

**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND  
SOUTHERN AFRICA**



**DECLARATION**

**OF**

**THE 8TH JOINT MEETING OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
AGRICULTURE,  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**HELD VIRTUALLY ON**

**24TH NOVEMBER 2022**

**Theme: *"Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic  
Integration"***

**WE** the Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources in the COMESA Member States, meeting virtually on 24 November 2022 to consider and review implementation of strategies, plans and programmes aimed at advancing the agriculture and food security, sustainable development and management of the environmental and natural resources in our region, have reached consensus on several issues and have agreed to issue this Declaration.

**EXPRESSING** our appreciation to Her Excellency, Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, Secretary General of COMESA, for hosting this virtual meeting which has availed us an opportunity to review regional strategic frameworks, and programmes to expand agricultural production and productivity, strengthen regional agri-food data and information systems, enhance resilience, access to markets and trade in safe and quality agricultural commodities and products, enhance regional food security, adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and build resilience;

**RECALLING** the commitment that our governments have made to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of zero poverty and zero hunger by 2030 and taking urgent action to combat climate change.

**FURTHER RECALLING** the AU Heads of State and Governments 2014 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods on the continent.

**RECOGNIZING** the potential of the blue economy sector to contribute to improved livelihoods, income, food, and nutritional security of the region.

**COGNIZANT** of the commitment that our Member States made to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change- related shocks including droughts, floods, and cyclones on the wellbeing of our people and to manage green gas emissions.

**AFFIRMING** our decisions at the Lusaka Meeting of 2020, which underscored the importance of boosting agricultural productivity and production and building resilience to climate change to achieve food and livelihoods security in the region.

**RECOGNIZING** the significant role which women and youth play in enhancing food security and nutrition and operations of agricultural value chains, environment and natural resource use and management.

**CONSCIOUS** of the challenges constantly posed by reoccurring outbreaks of transboundary plant pests and animal diseases which continue to affect agricultural production, livelihoods, and food security of our region.

**COGNIZANT** of the role Phytosanitary and Food Safety measures play in the protection of plants, animals, and human health, in enhancing competitive access to markets and trade in quality and safe agricultural commodities in our region and globally.

**AFFIRMING** importance of timely, accurate and reliable data for informed policy decisions, investments in agri-food system, and natural

resources development in a rapidly changing agri-food system and environment.

**COMMENDING** the outcomes of the Climate Change Conference (COP27) that was hosted in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt represented in acknowledging, for the first time in history of climate change conferences, the issues of loss and damage to be in the agenda; and the success of the Summit in approving an unprecedented declaration on establishment of a loss and damage fund in order to face the climate challenges; especially in the developing countries. Furthermore, the conclusions of COP27 affirmed that Egypt not only succeeded in creating a distinguishable level of organization and logistics in relation with the conference, but also succeeded at the collective international action level in relation with climate.

**RECOGNISING** that it is through inter-sectoral collaboration on agriculture and natural resources development and other related sectors that we can address some of our key national and regional socio-economic development needs.

**NOTING** that the Arab Republic of Egypt has offered to host the Ninth Joint Ministers Meeting on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources that will be physical.

**WE HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. We salute Member States that have developed and implemented National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAIPS) that are aligned to the Malabo Declaration and call upon countries to further integrate the Malabo Commitments into both their national

development plans and NAIPs and allocate more resources to support the implementation of the plans.

2. We commit ourselves to enhancing access to production inputs, services and improved technologies including leveraging digital technologies to drive agriculture and livestock production and productivity.
3. We commit ourselves to developing and implementing measures that promote and strengthen farmers, fishers, and agro-pastoralists-SMEs and larger firm business linkages for competitive market access and improved trade in agricultural commodities and products in the region.
4. We reaffirm our commitment to harnessing the potential of innovative technologies to expand opportunities for youth and women to enhance their gainful engagement in agriculture and natural resource development.
5. We commit ourselves to promoting and implementing initiatives that contribute to reducing post-harvest losses, improve agriculture commodity aggregation and storage, and enhance competitive access to markets and trade in the region and internationally.
6. We urge Member States and the Secretariat to mobilize and commit resources to support the implementation of the COMESA Blue Economy Strategy.

7. We urge Member States and Secretariat to further develop and implement policies, regulations, programmes, and support quality infrastructure development to enhance plant and animal health, improve the quality and safety standards and competitiveness of agricultural commodities and food products in the region.
8. We undertake to support the development and implementation of the COMESA digital Regional Food Balance Sheet (RFBS) initiative including similar efforts that aim to strengthen agri-food data and information system in our region for informed policy, investment, and trade decisions, and for emergency food and livelihood response in a rapidly changing environment. We commit ourselves to extending the analysis of National Household Consumption and Expenditure Surveys to cover food security issues in addition to routine poverty analysis. We also urge Secretariat to mobilize resources for the second phase of the COMESA-Statistics Norway Food Security Statistics Project to cover more Member states beyond 2023.
9. We applaud Member States that have developed and are implementing actions and interventions to support realisation of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). And further commit to continue working closely with the Secretariat in the implementation of the climate adaptation and mitigation commitments.
10. In this regard, we call on developed country parties to provide adequate resources to developing country parties to support effective implementation of the adaptation and mitigation actions and interventions.

11. We urge the Member States and the Secretariat to mobilize resources to support the operationalisation of the COMESA regional resilience implementation plan in order to enhance the resilience of agri-food system and livelihoods of our population.
12. We commit ourselves to developing/expanding national safety net programmes to enhance food security and nutrition and secure livelihoods for our vulnerable population.
13. We commit ourselves to investing in agricultural research to develop, transfer and disseminate technologies, innovations and management practices that are climate-resilient, market-responsive, suited to assorted agro-ecological contexts, and end-user preferred in our region.
14. We further commit ourselves to strengthening intersectoral collaboration and partnership with private sector in planning and implementation of investment projects and programmes that drive inclusive agricultural transformation and sustainable natural resources development and use.
15. We commend various Cooperating Partners supporting the implementation of regional programmes across the sectors and Member States; and
16. We commend and support the Food and Agriculture Initiative for Sustainable Transformation (FAST), which was launched during the Climate Change Conference (COP27), as it would allow the opportunity to implement tangible procedures that would lead to

improved climate action in addition to a quantitative and qualitative contributions for climate finance in order to finance the agri-food systems by 2030 to support the agriculture adaptation and innovation programs; and apply technology in supporting food and economic security; especially for the African states. The initiative would be an accelerator for financing the agri-food systems in order to achieve triple gain for people, climate and nature, which would achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

17. We request the COMESA Secretariat and its specialized institutions and agencies to work in close collaboration with Member States, cooperating partners, private sector, and other stakeholders to drive the implementation of the decisions taken at this virtual meeting.

**Adopted, this 24 November 2022**