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African Union Commission and European Union Partner to Invest In a Food Secure Future.



4-6 July 2016, Noordwijk, the Netherlands – The African Union Commission (AUC) and European Union (EU) have taken their partnership in the area of Agriculture to new heights with the maiden edition of the AU-EU Conference of Ministers of Agriculture; Investing in a Food Secure Future. The objective of the Conference of the AU and EU Ministers of Agriculture was to advance African Union-European Union cooperation in the field of

agriculture with special emphasis on the role of agricultural policy cooperation in food security and nutrition improvement. Specifically, the conference discussed; 1) building on the commitment of African leaders as expressed at the June 2014 African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 2) options for the contribution of agriculture policy cooperation between the AU and EU, including for SDG2 and AU Agenda 2063 implementation and in alignment with the commitments of the Malabo Declaration and 3) how to support governments, farmers, private sector, scientists, businesses, civil society as well as regional blocs and international organisations in addressing agricultural, forestry and fisheries practices, food systems and social and economic policies in order to reach the desired goals

The Conference building on existing partnership between the AU and the EU was a mechanism expected to enhance strong and lasting partnership of the Ministers of Agriculture from the two regions. The main themes of cooperation; accelerate the implementation of relevant agreements and actions and also to strengthen the cooperation with private sector, especially through private public partnerships.

The Minister of Agriculture of the Government of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Martijn van Dam emphasized in his Opening Speech that “Partnerships like these are an excellent example of what’s needed to bolster food security; and not only in Africa”. Hje further pointed to the need to pay attention to the earth and the resources at our disposal underscoring that “The challenge is not only to produce more food, but to produce it in better and smarter ways because its obvious that people are calling for more, but our planet Earth is crying for less. We only have one planet, and we need to use its resources wisely. Otherwise we’ll have depleted the Earth by 2050, and its people will go unfed.”

As the holder of the EU Presidency, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands organized the Conference as a platform to strengthen agricultural cooperation between Africa and Europe and to advance the vision and ambition that “Together, Europe and Africa can make a significant contribution to global food security since agriculture is a key sector for economic growth for both continents”.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace; the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, noted that the challenge of achieving food security and nutrition goals and poverty reduction has become more difficult with new challenges such as climate change undermining food systems in many regions. She underscored that feeding the growing population with already scarce resources presents a challenge that countries will have to overcome through a hybrid of multi-sectorial strategies and actions to transform agricultural and rural development policies.

She further alluded to the fact that African countries and their leadership are more committed to reducing poverty and ending hunger through the adoption of various strategies, declarations and agreements which include the Africa’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals that have as high priorities; ending hunger and reducing poverty. She concluded her remarks by imploring delegates to have credible progress to report in the subsequent Conferences foreseen on how we have driven the

agenda discussed under the five thematic areas spanning from climate smart agriculture, food losses and food waste, market access, responsible private sector investments as well as science and innovation.

In his keynote address, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze observed that the biggest challenge to achieving a Food Secure Future is not money but the lack of ownership, leadership and political will to bring about the desired development. He emphasized the need for Africa to have policies that work and appealed to delegates at the Conference to first see agriculture as a very profitable business before anything else. He advised for Africa to move beyond its inherent potential and focus on implementation.



Outcomes of the Ministerial Conference under the theme; Investing in a Food Secure Future

The Minister of Agriculture for the Kingdom of Netherlands, Martijn van Dam **committed on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands government to set up two to four incubators in Africa.** The Government of the Netherlands pledged to work with relevant parties and existing examples to further expand the network of incubators all over Africa,” he said. The Netherlands further pledged to support the idea of joint action around setting up an AU-EU multi stakeholder round table on food security and nutrition, focused on implementing concrete actions on the five areas of cooperation.

The Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, H. E. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace called upon all Members State to invest at least 10 % of their public budget as they have recommitted through the Malabo declaration.” She also made a strong call for a transfer of technology and innovation noting that “We are here today in the Netherlands, a Country that has invested consistently in Agriculture and generated technologies and innovations that allowed Agriculture modernization; these technologies and innovations are available today and they can be shared to African Countries. We are eager to learn, partner and more than ready to accelerate the African Transformation Agenda for inclusive growth and a food secure and hunger free Africa by 2025.”

On behalf the European Commission, H.E. Mr. Phil Hogan committed to deepen their work in the five thematic areas, especially via EC Funds, mainly EDF, ENI for North Africa, the Global Public Goods Fund, Agrify, and Funds of the European Investment Bank. And as a next step, EU will facilitate bringing a biennial Ministerial AU-EU 'Roundtable' focused on implementation and lasting partnership of AU and EU around the five main themes of cooperation as called for by the Conference.

The Conference was closed with partners agreeing to build on the commitment of African leaders as expressed in Malabo Declaration; explore options for the contribution of agriculture policy cooperation between the AU and EU, including for SDG2 and AU Agenda 2063 implementation; support to governments, farmers, private sector, scientists, businesses, civil society as well as regional blocs and international organizations in addressing agricultural, forestry and fisheries practices, food systems and social and economic policies in order to reach the desired goals.

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