

The Government of Seychelles has committed to accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in the country.

The Minister for Natural Resources and Industry and also in charge of agriculture and livestock, Hon. Peter Sinon, expressed his country's desire to accelerate implementation of the CAADP when he received a delegation from COMESA on Monday, 11 February 2013 in his office at Victoria, Mahe.

The Minister said that a lot has been achieved vis-à-vis finalization of the Seychelles National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (NAIP) since September 2011 when key stakeholders in the agriculture sector signed the National CAADP Compact.

"Among some of the milestones accomplished, hitherto, are: the initial drafting of the Seychelles Food Security Policy; strengthening of capacities among key stakeholder groups; and some preliminary work on the Agriculture Development Strategy document and the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (NAIP)," he said.

He added that the Government of the Seychelles is drafting the country's Medium Term National Development Strategy (2013-2017) under which the country's CAADP priorities and detailed programmes are also expected to be highlighted.

Hon. Sinon thanked COMESA and its key partners, including the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), for the support that had been rendered so far in ensuring that his country joins the many African countries that are seeking to give agriculture and food security the necessary due attention in the development agenda of their economies.

He stressed that despite the recent natural disaster that had befallen his country a few weeks ago, caused by major flooding in some key agriculture producing locations of the Island, he did not see the setback as a major deterrent to the progress already made in the CAADP process and the food and nutrition security agenda of Seychelles.

“I don’t want to see a situation where the CAADP process continues to drag on,” said Hon. Sinon. He assured the delegation that the Government of the Seychelles was doing everything possible to mitigate the sector following the flooding that was brought about by heavy rains early this year. He said, “This experience has in fact compelled experts on the CAADP Investment Plan Design Team to seriously consider elaborating the issue of effective drainages and reliable water control systems in the NAIP. This matter is generally reflected under Pillar I of the CAADP Framework.”

Hon. Sinon stressed that while it is noted that tourism remains the mainstay of the Seychelles economy, it is also apparent that this key sector derives much of its input for his country is derived from agriculture which includes areas such as crops, fisheries, forestry and livestock. He was quick to also underscore the importance of farmers and the private sector in the overall economy, and emphasized the need for continuous dialogue with these actors in order to ensure their effective participation.

The Seychelles Permanent Secretary for Natural Resources and Industry, Mr Michael Nalletamby said the government is working towards implementing measures that would reduce the cost of doing business for domestic producers in agriculture.

He said, “It is essential to note that farmers and the private sector are signatories to the Seychelles CAADP Compact, signifying their commitment to investing in collaboratively and carefully selected priority areas of agriculture.”

Speaking at the same function, COMESA CAADP Coordinator Dr. Sam Kanyarukiga reiterated the need for good coordination in the sector, including the involvement of key line ministries such as Finance and Trade.

“I am delighted to note the progress so far made in moving forward the design of the national agriculture development strategy and the NAIP. COMESA pledges its commitment to supporting the process further through provision of relevant technical and organizational assistance to the Seychelles,” he said.

The Government of the Seychelles, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Industry has set August 2013 tentatively, as the date for the CAADP Round Table, also known as the

CAADP Post Compact High Level Business Meeting.

During this conference, resources are expected to be mobilized for implementation of the NAIP. Prior to this event, COMESA and its partners, including NPCA, will facilitate an independent technical review to assist in refining the NAIP, ahead of the business meeting.

The COMESA delegation was led by Dr Sam Kanyarukiga, CAADP Coordinator accompanied by Dr Nalishebo Meebelo, Deputy CAADP Coordinator and Mr Walter Talma, Seychelles Country Officer and USAID Programme Manager for COMESA.