

Press Release N°162/2018

## AUC launches the Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Framework



October 9, 2018; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – The African Union Commission in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), launched the Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Framework for Africa, on October 5<sup>th</sup> in Rome.

The Framework has priority elements that will guide AU Member States when developing their national strategies for sustainable agricultural mechanization and implementing mechanization programmes at country level.

Speaking at the launch of the Framework, AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E Amb Josefa Sacko reiterated the importance the Commission places on sustainable agricultural mechanization in African agriculture as a critical factor in realizing the commitments of the

AU Malabo Declaration on agriculture transformation.

She further stressed that, “We will not be able to achieve the laudable objectives that we have set for ourselves, if agriculture continues to be saddled with the heavy drudgery of both farm and off-farm activities in the sector,” she said. “Efforts to attract youths to agriculture will also remain an illusion.”

Commissioner Sacko announced that she together with Angolan First Lady, H.E Ana Afonso Dias Lourenço would inaugurate the first Hand-Held Hoe Museum in Angola; building on the initiative by the former Chairperson of the AUC, H.E Dr. Nkosazana

Dlamini-Zuma, who championed the campaign to relegate the hand-held hoe to the museum and replace it with tillers, a symbolic effort to emphasize the importance of removing the drudgery from agriculture, and thereby improving labour productivity, especially for women.

The Permanent Representatives to the Rome-based UN Agencies, from Ethiopia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, shared their respective country experiences on agricultural mechanization and lauded the effort by the AUC and FAO to develop the framework.

In her closing remarks, the Deputy Director-General of FAO, Maria Helena Semedo said she was pleased that the joint effort between FAO and AUC had "given birth to a new baby" which had been outdoored. She expressed the hope that the same commitment would be provided to facilitate implementation of the strategy Framework, and help transform agriculture in Africa.

### **Agricultural Mechanization**

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) view agricultural mechanization in Africa as an indispensable pillar for attaining the zero Hunger Vision by 2025, as stated in the Malabo Declaration of 2014, Aspiration 1 of the AU's Agenda 2063, and Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Doubling agricultural productivity and eliminating hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025 can only be possible if mechanization is accorded the utmost importance. This includes enhancing access to mechanization services, improving access to quality and affordable inputs, such as seed and fertilizer, and delivering efficient water resources and management systems including irrigation.

Mechanization in the twenty first century must follow some core principles. It must be built along the entire agricultural value chain, private sector driven, environmentally competitive and climate smart, and economically viable and affordable, especially to small-scale farmers who constitute the bulk of African farmers. Mechanization must target youth, specifically to make agriculture more attractive for employment and entrepreneurship.

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