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AU Commissioner for HRST, Prof. Anyang Agbor addresses the AfCFTA Gender Summit 14 Africa

Kigali, Rwanda, 20 March 2018: Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union, on 19 March 2018, delivered a key note address at the Gender Summit holding with the framework of the Tenth Extraordinary Summit of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda).

The two day event which took place in the Marriott Hotel, Kigali brought together participants and delegates from the AU Member states to exchange views on the theme: *“Climate Change through the Gender Lens: Focus on Africa”*.

The HRST Commissioner began by conveying to the participants, greetings of H.E. Dr Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. She thanked the Government and the People of the Republic of Rwanda for their hospitality in this beautiful city of Kigali. “I wish to also extend our gratitude to the African Institute for

Mathematical Sciences, and its partner institutions across Africa for organizing and leading this important dialogue for the continent.”, She stated.

Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor said the theme of this Summit: “Climate Change through the Gender Lens: Focus on Africa” is very important, “first, because our continent is among the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate variability and change and we cannot afford to ignore it. Secondly the strong integration of gender dimension which is critical for us today more than ever: To promote effective and inclusive participation of all key segments of our population in Africa’s development agenda; where in most of our countries unemployment is as high as 30% which seriously undermines the potential of this young population where 70% is under the age of 25”. Therefore, she underscored the need to advance Continental Policy Priorities for a Better Future that enables to harness the demographic dividend presented by the young population of women and men, particularly by creating an enabling environment for their full participation in research and innovation, and entrepreneurship for the socio-economic development of the continent.

Commissioner Anyang Agbor recalled that, the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union adopted a people centred and long-term Agenda 2063 in January 2015 to drive the renewed Vision for Africa to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny and subsequently contribute to addressing the global Sustainable Development Goals to deliver on the aspirations of African citizens and beyond.

The Commissioner further pointed out that the Executive Council meeting at their 18th Extraordinary Session at the Kigali Convention Center within the framework of the AfCFTA Agreement is in prelude to its domestication at regional and national levels to allow the African people to optimally trade and exchange goods and services that are needed for the wellbeing of the people. “We all agree that the integrated Africa we expect in the near future cannot be achieved without a free movement of people and goods”, she noted.

Similar policies and program, building of continental, regional and national institutions and frameworks are underway to achieve the high level aspirations and goals set in Agenda 2063.

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and vision of Africa's Renaissance
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

4. A peaceful and secure Africa
5. Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics
6. An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of the African People, particularly its Women and Youth and caring for children
7. Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global partner and player

According to the HRST Commissioner, African countries are disproportionately affected by well-known challenges and development barriers and some of them, in particular climate change affects all of us across our national boundaries; disrupting in a complex way, our environment, ecosystems, agricultural sector, water supplies, sea-levels; and causing human displacements, extreme weather, and inducing health hazards among others. “For us to tackle this, from a science, technology and innovation view point, the Commission strongly recommends transnational collaborative approaches across our countries, utilization of our diversity, range of existing capacities, and expertise, while leveraging international cooperation’. In this regard interdisciplinary R&D and Innovation to address these complex climate change challenges, should take into account gender dimension for inclusive and effective climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and programmes. Furthermore, monitoring is critical so as to reorient our approaches and achieve maximum impact. (See complete speech of the AU Commissioner for HRST on the AU Website: www.au.africa).

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