



Agriculture

# Stakeholders brainstorm on resilience agriculture

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*By Chimwemwe Njoloma:*

Ministry of Agriculture has commended stakeholders in the agricultural sector for creating a platform for strategic dialogue and evidence-based guidance responding proactively to emerging challenges the sector is facing.

In the first quarter of the year, countries went into lockdown disrupting domestic production, except in the case of essential goods and services due to Covid-19.

Borders were closed to trade in unprecedented ways and restrictions introduced on movement of staple goods, Africa was no exceptional calling for the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI) to engage a diverse group of highly informed stakeholders to building resilience into the regions agricultural sector.

Malawi through the Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) hosted the 7th annual ReNAPRI stakeholder conference under the theme ‘The Great reset: embedding resilience into African agriculture’.

In his official opening of the conference on Wednesday in Lilongwe, Minister of Agriculture, Lobin Lowe said was hopeful that the conference would come up with useful recommendations and innovative ideas to be considered by various governments on what needs to be done in order to develop the resilience of agriculture and food systems.

He said the opportunity to have hosted the conference in the country was not to be taken for granted as ReNAPRI has many alternatives amongst its member institutions through which the conference could have equally been hosted.

“We do not take this conference for granted for this is timely to come up with innovative ideas and realistic solutions that will help to strengthen African agricultural and food systems which are vulnerable to various shocks,”

“The theme is well befitting as it has come at a time when most economies are chocked with the Covid-19 pandemic and vulnerable populations are unable to contain its devastating effects,” Lowe said.

He added that issues such as climate change, degradation of natural resources and the environment, rapid population growth, poor performance of agricultural input are some of the areas calling for resilience if African agricultural and food systems are to achieve increased and sustained production for both food security and economic development of the various African economies.

Vice Chancellor of LUANAR, Prof. George Kanyama Phiri commended the board of ReNAPRI for organizing the conference and for deciding to have LUANAR as host.

He said through the conference, many have shown their dedication and commitment to propel the African continent to greater heights of economic development through efficient performance of the agriculture sector which is the major economic sector of most African economies.

“The global economy is experiencing the worst economic recession in history as a result of the Covid-19 that has devastated the world economy, more so in agricultural-dependent economies,”

He said: “It is no doubt that such economies need to develop resilient agricultural systems that will result in increased production, sustainable food security and household incomes and overall economic prosperity of the African continent,” Phiri said.

He said that by bringing professionals and gurus in various disciplines within the agriculture and related sectors, the conference has created a platform for the professional to share knowledge and experience as well as making policy recommendations that will help the agricultural sector to recover from the Covid-19 shock.

The Vice Chancellor called upon African governments to consider the recommendations from the conference and implement them accordingly for purposes of rebuilding the economies and develop resilience in agricultural systems across the African continent.

The conference objectives were among others to reflect on the impact of policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic on food systems and identify what is known and unknown to date, but to promote practical ways by which African governments and development partners can focus high impact public goods investments towards value-chain upgrading.

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