to the attainment of the Zimbabwe Agenda for the Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-ASSET) objectives in the food and nutrition security cluster. The Permanent Secretary acknowledged that the Zimbabwean economy was anchored on agriculture and as such there was need to give the sector full support if Zimbabwe was to re-emerge as the bread basket of the region. This he noted could be achieved through organized farming of which farmers unions were key. The Permanent Secretary thanked the Joint President's Council for organizing such an important symposium which he hoped was going to come up with recommendations that could be part of a road-map towards improved and strengthened farmer representation in Zimbabwe.

### **3.0 SESSION II: INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATIONS**

In the second session of the symposium, the four farmers unions made presentations on their union, operations and membership. Following their



presentations there was a discussion session to allow participants to seek clarifications on the operations of the four unions.

### **3.1 Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU): President, Mr. Abdul C. Nyathi**

In his presentation, the President of the Zimbabwe Farmers Union, Mr. Abdul Nyathi noted that his organisation was the largest farmers union in the country with a membership of 220 000 farmers. It had the mandate to lobby and advocate on issues that affect the farmer. Mr. Nyathi explained that the ZFU had structures from the grass-root level and is present in all the eight administrative provinces of Zimbabwe and has 42 district offices throughout the country. On the structure the ZFU has the Main wing, Women wing, Youths wing and Commodities structures. The vision of the organisation was to be the leading farmer representation body, with a mission to promote and advance farmer's interests and welfare through representation, networking, information dissemination, capacity building, formation of commercially viable enterprises, gender, environment, HIV and AIDS mainstreaming, and mobilization. The ZFU's major activities include: lobbying and advocacy, farmer organisation, capacity building/training of farmers, networking with government/private institutions and market linkages.

The union is operating in an environment that is characterized by high production costs, low production, limited access to finance, poor infrastructure and climate change. However the ZFU had managed to establish 640 community farmer forums and successfully negotiated discounts with suppliers of inputs. They had also established market linkages with the private sector players for input schemes as well as the establishment of an agri-business chamber that promotes the commercialization of smallholder agriculture. On achievements, the ZFU had formed the Horticulture Producers Association and set up Women Development structures that assisted women who are in agriculture. However, like any other agricultural entity in Zimbabwe its members continue to face productivity challenges that are mainly caused by the lack of competitiveness of the sector. The ZFU noted that the sector also faced infrastructure related challenges such as bad and poor road network; deteriorating railway networks and dilapidated irrigation infrastructure. In addition, the sector is constrained by the lack of investment in the agricultural sector.

### **3.2 Commercial Farmers Union-CFU President, Mr. Peter Steyl**

In the presentation by the President of the Commercial Farmers Union, he noted that the Commercial Farmers Union of Zimbabwe (CFU) is an

independent and politically neutral membership driven organisation which represents and advances the interests of professional farmers in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa. The CFU and its predecessors have been serving farmers in Zimbabwe for over 100 years. The CFU draws its membership from primarily large scale and Intensive Commercial Agricultural Producers. Membership is open to all farmers regardless of scale or land holding. The CFU's main agenda is to promote a stable and competitive agricultural business environment; and to provide advice and support to farmers - covering technical extension service, inputs, marketing aspects, business management, labor relations, and advice with land and compensation issues and so on. The CFU explained that it exists to serve its members who are deeply committed to the success of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole. Their core belief is that only through an optimal agricultural business operating environment can their desire for maximum economic growth, farmer empowerment and sustainable poverty alleviation be achieved. With this in mind the CFU, in collaboration with ZFU as members of ZFAT, has developed a Zimbabwean Farmers' Charter which guides the vision and the values of the organisation.

The Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe offers a diverse range of quality services to its members these include: technical advice on agricultural production, assistance with cost modelling and agricultural business proposals, facilitation of finance, general legal advice including assistance with labor disputes, access to exclusive discounts from traders in various goods and services, access to weekly updates and bulletins highlighting topical information and developments in the industry, and access to a variety of other useful information and publications not elsewhere available. The Union noted that it also advocates for an improved business operating environment for farmers. This ranges from lobby for reductions in state levies and taxes to advocacy for the introduction of surtaxes on cheap low quality imported commodities. Successes in this regard do not only benefit only their members but all Zimbabweans.

The CFU has been exploring ways of empowering farmers and thereby ensure the success of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector. The CFU members' structures have district level farmers' associations and provincial structures. Alongside the provincial structures are the affiliated commodity associations that are categorized as Crops (consisting of producers of oilseeds, grains and cereals), Livestock (comprising Cattle Producers and Dairy Farmers), Coffee and Cotton. The primary decision making body of the Union is the National Council made up of a representative from each province and representatives from the commodity associations.

The CFU is a Farmers' Union and in addition is a Licensing Authority registered in terms of the Farmers' Licensing and Levies Act. Currently the CFU administers the following active producers associations: the National Association of Dairy Farmers (NADF), the Zimbabwe Crop Producers Association (ZCPA) (Incorporating Commercial Oilseeds Producers Association (COPA), Zimbabwe Grain Producers' Association, Zimbabwe Cereal Producers' Association). CFU Members who produce these commodities are automatically members of the Associations. Some of the Associations such as the NADF have membership open to non CFU members.

### **3.3. Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU) - ZCFU Director, Mr. Tevera**

The Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union is a registered farmers' Union. It was started on the initiative of large scale indigenous commercial farmers who entered the business of commercial farming after independence. The Union operated as an association from 1990 until it was registered as the Indigenous Commercial Farmer Union in 1996. The union has since changed its name to Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (Z.C.F.U), and its mandate is to serve commercial farmers irrespective of the size of the farm. At district level it consists of local associations committees. This level coordinates the activities of the various local associations and commodity association in the district and at provincial level. The district committees form a committee to run the affairs of the province.

ZCFU has commodity associations and these are specialist groups whose aim is to advocate for the benefits of their particular groups of producers. Commodity associations are important in that they lobby for producer prices, search for cheap inputs and equipment, and advise government on behalf of its members, provide technical advice and organize issues affecting their members. The Union has the following commodity associations: the Zimbabwe Association of Tobacco Growers (ZATG), the Grain/Cereals Producers Association, the Horticulture Producers Association, the Livestock Producers Association and the Cotton Growers Association. Each commodity association is linked to the union through two representative positions reserved at each level of the union structure.

The National Council is composed of President, Vice President(s), all National Executive members, all Chairpersons of Provinces, all Chairpersons of National Commodity Associations, and all Chairpersons of standing committees, and the National Executive – Members of the National Council elect from among their numbers the Union President, Vice President (s), Secretary General, Treasurer

and standing committee Chairpersons. This executive committee is responsible for translating resolutions adopted by other organs of the Union (Such as National Council and National Congress) into action.

ZCFU provides appropriate training programmes, leadership workshops, technical course/notes, handbooks, for the benefit of union members and represent Union members in negotiations with the National Employment Council (NEC) in agriculture for fair labour practices. The ZCFU provides and facilitates the provision of technical extension, administrative support and advisory services to the union members through field days, shows and demonstrations, newsletters, brochures and magazine. It is also mandated to undertake appropriate agricultural research programmes for the union and disseminate appropriate new farming technologies to the members and lobby for and negotiate conducive and favorable agricultural policies to benefit the members and the farmers in general.

The ZCFU organizes crop production, marketing and trade trainings, creates and manages website and database for trade partners for the benefit of its members and lobby for subsidized farming inputs programmes for its members, cash and trade discounts from strategic partners for the benefit of union members. The union has also established internet-based networks with market providers and lobby for and facilitate contract farming and financial package support for the farmers with strategic partners and arrange, lobby and advocacy trainings, analyze legislations, organize lobby workshops and develop a shared lobby platform with other Farmers Unions and stakeholders. The ZCFU also develops mainstreaming policies, organises linkages with partner organisations and carries out awareness campaigns on climate change, the environment, gender and HIV and AIDS.

#### **3.4 Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) Director, Mr. Edward Dune**

The ZNFU is a wholly indigenous owned farmer organisation and is an offshoot of the ZFU and CFU. Its mandate is to lobby and advocate for an improved provision of products, goods and services on agriculture. The Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) is about 7yrs old. It was formed upon the realization that there were more poor families during the hyper inflation period whose incomes and livelihoods had been eroded. This in turn had made the farming community and households more vulnerable due to high unemployment and low productivity.

The ZNFU structure consists of hierarchical structures that are similar to the ZFU. They have the President, Vice President(s), National Executive members,

Chairpersons of Provinces, Chairpersons of National Commodity Associations, Chairpersons of Standing committees, and the National Executive – Members of the National Council elect from among their numbers the Union President, Vice President(s), Secretary General, Treasurer and standing committee Chairpersons. This executive committee is responsible for translating resolutions adopted by other organs of the Union (Such as National Council and National Congress) into action.

The ZNFU has commodity associations in tobacco, beef, fisheries and wild life. The union provides leadership service training based on a curriculum which is based on integrated landscape management on agriculture in Zimbabwe, it covers production concepts for basic commodities with a view to equip leadership of the union with a basis for sustainable diversification and value chain development. The union offers leadership capacity building, whose main objective is to train and capacitate leaders at various levels. The union has launched a programme that encompasses partnerships in the form of contracts in the various agro-ecological zones of the country. The contracts vary from tobacco, forestry, sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, animal production, bee keeping and fisheries. Leaders at the low level are involved in these contract engagements. Challenges have been the poor investment climate.

#### **4.0 Question and answer session**

***Question 1:** Is there an apex board to coordinate the work of all the four farmers' unions in Zimbabwe?*

##### **Response to question**

Mr. A. Nyathi, ZFU responded that the Joint President's Council, which is a platform where Presidents of the various farmer organisations meet, advocates and coordinate the activities of the Council.

***Question 2:** How do the unions define membership? What is the criteria of being a member? Are unions member driven without consideration of financing? Who finances these farmer unions and are they dancing to the tune of their members or they are dancing to the tune of their outside financiers?*

##### **Response to question:**

1. Mr. A. Nyathi responded on behalf of ZFU and he explained that at the ZFU membership is voluntary. There is membership fee depending on the category of the farmer, the lowest being US\$2.00 for communal farmers and US\$10.00 for commercial farmers. He pointed out that the biggest proportion of ZFU membership is in the communal areas. The ZFU Director,

Mr. Paul Zakariya also confirmed that the philosophy at ZFU is that it is a farmer organisation and can get funding from levies and or donor funding.

2. For ZCFU, the Chairman, Mr. Wonder Chabikwa noted out that their experiences were similar to the ZFU.
3. However, Mr. Dune pointed out that for ZNFU, though everything is the same with the other two unions, commodity associations can also join. He however pointed out that there were so many farmers with dual membership, that is, they can be members of two or more unions and this caused challenges in the implementation of union activities.
4. For the CFU, the President, Mr. Peter Steyl explained that membership is for commercial farmers and membership is very important for the union. In addition they also have a category of previous farmers who are no longer farming due to the Fast Track Land Reform programme.

**Question 3:** *Are the levies that were mentioned by ZFU in their response statutory?*

**Response to question 3:** Mark Carrie-Wilson from the CFU pointed out that the levies were now not mandatory and there existed challenges in the collection of these levies.

During the discussion it was highlighted that farming was the only business that was not licensed. It was noted that as a result of this the country had almost six million farming businesses where there was very little information or knowledge of activities. However, the unions noted that they had made a presentation to the relevant Ministry to make sure that licencing be effected on all farmers and payment done through the Agricultural Marketing Authority (AMA).

**Question 4:** *All unions have mentioned Market linkages as key. Do the unions share success stories on market linkages?*

**Response to question:**

1. For ZCFU, they have established synergies with millers and came up with arrangements for purchase of grain. They had signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with seed companies where farmers pay 50% and the rest after harvest. This resulted in 50 000 tons of inputs being distributed. The ZCFU is also in the process of setting up an investment company that will guarantee the supply of fertilizer to its members.

2. The ZFU pointed out that they have 40 discount MoUs with the market and they have an sms platform that gives weekly market guides to their members.
3. The ZNFU has facilitated MoUs for tobacco farmers
4. The CFU had arranged financing facility with NMB Bank though not exclusive to CFU farmers only.

## 5.0 SESSION III: DISCUSSION, WAY FORWARD, AND CLOSING

### 5.1 Breakaway sessions

The participants were made to form four breakaway groups consisting of farmers, farmer's organisations, commodity associations and service providers and the government. The groups were tasked to discuss the following questions:

- **What are our expectations from farmer organisations as stakeholders?**
- **What are your expectations service providers as farmers?**
- **What is our way forward in terms of the organisation of farming?**
- **How best can we ensure a stronger voice for farmers?**
- **Gender issue in farmer organisation, how can we effect it?**

Presentations from breakaway groups

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| <p><i>Group 1: Commodity Associations/Agribusiness</i></p> <p><b>What are your expectations from farmer organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand service provision from farmer organisations and Government</li> <li>• Better organisation in order to achieve effective lobbying and advocacy and access better paying markets</li> <li>• Higher production in terms of quantity, quality and timeous production</li> <li>• Be up to date in terms of market</li> </ul> | <p><i>Group 2: Farmers Unions</i></p> <p><b>What are your expectations from farmers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers to be organized to produce</li> <li>• Farmers must participate and contribute financially to union activities</li> <li>• Join commodity associations</li> </ul> <p><b>Farmers expectations from unions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible benefits</li> <li>• Markets</li> </ul> |
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| <p>information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help farmers understand and interpret and facilitate adherence to contractual arrangements</li> </ul> <p><b>What is the way forward in terms of the organisation of farming?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater transparency to avoid being duped of hard earned resources</li> <li>• Strengthen and complement efforts from the Joint President's Council – need a more robust structure of the Council not a lose organization so that advocacy issues are take forward</li> <li>• Use standardized approaches in dealing with stakeholders</li> <li>• Emulate the Zambian model of farmers union having one voice and a strong advocacy strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>How best can we ensure a stronger voice for farmers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come together as farmer unions to avoid discord.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit the Unions' constitution to comply with the provisions of the National Constitution on gender issues</li> <li>• Lobby for a gender focal person in the MAMID to mainstream and champion gender issues in agriculture</li> <li>• Prioritize issues (remove gender issues from Any Other Business (A.O.B) in agendas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Conducive operating environment</li> </ul> <p><b>What are your expectations as farmers from service providers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling policy environment</li> <li>• Encourage farmers honor obligations</li> <li>• Affordable prices of inputs</li> <li>• Agricultural Boards and Commissions to include farmers</li> </ul> <p><b>What is the way forward in terms of the organisation of farming?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It should be mandatory for farmers to join unions</li> <li>• Unions should speak with one voice</li> </ul> <p><b>How best can we ensure a stronger voice for farmers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unity</li> <li>• Good structure</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Service provision</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage knowledgeable female farmers to actively participate in gender mainstreaming</li> <li>• Mentor, capacitate women and men to participate</li> <li>• Establishing a quarter system for women</li> </ul> |
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| <p><i>Group 3: Service providers</i></p> <p><b>What are our expectations from farmer organisations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unions should be transparent</li> <li>• Facilitate services to their members</li> <li>• Come up with groups that have permanent structures</li> <li>• Credible and have a constitution for the farmers to use</li> <li>• Need for up to date data bases for members</li> </ul> <p><b>What are the expectations of farmers from service providers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to support in infrastructure investment</li> <li>• Collaborative efforts</li> </ul> <p><b>What is our way forward in terms of the organisation of farming?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating farmers that farming is actually a business</li> <li>• Having a platform that address issues that affect farmers</li> </ul> <p><b>How best can we ensure a stronger voice for farmers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a joint forum that address issues that affect farming</li> <li>• Need for specialization</li> <li>• Evidence based lobbying</li> <li>• Implementation of technology</li> </ul> | <p><i>Group 4: Farmers</i></p> <p><b>Expectations from farmer organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers want services such as market linkages, finance links, inputs, training, research and extension services</li> <li>• Farmers want representation on issues to do with conclusive policies, investment, price discourses</li> </ul> <p><b>Farmers expectations from service providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of farmer organisations</li> <li>• Quality inputs</li> <li>• Fair business practices</li> <li>• Sustainable business relationships</li> <li>• Honest and integrity</li> </ul> <p><b>Farmers expectations from government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusive policies</li> <li>• Non-interference by the government</li> <li>• Consultation before coming up with policies</li> <li>• Regulatory input assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Way forward in terms of the organisation of farmers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build unity, better organized and speak with one voice</li> <li>• Mobilize resources, levies, licenses</li> <li>• Build relationships and trust</li> </ul> <p><b>How best can we ensure a stronger</b></p> |
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| <p><b>Gender issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming in all we do as farmers</li> </ul> | <p><b>voice for farmers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a single body/ federation of existing bodies</li> <li>• Form stronger commodity associations</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic positions should be given to women</li> <li>• Gender policies for farmer organisations</li> <li>• Deliberate gender mainstreaming</li> </ul> |
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### 6.0 Open discussion

- Mr. Ndoro pointed out that one of the issues that was still outstanding was on ensuring that unions promoted farming as a business among membership. It was queried if free handout of inputs was really the best way forward? A suggestion was made that farmers union must promote and advise their farmers that free inputs hurt farmers initiatives and drive. Moreover if farming was a business there should be less free hand outs as it promoted a culture of dependency.
- Mr. Nyathi noted that the issue was of pertinent concern but must be handled well, for it comes in a context that the farmer does not afford, but if it comes in the form of laziness then it should not be promoted. However Mr. Ndoro explained that NGOs/Presidential Input Schemes should be availed to those who do not afford but not for those who can afford but want free hand-outs. It was a view that was shared by many that free inputs must be targeted not to issue blanket subsidies as they distorted the markets.
- Ms. Ruvimbo Zhewe was of the view that the solution lies with markets. She suggested that competent farmers should sign and commit to contracts that they can pay back. She also urged farmer organisations to have functional databases where one can make clear identification of vulnerable farmers that require support.
- An officer from the Ministry (MAMID) shared with the audience that Government was in the process of designing a system that would replace the free handouts with sustainable inputs so as to support agriculture as a business.
- Mr. Michael Ndimba from Ruzivo Trust raised the issues of Warehouse Receipt Systems (WRS) arguing that this would protect farmers from speculative markets. Mr. Chabikwa however raised concern over the delay of

the operationalisation of the WRS though the MAMID has promised that it will be operational by 14 May 2014.

## **7.0 Way forward**

The participants at the symposium agreed to the following as a way forward:

- That unions should work together and have one common goal aimed at enhancing farming as a business;
- That unions should start working on coming up with one board that represents the interest of farmers such as working towards forming an apex body or a federation of farmer organisations. There is need to strengthen and operationalise the structures Joint President's Council as well so that farmer interests are well represented.
- That farmers' unions should create a platform for open dialogue and exchange notes and experiences on issues that affect farmers and desist from petty political agendas and commit themselves to service delivery to their membership.
- The participants also called for the resolving of the land issue as a way of enhancing agricultural production and competitiveness in the country.

## **8.0 Way Forward from Individual Participants: Use of Cards**

### **1. What brings us together as unions?**

- Common farming interests (14)
- The need to strengthen our voice and the farmer (7)
- Farmer representation (9)
- Solving and Discussing Common problems that farmers face (5)
- To provide relevant services to farmers and represent farmer interests (6)
- To help the farmer to make a farming business venture (3)
- The need for the restoration of the bread basket of Africa (1)

### **2. How can we strengthen that?**

- Formation of a legal entity /union federation (16)
- Create social platform that represent the issues of farmers (3)
- One voice, common vision (9)
- Jointly lobbying policy matters on those challenges (3)
- Strengthening of lower level structures from grassroots level (2)
- More engagement with government (1)
- Leverage commodity associations (3)
- To realise that the main purpose is to serve farmers (3)
- Strengthening Joint President's Council (3)
- Financing (1)

### **3. What sets us apart?**

- Fear of the unknown
- Representation of various interests groups with different backgrounds (7)
- Peculiar challenges
- History ; selfishness; ambition; power; personal interest (18)
- Politics (6)
- Having different visions, objectives (4)
- The type of service we provide the farmer (2)
- Thinking that one is better than the other (1)
- Competing for members
- Fragmentation
- Government
- Operating in isolation
- Finance/facilities (4)
- Lack of commitment to service delivery/political agendas
- Fragmentation
- Mind-sets-not willing to change how we do business

### **4. How can we improve our representation?**

- Federation of unions, form single union (11)
- Being more objective and focus on the task at hand (1)
- Collaborate with other unions (10)
- Trust
- Good policy formulation set aside personal interests
- Open dialogue and building trust (5)
- Unpack the fear - Thrash out the problems (3)
- Strengthening Joint President's Council through financing it
- Standardising approaches
- Initially can start with one natural commodity association for each commodity that represent the interest of all farmers
- Supporting sister unions when lobbying policy matters on those peculiar challenges
- Targeting natural farming regions not farmer categories
- Having a genuine desire to assist farmers and see the agricultural sector performing well (3)
- Let's swallow our pride and think of the agricultural sector
- Improved Statutes
- Forget history change mind-set
- Be apolitical (2)

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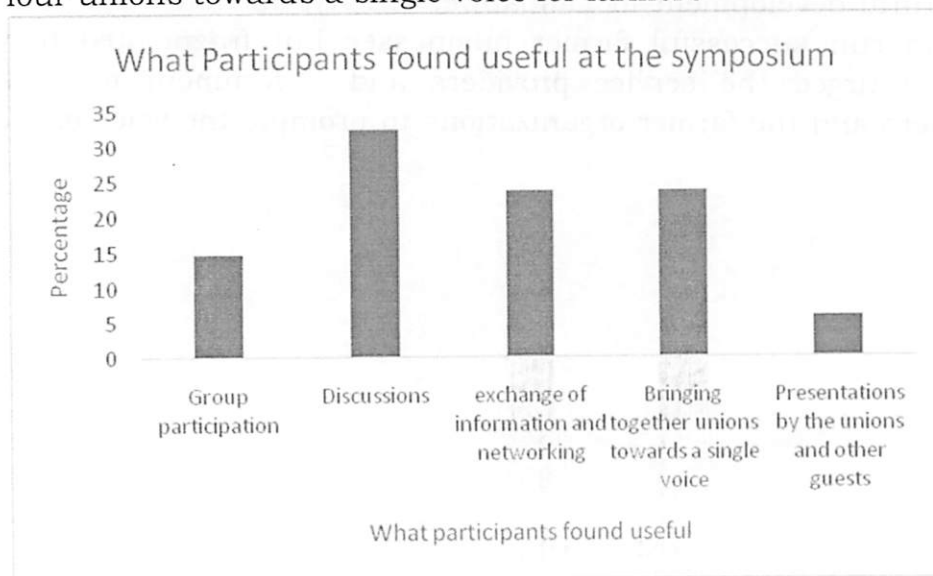
9.0 Conclusion and Closing Remarks

The Chairman of the Joint President's Council, Mr. Abdul Nyathi thanked everyone for participating in the symposium and was very hopeful that the deliberations that took place are going to strengthen the voice of the farmer and the farmer's organisations. He said the symposium was an eye opener and that they had learnt that being one and speaking with one voice was the way forward in agricultural development in Zimbabwe. Mr. Nyathi noted that as a joint unit they can run successful farmer businesses but fragmented they would collapse. He urged the service providers and government to work together with farmers and the farmer organizations to promote the voice of the farmer.

10.0 Farmer Symposium Evaluation

Question 1: What did you find most useful about the symposium?

The evaluation brought about five general themes on the importance of the symposium and these can be categorised as: group participation, discussions, exchange of information and networking, presentations, bringing together the four unions towards a single voice for farmers



14.7% of the participants found the group participation as very important while 32, 3% pointed out to the discussions as very important. 23, 5% found the exchange of information and networking that is brought about by the symposium as very important with 23, 5% of the participants pointing out to the fact that the symposium brought all the unions together towards a single voice; and 6% pointing towards presentations by the unions and other guests.

Question 2: List any suggestion to improve future workshop?

The participants raised concern with the time allocated for the symposium with some suggesting a full day symposium involving more value chain actors such as the local farmers, banks, private sector and high level government representatives for the symposiums to be effective. Some suggested a deliberate gender mainstreaming in the invitation of participants so that there is equal representation of men and women at the workshop. A number of the participants raised issues to do with the general presentation of the workshop where they suggested for two facilitators and more time for discussions as well as for discussions to be held in different rooms to avoid disturbing each other. They also suggested that presentations by unions should be expanded and give

more information on individual unions, their uniqueness and comparison with others.

Question 3: Suggest topics for future symposiums?

The topics suggested by the participants are categorised in the following:

- Pricing of commodities
- Marketing of produce
- Improving productivity and competitiveness
- The effects of the land issue on agricultural productivity
- Farming as a business/contract farming
- ICT in agriculture
- Youth/gender in agriculture, and
- Climate change and its effect on agriculture in Zimbabwe

Question 4: Other comments/suggestions?

The participants expressed that the symposium was well organized and the facilitation was up to expectation. However they encouraged for the way forward to be communicated to policy makers as well as pursuing further the ideas that were brought about by the discussions. They also called for the formalization of the Joint President's Council as well as to invite to learn from the Zambian Farmer's Union.

Annex 1

National symposium on farmer representative in Zimbabwe

Intervention by

**Philippe Van Damme, Ambassador,
Head of EU Delegation to Zimbabwe**

Venue: Mandel Training Centre, Marlborough, Harare

Permanent Secretary in the Mining of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation,

Presidents of the Farmers Unions,

Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocol respected

It is honour for me to be asked to share some opening remarks at this important symposium today. An honour because this is a symposium of a high symbolic but also operational importance.

Of **symbolic** importance because I see here representatives of all farmers unions. Unions associations defending the interests of some specific categories of workers, *in casu* specific categories of farmers, reunited here, today, all together, small-scale farmers, A2 farmers, commercial farmers, farmers of all colours, origin and nationality, farmers of all political opinions, all reunited to think of way to defend their collective interest, farmers united.

Of **operational** importance because I do not have to explain to you, the actors in the field, the historical importance of Zimbabwe's agricultural sector in the development of this country, not only in terms of its past and present economic contribution to GDP, to employment, to export earnings, but also in the way it forged the mentalities of this country. Land has determined the way people interact and form society; this was true in pre-colonial times, this was true in colonial times, and this is still true in post-colonial times, up to these days. We have to accept this heritage but at the same time look ahead, not only undergo history but make history.

Land and agriculture will remain cornerstones of Zimbabwe's future and it is important that all stakeholders concerned can come together to reflect on how this future may look like. This future is influenced by history but cannot be conditioned by history. We

can draw lessons from the past but the future is not a fatalistic extraordinary of the past, the future can be constructed.

Admittedly, agricultural production, productivity and competitiveness have fallen drastically, but nonetheless agriculture preserves its huge potential to contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The agriculture related endowments of this country have not fundamentally changed are well known and appreciated by all of us. They range from the rich agriculture land resource to physical infrastructure including transport, dams and irrigation systems, and to the abundant human capital with agriculture skills and expertise. There is no questioning of the potential of this country's agriculture to bounce back as a competitive producer of the most diversified crops and agricultural commodities.

However, there are obviously a number of challenges that impede agriculture recovery and growth in Zimbabwe:

To start with, the investment climate in the agricultural sector has to be improved; medium and long term investment decisions to enhance productivity are based on assessment of risks and opportunities, and therefore require predictability of the legal framework in which to operate and security of tenure. The security of tenure is also required to make tenure "bankable" as collateral in order to ensure access to indispensable investment credit. It is therefore absolutely necessary to fully implement the constitutional provisions relating to agricultural land, to security of tenure and compensation of those land was acquired by the state. (Constitution of Zimbabwe, Chapter 16);

The organisation of the agricultural sector has to be reviewed as well. Too many players intervene today in fragmented, uncoordinated way. The public and parastatal institutions within the agriculture value chain have to be audited and their role and status re-assessed to determine their value-added; they should be serviced-driven, accountable and responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders, and not live or

survive at their expense. Institutions and policies that distort input and output markets or protect the interest of some of the detriment of the majority reduce incentives to use production factors more efficiently;

In a more general sense, the extent to which institutions and regulatory processes are trusted and guarantee the respect the rule of law and a fair and “just” remuneration of the efforts made by the various stakeholders in the agricultural value chains directly impact agriculture performance. They have to be clear, transparent, predictable and uniformly applied.

How do we come to this more conducive and supportive investment climate in the agricultural sector and how do we guarantee the long term environmental sustainability of farming practices and methods?

In a value chain approach to agriculture, it is essential that all stakeholders find their right place in the process, from the input suppliers, over the farmers, the intermediaries, the transformers, the vendors and distributors and all the supportive services in between; it is essential that all these stakeholders interact and collaborate in a positive “Win Win” spirit, aiming at economies of scale and efficiency gains throughout the value chain, or the benefit of all.

There is therefore a need for the existence of strong interest groups or coalitions of interest groups with clear – and sometimes divergent interests but a common collective agenda, and a united voice on essential messages, and there is a need for the creation of a platform to engage in serious policy dialogue among those various stakeholders and between these stakeholders and government. The farmers are of course the critical link in this process and the farmers unions have a critical role to play but will only be capable of exercising this role if they are sufficiently organised to take up this challenge.

The EU stands ready to help the agricultural sector and its various stakeholders achieving those required structural changes and institutional reforms and to rebuild value chains in a sustainable and harmonious way.

On the 16th of February the EU and Zimbabwe signed the national indicative programme with an envelope of EUR 234 million, which spells out interventions to be implemented with funding from the 11th European Development Fund over the period until 2020. Agriculture base economic growth and Governance and Institutional Building are the key sectors of concentration next to the health sector.

We will therefore have the means and the tools to support the various stakeholders in the implementation of the agricultural reform agenda and to help the agriculture sector to become again an engine of sustainable, socially equitable growth and development, and in this way also to help the agricultural sector contributing to the national healing and reconciliation process.

This process that you may have embarked on is an important one and it is my hope that it will produce a common vision for agriculture, a vision which other stakeholders, including the EU, can and will rally behind and support.

I wish you a very fruitful and constructive symposium. Marx would have said, "Workers of all nations, unite", but I guess that man is not necessarily very popular among you, but the slogan remain valid, "farmers of all nations, unite".

I thank you for your attention

Annex 2:

**Speech by the MAMID Permanent Secretary at the Farms Union Symposium on
Farmer Representation in Zimbabwe**

Mandel Training Centre

25 February 2015

[Protocol]

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to speak to you today on this important event for us all. It is very encouraging to be invited to speak at an event organized jointly by all four registered farmers unions in Zimbabwe namely Zimbabwe farmers Union (ZFU), The Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU), The Commercial Farmer Union of Zimbabwe (CFU), and the Zimbabwe National Farmers Union (ZNFU) through their Joint President's Council. This is especially important in that farmers unions have finally realized that they serve the same farmer and are now asking questions on how best they can serve their number one client, the farmer?

You will agree with me that this symposium gives us a rare opportunity, to openly discuss and give our thoughts on how Government, Input suppliers, Transporters, Value Adders, Development Partners and everyone else who has anything to do with agriculture would prefer to interface with farmers unions and ultimately with the farmers at the grass root level.

Farmer organisation is important for national economic development. With organized farming, service provision by government in terms of research, training and extension is facilitated. It is also very easy for the private sector to provide services to farmers who are organized into structures than start at grassroots level. This way transaction costs and risks are minimized, at policy level government is able to get input from farmers through their Farmers Unions and vice versa. The Farmers Unions themselves are able to provide services that include amongst many others; marketing linkages and dissemination of production and market information to enable informed farm planning and marketing decisions by individual farmers.

In order to fully represent the diverse cross section of farmers in Zimbabwe Farmers Unions need to have membership databases that represent a significant population of the farming community. This gives them credibility and makes their voice authentic. The number give them the mandate to represent farmers in matters of development at national, regional and international levels.

The relationship of Farmers Unions with the Government should be developmental, guided more by engagement rather than confrontation. In that regard I am confident to say that we have been working with Farmers Unions well. We have walked together in such important national programs like CAADP process which culminated in the development of the Zimbabwe Agricultural investment Plan (ZAIP) and the subsequent signing of the CAADP compact. This is commendable. The farmers unions have been visible in the development, of late, of the Livestock policy and participate in agricultural Boards and Committees in various capacities.

Together we can overcome the challenges in agriculture which range from droughts, lack of collateral security, high cost of money, unsuitable types of agricultural financing, underdeveloped agro-value chains, poor infrastructure, and incapacities in utility providers to meet demand for services in agriculture, to mention a few.

The work of farmers unions to create conducive environment for farmers through representation is commendable. As a result of freedom of association as per the Zimbabwean constitution farmers are not compelled to belong to farmers' unions. I am aware that, that in itself gives a bit of some problems in that the benefits as a result of the work of farmers unions do not only accrued to members, but in many instances are enjoyed by all farmers in Zimbabwe. This is especially true with regards to benefits of a universal nature, like removal of VAT on some commodities which come as a result of the lobby efforts by Farmers Unions. My ministry is looking at ways of addressing such anomalies.

It is my sincere hope that this symposium is going to come up with recommendations that will see improved farmer representation and more importantly improve the contribution of the agricultural sector to the attainment of the ZIMASSET objectives in the food and nutrition security cluster.

The Zimbabwean economy is anchored on Agriculture and we need to give this sector our support if we are going to see Zimbabwe re-emerge as the bread basket of SADC. This can only be achieved through organized farming, of which farmers unions are key.

Let me once again thank the Joint President's Council for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. Let us ensure that the hours spent on this event are fruitful. Let us give this symposium the best that we can. Most importantly let us come up with recommendations that can be part of the roadmap towards improved and strengthened that can be part of the roadmap towards improved and strengthened farmer representation in Zimbabwe.

I thank you