COMESA Identification Mission

Stakeholder Meeting Zimbabwe

08 October 2021

The African Development Bank, COMESA and the African Land Policy Center hosted a team of international development partners operating in Zimbabwe. Present were the European Union, the Dutch Embassy and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nation (FAO).

The purpose of the meeting, as part of the COMESA Identification mission, was to learn about what development partners have been doing on the ground, their projects, policies and ideas on which areas should be taken into consideration when designing the COMESA project.

Currently, the FAO team in Zimbabwe is in the process of formulating and organising themselves to better support the country. They have a platform of land tenure which meets monthly to discuss issues of land. They are currently working with the Government on the draft National Land Policy Framework which addresses all land issues across all sectors. A requirement of the framework is acknowledgement that land cuts across all sectors and all local authority jurisdictions. There has been some national and provincial consultations on the draft document which has been presented to the Minister of Plans. FAO also has a number of initiatives to attract investors into the agricultural sector, where they try to de-risk agricultural investments and to attract investors to invest in Zimbabwe.

One of the key problems in terms of investments is collateral and gaining access to finance.

The FAO mentioned that it had established a working group on agriculture to see how they can coordinate the collaboration of partners in the region. They invited the African Development Bank to join these land and agriculture working groups and requested the concept note from this mission to be shared with their partners.

Zimbabwe has the lowest share of investments because of land issues. Land is an emotive and politically sensitive issue with approximately EUR 700 Million funds being turned away by the government as they did not want development partners involved in land matters.

The Dutch Embassy: Their interests in Zimbabwe, were in the horticulture space and that they're currently focusing on increasing exports and capacity building of small holder farmers. They have supported institutional strengthening to lobby and advocate for horticultural

producers to ensure ease of doing business in that sector. They commended the new government for being more receptive to these interventions.

Way Forward

- The Bank will be engaging with stakeholders present further, there after this, COMESA and AfDB will write the proposal to seek funding.
- The AfDB will take up the issue of joining the agricultural and land working groups and follow it up with the Country Manager.
- FAO is ready to link up with other partners in Zimbabwe and will be ready to provide any documentation with regards to land issues. They are also willing to provide support at the formulation of the programme.