Keynote address of Dr Ibrahim Assane MAYAKI,
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at the
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Excellency, Mrs Commissioner;
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen representatives of international organizations
Civil Society and Farmer Organisations
Professional organizations,
Dear participants

(Some recap of trends and challenges in African agriculture)

The 10th CAADP PP is being held in a landmark year for the AU, which is celebrating at the same time 10 years of CAADP and the Year of African agriculture and food security. “In the last several years many African countries have seen significant growth in their economies. However the continent still faces major challenges including Food and nutrition insecurity, unemployment particularly of youth and women and this situation is most acute in rural areas. Africa’s agriculture can and should significantly contribute to addressing these challenges.

It is now clear that CAADP must be an agenda for transformation. Africa is urbanizing rapidly and the urban population is expected to reach 50% by 2035, with consequences in terms of increased demand for marketed
food, control of rural-urban migration and pressure on our natural resources. We have repeatedly said that we would achieve our goals only by a thorough handling of our natural capital, by reducing inequalities, increasing capacities, empowering women and youth and creating a conducive investment environment for farmers.

The last decade was marked by a major change in the situation on agricultural markets and a reversal of the downward trend in prices to the point that African agricultural production by value increased by more than 10% per year on average against less than 2% per year during the decade prior to the CAADP. Obviously, if we look at the figures in terms of volumes, we still stand below the 6% target that we set for CAADP since the increase for cereals for instance was only 3.7% per year. Nevertheless this illustrates a very positive development when compared to the 2.3% before the setting up of CAADP. And this should be an encouragement to go further in our efforts. Because even if we actually made progress, it is absolutely fundamental to maintain the momentum. What I want to emphasize here is the political importance of CAADP and the need to boost our leadership by drawing lessons from the past decade.

(CAADP as a political stake)

After ten years, the CAADP attracted optimal attention many former sceptics have now become fervent supporters of the dynamic framework and its process, whether from the public sector or the African civil society, bilateral and multilateral, or technical and financial partners. CAADP has now become a recognised “brand” throughout Africa and the rest of the world.

The CAADP has been a catalyst for African leadership in driving Agriculture at all levels, such as defining national priorities, as well as for
the process of Africans’ regaining control of the dialogue with technical and financial partners. Indeed, CAADP has established itself as the expression of reclaimed ownership of agricultural policy by African States and citizens of the continent. In that sense it was a means of breaking away from the conditions and restrictions imposed by 20 years of structural adjustment.

CAADP has not escaped political contingencies. In the early stages, some international institutions competed to find favour with NEPAD and the AU and to ensure their assigned expertise. Technical and financial partners, even big NGOs, who previously prioritised “their own countries” or “their own RECs”, have sought to direct support towards specific regions based on the influence gained through the funding provided. In view of the CAAPD's visibility and legitimacy, it is therefore logical that it should arouse either extreme interest in order to win its favour or even protection, or complete rejection, in particular from organisations- even within Africa - that had not found it to be the platform they had hoped for. This is the price of the success that shouldn’t eclipse the main success of CAADP which is to foster political alignment.

(The case of partnership)

Nevertheless, every day, CAADP has to keep alive the notion of partnership whose renewal was the raison d’être of the NEPAD. The shared idea that our partnership should support the development of the African agriculture led by Africans is at the heart of CAADP. It was the major shift made in the approach to development aid after the structural adjustment period that was forced on many African countries. What is the strength of CAADP is this common desire of all parties to contribute to a vision and a programme set by Africans. The most efficient way to
partnering is to continue efforts in this direction by reasserting its essence. This PP is an opportunity for our financial and technical partners to reaffirm their commitment to align to the African voice and thus confirm our vision of partnership.

First of all partnership is not primarily a relationship between African constituencies and donors. It is between decision makers coming with different resources and means of intervention and people on the ground who make the development effective, i.e., farmers and entrepreneurs.

It is also important that the Partnership evolving within the stakeholders supporting CAADP implementation is consistent with key principles of local ownership and supporting to building local capacity. I don’t believe this is clear in the current dialogue on partnership. The thinking on the Joint Action Groups should be brought to reflect these principles.

Partnership also means that more attention would be given to proposals made by Africans in international forums like G8 or G20 were Africans are barely represented. Partnership means also dialogue but we should be aware that some issues can be controversial among parties; therefore a political dialogue should not necessary lead to an agreement on all matters and even the prerogative of not tabling for discussions some political issues might be preserved.

(3 challenges to avoid the erosion of the thrust)

Expectations raised by CAADP are high. Maintaining the initial thrust and enthusiasm implies addressing challenges of the maturity with zeal and unwavering commitment. I see 3 factors that might put CAADP at risk.

The first challenge is to ensure to respond to hopes raised at country and REC level and to thereby affirm the impact of CAADP by ascer-
taining whether or not the process has really contributed to an increase in production and to resource mobilisation.

In this regard, we have partially failed and we need to take action. Since 2003, only 13 countries have met or surpassed the CAADP target in one or more years. One might discuss some methodological issues regarding the calculations leading to this statement, nevertheless, given the low overall levels of total national expenditure, there is no doubt that we still rely on external financing for the development of our agricultural which is not desirable nor sustainable.

Additionally, by focusing on the issue of investments, we have attracted attention since the African party and donors agree on it, but in practice, however, speaking only of investment runs the risk of creating dependence with regard to funding strategies by donors.

This observation has motivated us to be clearer in the positioning of institutional and policy reforms apart from advocating for investment and these concerns had been present from the beginning. We then have taken a clearer line on the field of economic policy and we consider that economic regulation will need to be at the core the development agenda. In view of which CAADP has to be looked at from a multisectoral perspective. A second risk is that of bureaucratization within CAADP. Some stakeholders consider that CAADP “does not speak enough to their problems”. They view CAADP support as overly focused on method and process and lacking focus on farmers' priorities. Such priorities include prices, sources of funding, market opportunities, distribution of added value across sectors and ownership of natural resources and land. If this discourse is not sufficiently addressed at state level, then our role as Pan African institution is to make sure that such
issues are taken into consideration. It is a second argument for CAADP to develop a vision of agriculture at the continental level.

The third challenge stems from tendencies and the risk for decision-makers to be diverted from the commitments that might not reflect Africa’s agenda or interests. This competition also applies to private sector resources, which public administration admit they cannot do without. The concern for NEPAD is to ensure that investor interests converge with those of the main stakeholders, and it is thus important that producer organisations put their opinions forward and engage in dialogue with the other private investors.

Let me here put things at their right place. Whereas some billions are pledged in international fora organized by donors, the principal African investors are farmers themselves, among them 80% are smallholders, who invest around $100 billion every year in their farms, despite the almost total lack of credit facilities for the vast majority of them.

(Some strong position)

Building on the political leadership that the continent has shown in the last 10 years we consider the following 4 issues as of political priority: Capitalise on the achievements so far to enhance impact: perform beyond establishing plans and processes by concentrating on implementing the plans and creating an enabling economic environment. Reaffirm leadership by better articulating actions with continental and regional organizations, improving our partnership with farmers and private sector and better mobilizing domestic resources; reassert
1. Designing the future to include policy design processes that are inclusive and based on credible statistics and information on the role of agriculture in the development of the continent.

2. The focus on Results and Impact and the emergency of the CAADP Results Framework is fundamental and CAADP constituencies need to reflect profoundly on what it means; what are the implications; this could be a fundamental pillar to advance concretely many things we just talk about – from alignment through to accountability matters. It is technical as much as it is political; it is the space where we shall concretely compel and achieve synergies and complementarities. It is also a space where we can determine in concrete terms the role of agriculture in driving broad-based economic growth and inclusive development. The CAADP Results Framework should be the starting and the ending point for all of us in our work on African Agriculture. We need figures: figures on baselines; figures on targets.

3. The inclusive exercise we have conducted during the last months to sustain the CAADP momentum led us to take stand on the actions for the next decades and towards the achievement of the 2063 Agenda. Let me cite the most relevant ones.

   o We should upgrade the African food security strategy to a food sovereignty strategy and regional preference; which implies notably to adopt a progressive approach in the integration to world markets and to more actively involve in international negotiations for improving access to developed and emerging countries;

   o We should refocus public intervention by concentrating on market failures in particular by promoting risk coverage and provision of public goods with considerations for environmental and nutritional
policies. Efforts should be made to attain the committed objectives of public expenditures dedicated to agriculture.

- The CAADP Multi-donor trust fund is one of the instruments we have on funding CAADP implementation. It will be important that it is aligned to support delivery of the work streams and results identified in the CAADP Results Framework. There should be a clear link between financing the CAADP processes, in terms of institutional development and capacity development, to investment financing on aspects such as absorption capacity and effectiveness in resource use. Investment financing for agriculture development will be critical, but equally critical will be the financing to strengthen Africa’s institutional capacity and ability to plan and execute agriculture development programmes.

- We should promote inclusiveness which implies contractual relationships and balanced distribution of added value within the value chains and the empowerment and strengthening of rights for women and improvement of local governance on local resources especially land and water;

- We should promote the preference for sustainable farming systems that are labour intensive and environmentally friendly which should lead to sustain our support to small family holders.

Quality Investment plans alone will not deliver the desired results and sustainable impact, if the policies and institutional capacity is not aligned and strengthen to support Africa’s vision on an agriculture-led growth and development. This will require clear and many times collective determination to take controversial positions such as proactive policies to support and protect our agriculture and farmers as well as investments in the face of global competitiveness.
We believe that the time has come to give a new impetus to the CAADP to allow the legitimate expectations of states and African people are met while providing a clearer perspective and the overall role of agriculture in the socio-economic transformation of the continent.

Excellences’, dear participants, we could find some energy, motivation and hope in the wisdom of Mandela who recognized that “After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb”. These words should encourage us to keep confidence in our capacity to do better for our people. We have made significant progress on the implementation of CAADP but there is still much work to do to achieve our goals for a prosperous continent. It is my hope that together we will achieve the CAADP goals.

I thank you.

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