

AFAP stands committed to increased fertilizer supply

More than 100 public sector, private sector and development partners gathered on 15 July 2014 at the Lunamar Hotel and Conference Center in Mozambique for the launch of the “National Platform for dialogue and promotion of fertilizer use”.

The platform, launched through leadership provided by the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP), is a direct response to the Mozambican government’s national program for fertilizers and fertilizer management regulations – a five-year plan that was introduced in 2013 with the aim of increasing fertilizer users and usage in the country, so that smallholder farmers can increase their yields.

At the launch of the platform, Mahomed Rafik Vala (National Director: Agrarian Services, Mozambique) told participants that there was no doubt that the country had the potential to increase yields for smallholder farmers, stating that a small increase in the amount of fertilizer they use, would have colossal results in yields, incomes and poverty reduction.

“Mozambique does not lack resources such as water or land. In fact we have conditions conducive to a prosperous agricultural sector,” Vala said.

“There are currently 3,8 million smallholder farmers in Mozambique and of this number, 3% to 4% has been documented to use fertilizer. This is a big challenge that needs all members in this room to sit and address,” he said.

A study conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States (FAO) noted that farmers in Mozambique used 5 kg of fertilizer per hectare, which is lower than Africa’s average of 8 kg per hectare and the global average of 150 kg per hectare. According to the study, over 90% of the fertilizer consumed, is applied only on commercial crops – sugarcane and tobacco.

Through the national platform for dialogue and promotion of fertilizer use, participants drawn from different levels of the value chain (providing a holistic solution to the low fertilizer use challenge) will for the next six months identify key constraints in the fertilizer value chain and offer policy options to facilitate the implementation of regional and regular fertilizer supply. In addition, through work with the private sector, the team would identify ways of reducing the cost of transportation of fertilizer.

“AFAP has opened an office in Mozambique, because this was a country identified as being a natural growth point for the development of viable fertilizer markets,” Richard Mkandawire (Vice President: AFAP) said.

He added that AFAP remains committed to working with the private sector and the government, in moving towards the increased use and usage of fertilizer by smallholder farmers.