

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: **003456/2023**

Date: 18 July 2023

Venue: Rome, Italy

### The 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Agriculture Ministers recommit to a renewed partnership to accelerate Food Systems transformation for sustainable development.



The 5th AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference convened on 30th June 2023 at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Conference brought together representatives from the African Union and European Union Member States as well as the, private sector and civil society to take stock of the achievements made from the last Agriculture Ministerial Conference, and share their experiences towards **more sustainable food systems**, in light of the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the food security crisis brought by the Russian – Ukraine crisis.

Around 400 participants joined the event in person, while over 800 people followed the plenary session online. A total of 55 country delegations attended, with 27 represented at ministerial or vice-ministerial level. The plenary session included opening speeches by two Commissioners, H.E Josefa Sacko Commissioner for Department of Agriculture Rural Development Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment of the African Union, and Commissioner Wojciechowski Janusz European Union Commissioner for Agriculture as well as talks from national ministers and FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu.

In her opening remarks, H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko emphasised the need to renew commitment to advance agriculture transformation in Africa and Europe, through promoting sustainable investment in agri-food systems, boosting trade and integration, fostering science and innovation, and building climate resilient food systems Trade. “Agriculture, as we all know, lies at the heart of both Africa and European economies and societies. As such, deepening the

two continents' partnership and cooperation in the sector, is of paramount importance for our shared future" she said.

Commissioner Wojciechowski highlighted the tangible benefits that the Africa-Europe Rural Transformation action agenda has already brought to farmers and food supply chains in Africa through the establishment of the Pan African Network for Economic analysis of Policies, the agri-food business platform, and African-European Farmers' exchanges. "The work of multilateral organisations and the organisation of a Stock-Taking Moment at the end of July, for the United Nations' Food Systems Summit, is an example of how we are continuing to come together, to advance our Sustainable Development Goals", he added.

In his speech to the Conference, QU Dongyu highlighted that global agrifood systems are continuously facing shocks from different dimensions, and emphasized that FAO and its Members should not only focus on the challenges, but also find opportunities and act to move forward. "We need to start the transformation!" Qu urged, stressing that agrifood systems need to urgently become more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable.

Keynote speeches followed, discussing collective efforts to tackle global food security challenges. The session ended with a report on the morning's high-level thematic sessions. Ministers have stressed the importance of increased investment in agri-food systems and the need for improved data to enhance knowledge. They have highlighted the crucial roles of women and young people in farming and agreed on the significance of research and innovation for sustainable transformation. Participants have firmly committed to ongoing discussions among all parties involved.

The conference concluded with the announcement of the establishment of an EU-AU Joint Task Force on Fertilisers. This task force aims to address challenges related to fertilizer accessibility and affordability and propose solutions. The key recommendation and actions from the conference included; to strengthen cooperation and accelerate the implementation of AfCTA and global trade, this being the year of trade in Africa, to collectively shape the action and push joint leadership, to identify opportunities to strengthen this cooperation and promote innovative forms of EU-AU partnership in strengthening agri-food systems and to operationalize multilateralism, sustainable and inclusive development, and sustainable growth as key drivers for the achievement of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)Malabo Declaration, Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

**For further information, please contact:**

1. **Dr. Laila Lokosang**, Technical Advisor to the Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission – Email: [LokosangL@africa-union.org](mailto:LokosangL@africa-union.org)

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

1. **Ms. Peace Lydia Mutuwa**, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission; Email [mutuwap@africa-union.org](mailto:mutuwap@africa-union.org)
2. **Mr Molalet Tsedeke**, Information and Communications Directorate; AU Commission Tel: 0911-630631; Email: [molalett@africa-union.org](mailto:molalett@africa-union.org)

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)  
**Web:** [au.int](http://au.int) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | **Follow Us:** [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)