

Farmers should get involved in CAADP: Ntombela

Small-holder and commercial farmers should get involved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), says acting director-general at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Siphon Ntombela.

"It is crucial for South Africa to be deeply involved in CAADP and (if government is to be successful) in tackling poverty... and hunger in rural areas, we need the involvement of everyone." Ntombela said.

CAADP was established as part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) and endorsed by the African Union Assembly in July 2003. African governments are committed to raising through CAADP agriculture productivity by at least six percent in a year. This is the minimum required if Africa is to achieve agriculture-led socio-economic growth. Participating governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by 10%.

According to Ntombela, South Africa has been lagging behind in implementing CAADP - "we've invited commercial farmers and farmer unions to be part of this journey, which is also in support of our zero hunger programme." Ntombela added that the four pillars on which CAADP rests are - increasing market access through improved rural infrastructure and other trade-related interventions, increasing food supply and reducing hunger across the region by bolstering small-holder productivity, and improving responses to food emergencies. "The last pillar," he said "is to improve agricultural research and systems (in order) to disseminate appropriate new technologies and (offer support in order) to help farmers to adopt (these technologies)."

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