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Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security successfully commemorated in Accra



October 31, 2016, Accra, Ghana- The commemoration of the 7th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) took place on October 28, 2016 with a call for enhanced efforts to fight hunger and malnutrition in Africa, through investment in child nutrition.

This year's celebration themed "*Investing in Food Systems for Improved Child Nutrition: Key to Africa's Renaissance*," was organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Ghana, the New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency, United Nations Agencies and other implementing partners, to cultivate collective responsibility toward increasing sustainable access to safe, nutritious and healthy foods amongst Africa's countries. The ADFNS serves as a

rallying point to intensify political and financial commitments at all levels in order to address current challenges of food and nutrition insecurity in Africa.

The main objective for commemorating this year's ADFNS was to motivate commitments by decision and policy makers and all relevant actors to deliberately prioritise investment in nutrition in development planning, resource allocations and programme implementation.

Officially opening the commemoration, Honourable Elvis Afriyie Ankrah, Minister of State, Office of the President, Republic of Ghana, said investing in child nutrition is pertinent as, malnourished children transit into malnourished adults leading to an underdeveloped and malnourished society.

He said Africa had the capacity to pull the youth out of the development quagmire, quoting the AU Agenda 2063 that, "Envisions an Africa whose development is people driven and hinged on the potential of its own people especially its women and youth."

Dr. Josue Dione, Special Advisor to the AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, speaking on her behalf, emphasized that in order to attain Africa's renaissance, investing to develop and optimally exploit Africa's food systems would lead to a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of children as well as country's economies.

"Investment in children is an economically profitable and viable undertaking. There is no doubt that achieving the AU Malabo Declaration targets of ending hunger and reducing stunting and underweight to 10 percent and 5 percent, respectively by 2025, is not an easy matter," Dr. Dione said. "We, therefore, urge our leaders, policy and decision makers to consider putting money where it matters most."

Other dignitaries present at the opening ceremony included, Hon. (Dr.) Ahmed Yakubu Alhassan , Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Crops),Ghana; Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Africa and Representative in Ghana; Dr. Christine Evans-Clock, UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Ghana; Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, Vice Chairperson, National Development Planning Commission, Republic of Ghana; Dr Margaret Agama-Anyetei, Head Health, Population and Nutrition, Department of Social Affairs (AUC); and ONE campaign goodwill ambassador and Ghanaian actor, Mr. Majid Michel, who called for an increase in nutrition-specific spending and an improvement of data and nutrition spending in order to meet the Malabo commitments on agriculture and nutrition.

The ADFNS was declared in July 2010 by the African Union Heads of State and Government. The decision was made in recognition of the unacceptable and chronic crisis of hunger and malnutrition in Africa. The first ADFNS was successfully launched

in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 31st October 2010 and it has been annually commemorated since then.

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