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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION SET TO COLLABORATE WITH LANDMARK UNIVERSITY TO POPULARISE THE AFRICAN AGRIBUSINESS YOUTH STRATEGY

As part of commitments towards the realization of her vision of agrarian revolution, Landmark University, situated in Omu-Aran, Kwara State, Nigeria the Rural Development Division, of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) of the African Union Commission co-organized a webinar to situate the role of Universities in implementing the African agribusiness youth strategy within the context of Agenda 2063. The virtual meeting took place on the 15th of February, 2022.

The African Agribusiness Youth Strategy seeks to mobilise key players including private sector to support the growth of a modern, robust and inclusive African agribusiness that will generate employment and income, contribute to economic growth and reduction of food dependency in Africa. The strategy, also focuses on young women and young men of all categories, to create an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship and youth employment in agribusiness within the African Union for 2025 and beyond.

Dr Janet Edeme, the Head, Rural Development Division of the African Union Commission, represented H.E, Amb. Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment. in her opening remarks , she stated that the African Union through its initiatives encourages African Universities to run programmes in agribusiness thereby making it more people inclusive and also to increase the collaboration with national

agricultural platforms, ministries of agriculture and local institutions to have a common ground for the development of agriculture in Africa.

She further highlighted the Malabo declaration of 2014, where African Heads of States and Governments made commitments and tangible goals to transform Africa's Agriculture by 2025, including the creation of job opportunities for at least 30 percent of the youth in agricultural value chains, and to support preferential entry and participation of women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities.

Professor Charity Aremu, the acting Vice-Chancellor, in her opening remarks noted with delight the advantages of having the African Union on board showing the youths opportunities in agribusiness since the economic development of the nation lies with the youths. She commended the interventions of AU in agribusiness and the empowerment of the youth intended to avoid economic shipwreck. She further noted that if Nigeria and Africa would experience significant growth, agribusiness is the way forward. Professor Aremu pointed out that driving agribusiness is one of the strong directions the University must engage in to realize the agrarian vision.

Ms Fola Oyinloye the Registrar of Landmark University also revealed that there are some similarities in the vision and mission statements of African Union and Landmark University. Stating that Landmark is a full-bodied private University, with a population of young people, while the African Union also has a quest to push agriculture to young people with a focus on youth empowerment through agribusiness. Ms.Oyinloye further stated that Africa Agriculture and Young people are a focus of the Global Space, and thus need to build common grounds for collaborations between the two entities.

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