



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### Delivering Africa's future through science-led agricultural transformation

**JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, November 26, 2014** - “The world’s future food basket” is Africa. By 2030 the continent needs to become food and nutrition secure, as well as a global scientific player. Africa possesses 60% of the world’s uncultivated arable land and 70% of its water as well as human capital. These are some of the critical elements for a successful production system but is Africa lacking in technology and mechanized systems to fully gain momentum as a global producer and supplier?



As the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, over 570 delegates from across the world have gathered in Johannesburg this week to generate the answers to these questions. Indeed, as Dr. Charity Krugar, Chair of the FARA Board, said quoting Nelson Mandela, poverty just like apartheid is manmade and not

divine ordained, therefore, men and women can address and overcome poverty, hunger and malnutrition once they resolve to do so.

African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, was among the dignitaries at the opening ceremony of the FARA celebration. She commended FARA for having traversed over the years in coordinating and advocating for agricultural science, research, technology and innovation.

“We are very happy that, indeed, FARA has been a credible and formidable pillar institution in our common pursuit of the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP),” said Commissioner Tumusiime. “It is a positive coincidence that FARA’s 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is, indeed, coinciding with the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CAADP and within the 2014 AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security and also the International Year of Family Farming.”

She called for sustained efforts to scale up agricultural research, innovation and technology and making them accessible to a greater majority of African farmers and especially smallholder farmers with a view to increasing their production and productivity with the ultimate objective of ensuring a food and nutrition secure and poverty free Africa.

“The role of science in enhancing agricultural productivity, competitiveness and market access in Africa is too important for it to be outsourced,” said Dr Yemi Akinbami, FARA’s Executive Director. “Without the catalytic role of a science agenda, the transformation dream will only be a mirage.”

He noted that no nation has achieved social and economic growth without using the power of science saying, “Africa needs to use science and technology to leverage more value out of the resources available on the continent and African leaders will have to invest more of their own resources in this area. Being able to demonstrate the power of science to support agriculture and development is at the heart of this FARA event.

Other speakers at the opening ceremony included Dr. Shadrak Moephuli, Head of the Agricultural Research Council and Dr Jimmy Smith, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute.

The FARA celebration has brought together key industry players to review the progress made at country, sub-regional and continental levels. Lessons will be drawn from milestones reached and discussions will be held to come up with solutions that will set the strategy for delivering Africa’s future over the next decade through science led agricultural transformation in line with the AU Malabo Declaration on Accelerated African Agricultural Growth and Transformation.

Some of the world’s top opinion leaders in Agriculture in Africa will be presenting over the 3-day period including Professor Calestous Juma, an internationally recognized authority on the application of science and technology to sustainable development. He was named one of the most influential 100 Africans in 2012 and 2013 by the *New African* magazine. His keynote address amongst the impressive list of guest speakers will be: Smart Harvest: the role of science, technology and innovation advice in African Agriculture. Other discussions will include climate change, food sovereignty vs. food security and a focus on the promotion of youth engagement with the creation of the Youth Agripreneur Model. There is also a running Exhibition showcasing technologies and innovations capable of spurring African agriculture.

#