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AFRICAN LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT IN SUCCESS OF AGRICULTURE LED DEVELOPMENT



Midrand, South Africa 21 November 2012- It is an

uncontestable fact that access to food is a basic human right. The agricultural sector also offers many opportunities to spearhead development in Africa. It is therefore imperative for Africa to produce enough food for its people, as well as excess for export, which will contribute to jobs and growth of economies. With 70% of its population engaged in agricultural activity, any sustainable development agenda needs to take

agriculture into account. As such, food security is one of the top priorities of the African Union, the continental organization charged with spearheading development, integration and peace and stability.

In this respect, the African Union is in a two day meeting with Chairpersons of parliamentary committees on agriculture and the environment from African Union member states, with the aim of sensitising, building understanding and further enhancing ownership of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and other AU initiatives. The meeting is part of a broader drive to advance political ownership, championing and facilitating faster compliance and adoption of key continental decisions aimed at advancing the agricultural transformation agenda. The focus of the meeting is on African agricultural transformation,

Achievements registered so far under CAADP

- 40 of the 54 African countries have formally launched CAADP implementation process
- 30 countries have signed the CAADP compacts
- 27 countries have completed the CAADP based National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans
- IGAD, COMESA and SADC are in advanced stages of formulating regional CAADP compacts and regional agricultural and food security investment plans
- Nearly ten countries have either reached or surpassed the 10% allocation to the agriculture sector. The average allocation in Africa stands at 6%
- The East, West and Southern regions are showing an increase in agricultural growth
- The CAADP process has stimulated critical thinking towards policies, strategies and actions in agriculture led development and poverty reduction
- Agriculture accounts for 60-80% of employment in Africa
- 240 million Africans do not eat enough for their health and well being

underpinned by sound environmental management.

At the meeting taking place from 21- 22 November in Midrand, South Africa, the parliamentarians are reviewing how political and technical leaders at country level can be more effectively engaged and mobilized to ensure compliance with the key principles and targets of CAADP. This is because, in their responsibilities as MPs, the parliamentarians represent the primary stakeholders in Africa's development i.e. the African people.

The meeting will share lessons, experiences and challenges of CAADP implementation, expand the enabling environment for implementation, foster a consultative approach to bring about collective responsibility and mutual accountability around CAADP, and nurture champions of CAADP. The experience sharing offered by the meeting will contribute to strategies on promoting agriculture led growth.

Under CAADP, African governments committed to allocating at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture to achieve annual agricultural growth rates of 6%. Under this programme, African leadership is critical.



“A key feature of CAADP is its emphasis on African political leadership and ownership towards sustainable agricultural development. It is in this context that the AUC and the NPCA continue to engage with our political leadership to explore options of sustaining momentum”, said AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumussiime at the meeting today.

In terms of concrete outcomes, the parliamentarians' meeting will realize the following: Firm individual commitments to influence policy on accelerating CAADP processes towards sustainable results and outcomes, through strategies that will see African Heads of State and Government champion the CAADP cause and demonstrate strong will to drive CAADP forward.

Additionally, parliamentarians will be informed on the incentives associated with implementation of CAADP. The engagement of parliamentarians will facilitate government commitments in moving forward the national CAADP agendas.

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Note* CAADP's main objective is to assist African countries accelerate economic growth through agriculture led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and enhances food and nutrition security as well as growth in exports. It is coordinated by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development Coordinating Agency (NPCA). The following main principles and targets define the CAADP framework:

- Agriculture led growth as a main strategy to achieve targets on food security and poverty alleviation consistent with the Millennium development Goal of reducing hunger
- Pursuit of a 6% average annual sector growth rate at the national level
- Allocation of at least 10% of national budgets to the agricultural sector
- Exploitation of regional complementarities and cooperation to boost growth
- Application of principles of policy efficiency, dialogue, review and accountability
- Use of partnerships and alliances including farmers, agribusiness and civil society
- Assigning roles and responsibilities of program implementation to individual countries' coordination to designated Regional Economic Communities and facilitation to the NEPAD agency