agriculture, land reform & rural development
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Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
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MEDIA STATEMENT

TO ALL MEDIA/NEWS EDITORS

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AGRICULTURE MINISTER STEENHUISEN – G20: BIOECONOMY A PRIORITY

The South African G20 Presidency will prioritise bioeconomy policies and developments that encourage actions to address economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity.
Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen participated in a panel discussion of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) on "From Diversity to Action: Global Collaboration to Achieve a Sustainable Bioeconomy in Agriculture" at the 17th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin.

Of the three sectors identified as crucial in the South African Bioeconomy, agriculture is considered the one with the highest economic impact. The area in agriculture, which spans the full value chain, where bio-innovation can make a significant impact include: crop and livestock improvement for biotic and physical stresses associated with climate change (including indigenous crops); agroprocessing initiatives; an integrated food and nutrition research programme; animal vaccine capabilities; energy crop initiatives; biocontrol and biofertilizers; aquaculture; soil conservation; water resource management; and build high-value skills and capacities to enable agro-innovation.

During its leadership of the G20 in 2024, Brazil developed the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy (GIB) which led to the adoption of ten High-Level Principles which has the purpose of inform bioeconomy-relevant policymaking and market development.

The GIB Principles focus on normative dimensions, such as social equity, livelihoods, sustainable prosperity, and the need for the bioeconomy to address nature and climate goals. They highlight the need to base the bioeconomy on accurate science, establish common definitions and metrics, and point out the importance of enabling trade rules, financing arrangements, and flows.

Minister Steenhuisen emphasized, that as the G20 leader in 2025 and with an existing Bioeconomy Strategy, South Africa has the opportunity to drive bioeconomy development in line with these principles.

The 2025 GIB will promote anti-poverty and pro-equity goals based on national actions while focusing on regional and international cooperation. South Africa does not stand alone in its commitment as Colombia has committed to prioritise the bioeconomy during its COP-16 Presidency, and Brazil has committed to advancing the bioeconomy theme during its UN Framework Convention on Climate Change COP-30 Presidency.

South Africa's Bio-Economy Strategy, under the leadership of the Department of Science, Technology

and Innovation has the vision of being a significant contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product of South Africa by 2030, through the creation and growth of novel industries that generate and develop bio-based services, products and innovations, with a corresponding increase in the new and existing companies that provide and utilise these solutions.

A thriving bio-economy has the potential to address South Africa's socio-economic development goals of reducing poverty; enhance food security; improving South Africa's competitiveness (especially in the industrial and agricultural sectors); create more jobs; and improving quality of life.

The Bio-Economy Strategy identified Agriculture, Health, Industry and the Environment as crucial sectors. Under the leadership of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, South Africa has developed the National Biodiversity Economy Strategy (NBES) in 2014. The strategy is currently being reviewed to include other sectors that rely on biodiversity for business, such as forestry, ecotourism, marine and fisheries, and to align with the vision and principles of the White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity.

The global bioeconomy's value is estimated to be US $4 trillion with a growth potential of up to US $30 trillion by 2050.

Note: The GFFA is the global conference that deals with the future of food and agriculture. It brings together experts, politicians, scientists, businesses and civil society to develop solutions for future food security. The political highlight is the world's largest informal conference of agriculture ministers.

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