

**Press Release N°180/2015****AU Commission holds a bid farewell to Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture****Addis Ababa- 4 August 2015:**

The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission hosted a dinner to congratulate and bid farewell to Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel, outgoing Director of the Department who has since been appointed as Deputy Director of the United Nations Food and Agriculture

Organisation (FAO) for the Regional Office for Africa and FAO Country Representative for Ghana. The function took place at Congo Hall within the AU premises.

Dr. Abebe was lauded by the Commissioner and members of staff who spoke for the dedication and contribution as Director of the Department for the last four years. Before becoming Director he was Head of Division of Rural Economy and Agriculture in the same Department and prior to that he served as Coordinator of the Semi-Arid Grain Food Research and Development (SFAGRAD) one of the six specialized technical offices of the AU under DREA. He joined the AU in 2005.

He was praised for his technical expertise, excellent management skills and interpersonal relations and also commended for championing Pan African policies, building partnerships, mobilising resources and capacities of staff.

He on his part highlighted the achievements made by the Department in the two strategic areas of intervention notably agriculture and food security and environment and natural resources, stressing the sustaining of the CAADP Momentum and the

development of the AU Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Africa Agriculture Growth and Transformation. He also underscored the role of the Department in the formulation of Africa's common position and establishment of a unified structure for global climate change negotiations where Africa has since spoken with one voice. He saluted the leadership of Her Excellency Tumusiime Rhoda Peace and thanked her for the confidence and support throughout his tenure. He also thanked the staff of the Department for the productive team work.

Dr. Abebe was accompanied to this party by his wife and children. The Department staff offered him souvenirs.

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