



**JOINT STATEMENT BY EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION TO SOUTH AFRICA AND AFRICAN FARMERS
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA ON THE EVENT
HELD TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABLE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN EMERGING FARMERS**

Tuesday, 19 February 2019, Cape Town: Today, the Delegation of the European Union to South Africa and African Farmers Association of South Africa (AFASA) held a workshop at the Cape Town International Convention Centre to address market opportunities for South African emerging farmers into the growing European market for sustainably produced goods.

The objectives of the event include sharing information about the general concepts of Organic, Fair Trade and EU Ethical Trade policy and informing stakeholders about market opportunities for Organic, Fair Trade and Ethical Trade for the benefit of SA companies. The event also provided the participants with first-hand information on how to access this niche market with enormous potential given high growth rates and consumer interest in sustainably produced products. Promising products were also presented with valuable information on labels and certification requirements in the EU.

Participants that attended were primarily emerging farmers producing fynbos, rooibos, vegetables, citrus and fibre. Keynote addresses were delivered by Hon. Cecilia Malmström, EU Trade Commissioner and Mr. Mike Mlengana, Director General of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Dr. Vuyokazi Mahlati, President of AFASA said: “We have seen today several success stories proving that South African smallholder farmers are ideally suited to supply high value niche market products in Europe. Let us work together to reap the opportunities and support small farmers to further professionalise production and marketing to succeed in this highly lucrative export market”.

Hon. Cecilia Malmström said: “South Africa ranks 11th in the EU’s top agricultural importing partners with a surplus balance of almost €1billion. There is great opportunity for South African producers to increase exports of sustainably produced products into the EU if recommendations from this workshop are successfully implemented’.

Mr Mlengana responded on behalf of Hon. Sifiso Buthelezi and expressed support for this forward-looking initiative to assist South African farmers access the growing organic industry. “The South African government is committed to working with all stakeholders to build a solid foundation to especially support small-holder farmers. President Cyril Ramaphosa recognised in the State of the Nation Address that we are fortunate to have an agricultural sector that is well-developed, resilient and diversified; and agricultural exports are an important source of revenue for our economy and job creation”.

Four success stories were presented by South African companies in mohair & wool, wild flowers, organic rooibos and citrus to participants from the South African Government, South African industry associations, farmer associations, emerging farmers as well as experts in the fields of trade, sustainable and fair production.

Marcus Cornaro, EU Ambassador to South Africa concluded: “The EU is encouraged by the success stories and entrepreneurial spirit showcased today. We are looking forward to replicating this initiative in other sectors to increase trade between EU and South Africa”.

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