



**Directorate of Information and Communication**

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**Ninth Pan African Meeting of Directors of Veterinary Vaccine Laboratories Opens**

**Antananarivo, Madagascar– 29 August 2016:** The African Union Commission (AUC) is hosting the Ninth Pan African Meeting of Directors of Veterinary Vaccine Laboratories, which kicked off on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2016, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The main objective of the three day workshop is to review the reports from African Union Member States' vaccine production laboratories, on the status of vaccine production on the continent, achievements and limitations so far.

Speaking at the opening ceremony H.E. Professor Marie Monique Rasoazananera, Madagascar's Minister of High Education and Scientific Research, highlighted the situation of international and regional trade on the continent. "We must protect our livestock against the introduction of new animal diseases, with the economic and social consequences that implies. We need to work together to prevent the spread of certain communicable disease, such as the foot and mouth disease that is currently present in some of the neighbouring islands of the Indian Ocean", she urged.

The Minister also acknowledged the opportunity presented by the ninth AU-PANVAC directors meeting to strengthen the partnership between countries through this important African network.

In her welcome remarks H.E. Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC also stressed the serious constraint of livestock sector development in Africa due to the burden of other infectious animal diseases, like Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), Rift Valley Fever (RVF), African Swine Fever (ASF) and many others, which are threatening to dwarf the monumental strides made and efforts being put into livestock development in Africa. According to her, animal diseases constantly reduce Africa's capacity to achieve self-sufficiency in food proteins to assure livestock owner's welfare, and continue to pose significant impediments to national, regional and international trade in livestock and livestock products. "In Africa these diseases alone cause annual losses estimated at US\$4 billion. Using quality assured vaccines is one sure way of controlling these diseases", she added.

Mrs Tumusiime noted the particular attention that the African Union Commission pays to the continent-wide programmes run under its three technical offices; AU-

PANVAC, AU-PATTEC and AU-IBAR for livestock health and development as part of its contribution not only to regional and international trade but also towards a food secure and poverty free Africa. “Indeed, livestock forms part of the priorities under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) which, is the strategic framework and process for increased agricultural production, productivity, as well as food and nutrition security on the continent”, she said.

The Commissioner also underscored the contribution of the meeting towards the Growth and Transformation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of the Malabo Declaration. (*The Commissioner’s full statement is available on [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)*).

Mr. Louis Muhgirwa, Programme Officer and Deputy Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Madagascar, assured the meeting of FAO support to the countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) within the framework of its mandate. He also reiterated FAO’s collaboration in the implementation of the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) world eradication programme, which was adopted during the 39<sup>th</sup> ministerial conference of FAO in June 2015.

The three-day workshop is expected to deliberate on AU-PANVAC achievements during the last two years (2014 and 2015) on vaccine quality control and biological reagents production, as well as presentations from Member States, partners and stakeholders. It will make recommendations on major issues concerning the quality of vaccines used to control livestock diseases in Africa; as well as strengthen collaboration between AU-PANVAC and its stakeholders.

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