

**Press Release N°394/2016****AUC holds workshop to validate the Geographic Indications Policy Framework for Africa**

Nairobi, Kenya; November 23, 2016- The technical workshop for the validation of the draft Geographic Indications Policy Framework in Africa by the AUC's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) opened yesterday in Nairobi.

Organized with support from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Union within the broad context of the Joint AU-EU Strategy 2014-2017 and Africa's Agenda 2063, the purpose of the workshop is to finalize the draft strategy as well as develop an Action Plan for implementing the strategy.

It speaks to Aspiration 1 of the Agenda 2063; *a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*, as the Policy Framework is one of the mechanisms that will be used to transform African agriculture and to make agriculture profitable for farmers and other actors along the value chain.

Officially opening the workshop, Hon. Adan Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives, Kenya represented by Mr. Sylvance Sange, Managing Director, Kenya Industrial Property Institute, lauded the AUC's initiative to facilitate protection mechanisms for unique African agricultural products, made possible by GI, as a tool for promoting rural development by the positive effects it produces in the production and sales value chain as well as encouraging variety of production.

Hon. Mohamed urged the participants at the workshop to ensure the GI policy framework not only addresses intellectual property protection but to also leverage such protection to improving value addition to agricultural products through use of trademarks, geographic indicators and effective branding.

Also speaking at the opening ceremony, Prof. Ahmed ElSawahly, Director African Union Inter Africa Bureau for Animal Resources, (AU-IBAR), informed the participants that the workshop objectives addressed the commitment on "Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services" enshrined in the 2014 AU Malabo Declaration on agricultural transformation, whilst also addressing relevant issues pertaining to global agricultural trade, from the African perspective.

"The importance of linking products and product quality, reputation or other characteristics to where it originates from in the current global market arena is very beneficial to our producers," he said. "This benefit can be obtained only if we plan well and act accordingly. I reaffirm the Africa Union Commission's commitment to this process, as we work to ensure that we get the Africa we want."

The opening ceremony was also graced by Mr. Alessandro Tonoli representing the EU Ambassador and Mrs. Anne Chele Representing the FAO Kenya Country Representative. They both reaffirmed commitments of both the EU and FAO in supporting and working with the AUC in advancing the work on Geographic Indications.

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