



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Welcoming Remarks by The **Director General** of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of The Republic of South Africa Mr Mzamo Mlengana , During the Official Opening of The 2nd Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture at the Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa on 9th October, 2018.

Honourable Ministers,

Members of Parliament,

Senior Government Officials,

Members of Diplomatic Corps,

Sponsors,

The Chairman of the Congress Organizing Committee,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to join you today at the Second Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture (2ACCA) and welcome to this wonderful country with its diverse culture and agro-ecological landscape.

The second Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture is a very important occasion for Africa where we can endeavour to scale up the adoption of climate-smart agriculture technologies to benefit not thousands but millions of farmers in the continent, by taking a fresh look on how to realize sustainable agriculture, in the context of the African Unions' Malabo Declaration.

I want to thank all the institutions, multilateral organisations, donors, exhibitors that has provided visionary leadership and tireless efforts in making this conference a reality. I want to thank all the delegates for setting aside their time to attend this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Second Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture is a follow up to, **the First Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture (1ACCA)**, held in Lusaka, Zambia in March 2014. under the theme 'Conservation Agriculture: Building Entrepreneurship and Resilient Farming Systems.' The 1ACCA reaffirmed that the restoration of soil health and intensification of agriculture through Conservation Agriculture could become the cornerstone in transforming the way farming is done in Africa, representing a major contribution to achieving NEPAD-CAADP's goal of 6% growth of the agriculture sector.

During that congress, ten resolutions were made in 1ACCA which centred on towards realization of the Lusaka/Malabo Vision 25x25, under the broad themes of (i) policy, political commitment and leadership; (ii) private sector engagement; and (iii) training, extension, research and innovation, and knowledge support. Governments, development partners, private sector, farmers, education and training institutions, research institutions, regional economic communities and non-governmental organizations are among the stakeholders called upon to support and facilitate the implementation of the resolutions in order to enhance the adoption and scaling-up of Conservation Agriculture (CA) across Africa.

The 2ACCA is therefore a perfect opportunity for us all to reflect and evaluate how far and even report back on the progress of the 1ACCA resolutions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

South Africa has the largest area, 483000 hectares, under Conservation Agriculture in the continent, which is contributing immensely to food security. The intensive crop production of cereals, pulses and oilseeds in the large-scale commercial farming in South Africa is also associated with pastures and other fodder crops for intensive livestock production. It will be ideal to emulate this sustainable system even to our smallholder farmers, which are majority in our farming system. Indeed, this is a unique model for the continent to emulate; given that livestock are perceived as threat to adoption of Conservation Agriculture instead of being an asset.

There is no doubt, appropriate mechanization and commercialization has a very significant role to play in the modern and sustainable agriculture. The Government of South Africa is progressing well in providing a conducive environment by developing the Conservation Agriculture policy to accelerate upscaling by our smallholder farmers.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Second Africa Congress of Conservation Agriculture has set in motion the catalytic process for policy dialogue Conservation Agriculture (CA) and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) within national government systems.

Furthermore, the Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture is an agenda under the African Conservation Agriculture Network, to facilitate continued engagement with investors, to highlight the business opportunities in smallholder and medium scale farming to innovate on how to seize the opportunity. The targeted and organised 25 million farm-households gives no small magnitude in terms of business volumes for inputs, implements, financing, crop insurance, manufacturing and distribution, skills development, information, etc.

My Department, has already demonstrated the commitment, and we are open to work with NGOs, and development partners in furthering the infrastructural setup and non-business services. Our training, LandCare programme, research and extension institutions are continually developing innovative products and services that will contribute to improving the farmers technical, economic and social needs. This is in appreciation that today's products will be obsolete in the future and therefore develop new CA products to add on the existing or even replace the current.

I assure you that the Government of South Africa will continue to create an enabling environment to promote sustainability and growth of all sectors through the provision and development of policy and legal frameworks to ensure that we provide competitive services to our clients. My pledge is to continue supporting you and giving you all the guidance you may require. The local organising team will take the delegates to farms which practise your through some of thriving Conservation Agriculture farms during the last day of the congress. I hope you will learn and build on the knowledge of Conservation Agriculture and enjoy the sights of our beautiful country.

Lastly let me acknowledge:

The African Conservation Agriculture Network, The Government of the Republic of South Africa , the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the Regional Economic Communities, International NGOs, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the European Union (EU), the Food and

Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the UN and various bilateral and multilateral partners for their immense contribution.

As usual we all know there are people who are providing support . My brief is that the African Conservation Agriculture Network supported by a team of 30 persons' International Steering Committee, which is chaired by NEPAD and with the vice chair as the Kenya Agricultural Research Organization (KALRO). I commend the 2ACCA Secretariat for the persistent desire to transform smallholder farming in Africa by realizing the Lusaka Declaration of the 1st Africa Congress on Conservation Agriculture and the AU Heads of State Malabo Declaration and particularly Vision 25 x 25 – which aims at targeting 25 million farm households practicing climate smart agriculture by 2025. The Scientific and Technical Committee, led by the International Conservation Agriculture Advisory Panel for Africa Chairperson, the National Organising Committee, led by the DAFF, and the Review Committee for Papers and Posters led by ACT are all commended for the job well done.

Ladies and Gentleman,

With all this welcome remarks i therefore wish you a fruitful deliberations.

THANK YOU.