



South Africa, India to strengthen cooperation in agriculture

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The governments of South and India have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The two countries made the commitment during a bilateral meeting between South Africa's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana and Indian Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Parshottam Rupala, in New Delhi, India last week.

The bilateral meeting was aimed at strengthening cooperation in agriculture, forestry and fisheries with a special focus on the areas of crop and animal production, research, food and nutrition security, agroforestry, aquaculture and agro-processing.

The meeting was a culmination of technical discussions which took place at the 4th Joint Working Group on Agriculture between the two countries.

During a meeting, Zokwana and Rupala recognised the importance of agriculture to the economies of their respective countries, and committed to continue deepening bilateral trade in agricultural commodities.

South Africa gained market access for persimmons and mangoes in 2016. Work is currently at an advanced stage to gain market access for avocados, litchis and pickled sheep and goat skins.

The ministers recognised the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Research and Education between the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 2018. They urged both institutions to expedite the finalisation of a work plan to outline a programme of action on cooperation in research and education.

The areas to be covered in the work plan include crop breeding, silk production, agricultural biotechnology, post-harvest technologies and agriculture education and training.

They also agreed to explore opportunities in the area of the bamboo value chain.

Further agreements were made on working together on mutual food and security initiatives directed towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with specific reference to SDG 1 – addressing poverty; SDG 2 – addressing hunger; and sharing their experiences in the development of drought resistant varieties and bio-fortified varieties.

Both Ministers further noted the importance of the soil-water-energy relationship and committed to intensifying initiatives in this nexus to address sustainable agricultural systems.

Experiences were shared in extension services on the importance of it in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to ensure revolutionary agricultural development was emphasised.

Furthermore, the Ministers agreed on convening an inaugural bilateral seminar on extension. The seminar will be a platform to share best practices and set a new bilateral agenda on extension and technology transfer.

South Africa will host the first seminar, where a joint action plan will be crafted. In strengthening the marketing of commodities, the National Agricultural Marketing Council of South Africa and the National Institute of Agriculture Marketing of India will sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

Source: <https://africabusinesscommunities.com/news/south-africa-india-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-agriculture/>