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Prof Sunita Facknath, Dean Faculty of Agriculture;

Mr Njongenhle Nyogi, FANRPAN Representative;

Members of the Mauritius FANRPAN Node;

Participants;

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

A very good morning to you all.

It is a great honour, as Chairperson of the National Node of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), to welcome you all to this National Policy Dialogue on Mauritius Climate-Smart Agriculture.

Since 2002, the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Mauritius is the Node Hosting Institution for FANRPAN. This node represents an ideal platform for academics, students, and all stakeholders including the private sector to come together to share knowledge and experiences in the food, agriculture and natural resources sector. Since its inception, the Mauritius FANRPAN Node has carried out a number of national dialogues, workshops and has also participated in regional ones. These activities have touched important themes of direct relevance to agriculture including: Biosafety Systems, Regional Policies on Food Security and Agriculture, Farmers' Organizations and Climate Change amongst others.

The African continent has long been confronted with problems of agricultural growth and food security. There are a number of challenges that the continent has been facing and is still facing in the agricultural sector and these include slow growth rate, limited technology transfer, slow adoption of new technologies, non skilled small farmers and not forgetting to include to this list is climate change.

As you all know, climate is a key driver for agriculture and crop production.

I think you will all agree that climate change is now a reality and is affecting us more rapidly than it had been predicted. We are now experiencing some extreme weather and climate events. Such changes are already impacting, on our agriculture. A concrete example is the low sugar recovery in our sugarcane crop in 2015 (and some

phenomenon also occurred in Reunion island). In fact, 2015 recorded the lowest sugar yield since 1947, and this is attributed to excessive rainy conditions during the ripening period of the crop.

Some of you will recall that through the assistance of FANRPAN, the University of Mauritius engaged a few years ago in a study to take stock of the situation on relevant policies, practices and needs for a **Climate Smart Agriculture** in Mauritius.

The question that is very often asked is - **What is Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)?**

One simple way to define Climate smart agriculture is: It is an agriculture that sustainably increases **productivity**, **resilience** (adaptation), **reduces or removes** greenhouse gases (mitigation), and **enhances** achievement of national food security and development goals.

A study on Climate Smart Agriculture in Mauritius was undertaken by a group of local consultants in 2013 and a comprehensive report was validated, in 2014, in this very same room, through a Workshop organized by our local FANRPAN node.

After two years and following the COP 21 meeting in Paris last December, where major decisions were taken, it is now time to review the Climate Smart Agriculture scoping study for Mauritius to identify new needs /policies/constraints.

At COP 21 meeting in Paris, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future.

One of its objectives is to eradicate poverty by: ‘Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production, (hence agriculture)’.

Mauritius has already signed and ratified the Paris Agreement on 18 April 2016.

We have reached a point where there is a need to further assess and review our finding on the Climate smart agriculture study undertaken in Mauritius in 2014 and to further identify new challenges and needs, in order to implement measures to mitigate the effects of climate change on our agriculture.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I end, I would like to thank the organizing Committee of the Mauritian FANRPAN node, in particular Mr Shane Hardwar, for his endless effort in preparation of this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all for your attention and I look forward to your active participation in this Workshop.