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PRESS RELEASE

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Rwanda Hosts COMESA CAADP Partners Meeting and Rwanda CAADP Round Table

Kigali, Serena Hotel, 29th – 31st March 2007

Forging Partnerships for the Country's Agricultural Development Strategy

Nearly 300 agricultural experts and policymakers, stakeholders from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), development partners, representatives of international organizations, African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) will convene in Kigali from March 29-31 for a roundtable on NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP).

CAADP, which is spearheaded by African governments, aims to accelerate agricultural growth and eliminate poverty on the continent. H.E. President Paul Kagame is expected to officially open the roundtable, as well as a preceding meeting of COMESA and CAADP partners.

In preparation for the roundtable, a team of Rwandan consultants and collaborating partners reviewed the country's ongoing development efforts, including its agriculture policies, strategies, and investments; evaluated these efforts against CAADP principles and targets; and prepared a long-term framework to implement and accelerate Rwanda's agricultural development strategy, as well as the country's broader development objectives.

The purpose of the CAADP Rwanda Round Table, which is jointly hosted by the Rwandan Government, NEPAD, and COMESA; is to reach consensus among key stakeholders on the framework, forge the necessary partnerships to implement the agricultural development agenda, and secure commitments and resources from partners to make the necessary investments.



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Rwanda is the first to organize a Round Table among phase one six countries - Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia, which were selected by COMESA to speed up implementation of the agricultural development programs in the region through round tables.

With the support of NEPAD, COMESA, and the international community, Rwanda is confident that it can achieve its agricultural development goals, and ultimately alleviate poverty and achieve food security for the country's poor.

BACKGROUND TO CAADP

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development program (CAADP) is a NEPAD initiative that focuses on Agriculture development on the Continent. It was endorsed at the July 2003 Maputo Summit in a Declaration of African Heads of States.

CAADP promotes interventions that best respond to the widely recognized challenges in African agriculture. It was designed to focus deliberately on investment in the four mutually reinforcing 'pillars' that can make the earliest difference to Africa's Agriculture situation. They include: land and water management, rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for improved market access, increasing food supply and reducing hunger and agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

The following are the main principles and targets which define the CAADP framework:

- the principle of agriculture-led growth as a main strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of poverty reduction;
- the pursuit of a 6 percent average annual growth rate at the national level in the agriculture sector;
- the allocation of 10 percent of national budgets to the agricultural sector;
- the exploitation of regional complementarities and cooperation to boost growth;



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- the principles of policy efficiency, dialogue, review, and accountability,
- the principles of partnerships and alliances to include farmers, agribusiness, and civil society communities;
- the implementation principles assigning the roles and responsibility of program implementation to individual countries; that of coordination to designated to regional economic communities; and that of facilitation to the NEPAD Secretariat.

In order to achieve the CAADP objectives, particular emphasis is to be put on the following four pillars:

1. Optimal Water and Soil Management
2. Improvement of Rural Infrastructure to facilitate market access
3. Increased food production to ensure food security and adequate nutrition
4. Promotion of Agricultural Research to ensure knowledge_based production and value addition

These CAADP pillars are in full consistency with the Rwanda National agricultural policies, strategies and programmes, to achieve the objectives and targets of the Rwanda EDPRS, MDGs and the Vision 2020.

The main objectives of the CAADP round tables are to:

- review how national policies and investments are supporting agricultural development;
- identify constraints to achieving at least 6 percent target growth rate for the agricultural sector, and identify policy and investment gaps;
- design action plans to bridge these gaps and agree on the necessary resources and capacity to implement the plans; and
- adopt mechanisms to coordinate efforts, monitor and evaluate a country's progress and performance.



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