

**Speech of Honorable James MUSONI, Minister of
Finance and Economic planning in the official
closing of the COMESA and Partners meeting and
Rwanda CAADP Roundtable**

Kigali-Serena Hotel 31/03/2007

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Economic development and poverty alleviation is a big challenge for developing countries with low income per capita. This challenge is even more pressing for the rural populations who have to depend on the natural resources for their sustenance.

Initiatives like the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) provide excellent guidance and starting points for our nations to overcome our challenges. However, targets and outcomes embraced in our plans cannot be reached if governments, civil society, private sector, development partners and most of all the population are not profoundly engaged in implementing those programs and strategies.

Ladies and gentlemen

We wish that this Rwanda CAADP roundtable meeting and others which will follow be an opportunity for the establishment of a forum for experience sharing, dialogue and peer reviewing to achieve the targets set in all COMESA countries. Indeed, the potential to attain the

goals set in our development plans like the Economic Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) process will be completed by May. That is why I would like to appeal to all of the participants of this three days event to take home the following message: Let us strengthen our partnerships and dialogue so that we can accelerate the development agendas of our countries.

We expect the Rwanda CAADP compact, which has been agreed on today, to be a tool for aligning and harmonization of our interventions and efforts in the development of our country especially in the field of Agriculture. That is why agriculture in Rwanda as the backbone of our economy compels us to put more emphasis to the development of this sector. This emphasis will be through a wide range of interventions by all stakeholders.

The stakeholders will be supported through an appropriate resource allocation and close monitoring and reporting on the development of the sector. This will facilitate the move towards achieving the targets set forth in the Maputo declaration by the African Heads of State and Government.

Let me take this opportunity to say a word of thanks to all who contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this meeting more specifically to European Union and COMESA Secretariat for having availed resources to make this meeting a success.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I officially declare this COMESA meeting and Rwanda

CAADP roundtable meeting closed.
I wish you all the best and I thank you.