

Press Release N°125/2016

AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture Speaks at the 29th FAO Regional Conference for Africa



Abidjan, 7th April 2016. The Ministerial Session of the 29th Session of the FAO Conference for Africa opened in Abidjan with statements from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Daniel Kablan Duncan, the Director General of FAO, Dr. Jose Graziano Da Silva, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, the Chair of the Committee on

World Food Security, H.E. Amira Gornass, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the Rome-based UN Agencies, the Cote d'Ivoire Minister of Agriculture and the Mayor of Cocody Municipality in Abidjan.

Convened under the theme "*Transforming African Agri-food systems for inclusive growth and a shared prosperity*", the conference brought together 51 ministers of agriculture among over 300 delegates, including African ambassadors to Italy and Permanent Representatives to the Rome-based UN agencies, senior government officials and representatives of the civil society and other international organisations.

In her remarks Commissioner Tumusiime stated that "Africa is opening a new chapter in the script of economic development, as seen in the recent firm commitments by its leaders to turn the continent's natural, human and physical resources for improvement of African's livelihoods". She underlined the different decisions and commitments by world and African leaders, which suggest that they have done their part and that the onus on African institutions and development partners to work together toward delivery of the services to the people.

"We should take the steering wheel to drive planning and laying the building blocks toward achievement of progress against the defined targets linked with priority areas", she added. In the light of recent AU Summit decisions, the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), Africa Agenda 2063, the declaration on “Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025”, among others, Commissioner Tumusiime underscored that the AU Commission has committed itself to facilitate and support Member States in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of progress toward achievement of these goals.

The Commissioner also acknowledged the efforts FAO is exerting with regard to implementation of the Malabo Declaration on “Accelerated Africa Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Growth and Improved Livelihood”, committing resources and supporting the Commission, Regional Economic Communities and Member States. She singled out the recently launched FAO Regional Initiative for Africa as a worthy intervention, confirming that her department will coordinate continental efforts and rally partnerships for the success of the programme.

On his part, the FAO Director General recognized the new gains in Africa’s economic performance. However, urged that more efforts need to be exerted to avert the new challenges of vulnerability to climate change, post-harvest losses and depletion of natural resources.

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