

Conference to provide insight on land tenure, future skills for agriculture

Leaders of farmers' organisations in southern Africa and other stakeholders will be joined by Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana in Cape Town to share insights on what the future of agriculture will look like and the type of skills that will be required.



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The conference will bring together SACAU members including executive directors/chief executive officers and presidents more than 16 national farmers' organisations from 14 countries in southern Africa, as well as representatives of intergovernmental and international development agencies, the private sector, academia, R&D and training education and extension agencies in May 2017.

"The conference is designed to provide the leadership of the farming community in southern Africa with strategic insights into the future of agriculture and its implications," says Ishmael Sunga, SACAU CEO.

"The outcomes of the conference will be used to develop SACAU's key messages and position statements which will guide work," adds Sunga.

Smallholder farmers face many challenges

Smallholder farmers make up the largest segment of primary agricultural producers in southern Africa. "This sector faces many challenges, including low productivity, low competitiveness, limited access to input and output markets, high post-harvest losses, inadequate investment in technology and on-farm infrastructure and low returns," explains Sunga, who will be one of the speakers.

These challenges are exacerbated by the aging population coupled with a general lack of interest by the youth to engage in farming. The conference will look at the importance of land tenure and will also explore "the ability of smallholder farmers to leverage this resource to drive agricultural transformation."

It will be addressed by Gugile Nkwinti, Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, and Dr. Janet Edeme, Head of the Rural Economy Division in the African Union Commission Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture. Other speakers include Professor Mandivamba Rukuni from Barefoot Education for Afrika Trust who will be delivering a background paper and Dr Lasse Krantz from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden who will be sharing on a Mozambican experience on the application of land laws, and more.

This conference on Skilling for the future of Agriculture will take place from 8.30am to 5pm on 24 May and from 8.30am to 1pm on 25 May. It will be preceded by a conference on Land tenure security and agricultural transformation in the smallholder sector in southern Africa from 8.30am to 5.30pm on 22 May and from 8.30am to 1pm on 23 May. Media are invited to both conferences which will be at the Garden Court Nelson Mandela boulevard hotel, Cape Town, South Africa. The first conference is co-hosted with We Effect and the second with the African Farmers Association of South Africa and AgriSA.

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