

NEWS RELEASE

FOCUS ON THE YOUTH AT AGRICULTURAL DIALOGUE IN SWAZILAND

Engaging the youth in future agricultural developments in Africa will take centre stage at the Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network's (FANRPAN) annual regional food security policy dialogue in Swaziland next week.

"The time is now to ensure that the youth are part of decisions about the future of agriculture in Africa – they are after all the generation that will have to ensure that the continent's growing population is fed," says FANRPAN Chief Executive Officer Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda.

"It is the responsibility of current leaders in agriculture to ensure the involvement of the youth in development – and that is what we plan to do."

The dialogue will discuss, among others, dominant and alternative viewpoints and recent empirical data about how young people engage with the agrifood sector in Africa as producers, processors, entrepreneurs, employees, consumers and citizens. It will also look at change in different components of the agrifood sector and its implications for young people and at alternative policy approaches to the development of the agrifood sector.

Over 300 international delegates are expected to attend the dialogue from 19 to 23 September. The meeting will be officially opened by Swaziland's Prime Minister, Dr Barnabas Dlamini. Case studies of innovative youth initiatives from countries like Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius will be presented.

Other presentations will include the role of the youth in markets for Africa's green revolution and their role in safeguarding the continent's natural resources and the environment. Other global youth initiatives will be explained in presentations by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation, the Caribbean Agricultural Forum for Youth, the Pacific Agricultural and Forestry Policy Network and the keynote speaker will be the Minister of Youth and Development in Swaziland, Hlobisile Ndlovu.

Sibanda says no dialogue about agriculture is relevant without discussing climate change. Civil society is committing to responsible increases in agricultural productivity through climate smart agriculture which includes proven techniques such as agro-forestry and conservation agriculture, that combine adaptation, mitigation, resilience and food security.

"African leaders in agriculture and indeed African heads of state will have to take the global lead to bring together a climate deal that has a dedicated work programme for

agriculture. It is of utmost importance that Africa puts climate-smart agriculture high on the political agenda,” she says.

“FANRPAN and its partners will work to ensure that one of the outcomes of the UNFCCC COP17, in Durban at the end of the year is a dedicated work programme for agriculture.”

FANRPAN Chairman, Sindiso Ngwenya who is also the secretary-general of the Common Market for European and Southern Africa, will present the FANRPAN awards for media, civil society policy movers and shakers and for food security policy leadership at the Swaziland dialogue.

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