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PRESS RELEASE

Ministerial session of the 3rd STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment Sector opens with a focus on combatting food insecurity and unabated environmental and resource degradation



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Addis Ababa, 24th October 2019 –The Ministerial segment of the Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment opened today at the AUC Headquarters with a view to addressing the challenges facing the continent like food insecurity and the effects of climate change.

The STC is further discussing relevant strategic goals and linkages in ongoing agriculture, rural development, water and environment related initiatives and their implications on the achievement of the overarching goals set out in the ten-year

implementation plan of Africa's Agenda 2063, to transform Africa and the AU's Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural transformation

Speaking during the opening ceremony, H.E Josefa Sacko, AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, briefed the Ministers of the progress made by the Department on various initiatives since the last STC in 2017 and realization of the goals in the AU's Agenda 2063.

She reiterated the AUC's commitment to work with the Ministers to validate various areas including; strengthening mutual accountability and the Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard to be able to bridge the capacity gap in data collection and evidence based planning meant to trigger the implementation of the AU Malabo Declaration; and proposing strong policy recommendations to ensure sustainable utilization of the vast natural resources for transformative and inclusive growth in Africa.

"You may be aware that in the recent past a number of declarations, recommendations and calls for action were pronounced. Our biggest challenge in Africa, however, is that despite the encouraging high-level commitments, we are still very far from meeting budgetary levels for implementing programmes aimed at realising agricultural transformation and safeguarding the environment." Commissioner Sacko said. "In this respect, both the inaugural and the second biennial report for measuring the progress achieved against the Malabo commitments show that a significant number of Member States are not on track on important indicators."

She urged the Member States to adhere to the commitments they endorsed in revolutionizing agriculture on the continent.

Deputy Commissioner from the Ethiopian Environment, Forest and Climate Change Commission, Ms Frenesh Gobena representing Ethiopia's agriculture, water and environment sector, urged the ministers, experts and stakeholders to ensure that there were clear complementarities and linkages among the sectors represented to effectively implement the decisions of AU Heads of State and Government.

She reiterated the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to AU initiatives stating that, "Ethiopia responds to the call to action in the Agenda 2063, the Malabo Declaration and SDG's."

Outgoing Chair of the STC Bureau and Minister of Agriculture from Burkina Faso, Hon. Salifou Ouedraogo, highlighted the work of the bureau and follow up on recommendations from the 2017 STC. He thanked the AUC for holding the Inaugural West African edition launch of the campaign to "confine the hand-held hoe to the museum," in Bobo Dioulasso, with the unveiling of a statue in commemoration of International Rural Women's Day.

Hon. Ouedraogo acknowledged the method used by the AU's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) to measure AU Member States' implementation of the Malabo Declaration commitments, the Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard (AATS) and suggested that the method should be used for measuring other commitments made by AU Member States.

The Report of the outcomes of the third STC will be submitted for consideration at the AU General Assembly in February 2020.

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