The African Union (AU) has unveiled a statue dubbed “Retiring the Hoe to the Museum”, in the Burkina Faso town of Bobo Dioulasso to symbolically mark the continental agenda of promoting agriculture mechanization among women to improve food production.

“Retiring the Hoe to the Museum” in order words, means the hoe which has been a drudgery tool for agriculture production since medieval times should now be abandoned in Africa as a major farming tool for more effective means of agricultural production- mechanization.

The unveiling of the statue and launch of the campaign is a follow up to the 2015 AU submit in South Africa, when the immediate past AU Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, proposed the campaign by symbolically presenting power tiller to each African Head of State and Government to emphasize the importance of removing the drudgery from agriculture, especially among women.
The campaign is also in consonance with the Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization Framework for Africa, which was launched by the AU in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on October 15, 2018; aim at reducing the drudgery in agriculture production in the continent by helping African countries to develop strategies for sustainable farm mechanization.

The unveiling of the statue on October 15, 2019 was the major highlight of the celebration of the International Rural Women Day, with special focus on rural women in agriculture.

The FAO estimates that only 15% of farm power is provided by mechanized services in the continent, 25% is provided by animals, with the bulk of the 60% provided by human muscles, out of which, 50% of that is provided by women through drudgery.

In a speech to launch the Campaign, HE Ambassador Josefa Sacko, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture stated that agriculture mechanization was indispensable requirement for the achievement of the Malabo Declaration of 2014 by African Heads of State to improve agriculture production in their respective countries, as well as, Goal 2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that aims to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

HE Ambassador Josefa Sacko, who was recently appointed as one of the 27 Global leaders by the United Nations to advocate for improved nutrition, reiterated her commitment and that of the AU to pursue the agenda of agriculture mechanization in the continent, as it was also important in the attainment of improved nutrition.
She commended the Government of Burkina Faso, FAO, Empowering Women in Agriculture (EWA) and partners, The Government of China, OCP AFRICA and the Pan Africa Women Organisation (PAWO) among others for supporting the campaign.

Hon. Cynthia Mamle Morrison (MP), Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection who represented President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo Addo- AUC Champion for Gender and Development; urged the involvement of private sector in the campaign to provide financial support, such as, loans since most women could not afford the mechanized equipment

She advocated that women groups in the continent should be encouraged and supported to form cooperative groups to enable them to qualify for loans and other financial support to acquire these machines.

Mrs. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of AUC for women, peace, and security said emphasis should be placed on women in the development agenda of the continent considering the important role they play in African societies.

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“I thank the African Union and all the partners for the campaign to lessen our (women) burden with mechanized farming. Today, I have the pleasure to handle a farm tiller which has been my dream to own in future to help me with my farming activities” Madam Amina Quadreco, farmer