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OPENING REMARKS

BY

**Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel,
Director, Rural Economy and Agriculture**

AT THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE SESSION

THEME:

*“Toward African Renaissance: Renewed Partnership for Unified Approach to End Hunger
in Africa by 2025 within the CAADP Framework”.*

29th June 2013

H.E. Jose Graziano da Silva, FAO DG

Mme Helena Semedo, FAO, DDG

Dr. Modibo Traore, FAO Representative to AU, UNECA, Ethiopia
and FAO Subregional Coordinator for Eastern Africa

Representative of the Pan African Farmers Organisation

Mr. Celso Marcondes, Executive-coordinator for the Africa initiative

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

All Protocols Observed,

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all on behalf of the African Union Commission to this Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue Session that is taking place on the eve of the High Level Meeting of African and International Leaders on “Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to end Hunger in Africa by 2025 within the CAADP Framework”.

I bring greetings to you from H.E. Mrs Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AU Commission.

Let me also express our appreciation to FAO, the Lula Institute and the Host country Ethiopia, for joining hands with the AU Commission in organising this event.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Evidences indicate that about 240 million people in Africa are undernourished – meaning one out of every four Africans. About 40 percent of these are children under five years of age, which may lead to irreversible mental and physical disabilities. Africa is also the only region where the number of hungry people has increased in recent years, despite improved performance of African economies during the same time.

Such appalling facts and figures on hunger and malnutrition in Africa are the cause of our resolve to do business differently. We should not accept to continue to live with such a dire situation; we should try and change it for something better. But this is not and cannot be an exclusive agenda of any sector – government or otherwise.

One of the innovative aspects in doing business differently in our agriculture transformation efforts through CAADP has been to harness partnerships including public and private sector, civil society, farmers organisations, and the academia.

We take the role of non state actors as being vital and critical for achieving success – not only in terms of your roles in mounting an effective advocacy, and compelling all parties to do what they are supposed to do efficiently; but also because of the complementarity of your efforts with other key players, such as the government or development partners.

The lessons learnt from the experience of CAADP implementation over the last decade indicate that unless we harness the collective strengths of both public,

civil society, farmers organisations, and other stakeholders and interest groups, we cannot deliver on the targets we have set for ourselves.

The African Union Commission and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency commit themselves to a much more deeper and quality engagement aimed at building complementarities among the efforts of all stakeholders as we go forward in sustaining the CAADP momentum in the next decade.

The key elements of sustaining the CAADP momentum include wealth creation through significant improvement of agricultural production and productivity; value-addition and expansion of decent and rewarding employment opportunities for the youth along the agricultural value-chain, enhancing access to productive resources to disadvantaged social groups including women and the youth and access to markets, and building resilience of livelihoods to minimize vulnerabilities to natural and socio-economic risks.

Going forward, more effort is going to be exerted in terms of supporting countries to enhance their capacities for design and implementation of policies, strengthening institutional delivery mechanisms, enhancing evidence-based planning and implementation, mobilising investment resources from the private sector, and mobilising public funding to catalyse and leverage the private sector efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are gathered here to deliberate on a very fundamental topic: New Partnership towards a Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa. I am sure you will agree with me that the goal of ending hunger in Africa is not something that we cannot realistically achieve. We have the resources, we have the capacity, and we have the opportunity to learn from successes – what it requires is the will to do it. In fact from what we have witnessed recently, those who have the will and the determination to act have made significant progress in fighting hunger – in Africa and beyond.

As you are aware, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/ African Union (AU), which was launched on May 25, 2013, under the theme “Pan Africanism and African Renaissance”. The concept of African Renaissance can only make sense and become complete when we will have conquered hunger in Africa. It is our firm belief that with strong political commitment, quality leadership and constructive engagement by all stakeholders, Africa can rise to the challenge of eradicating hunger. It is encouraging to note that African leaders have recognised the significance of this; and as you know CAADP has given us the platform to

prioritise agriculture in Africa – an opportunity that we have seized towards building and sustaining partnerships for results.

The AU Commission and NPCA have been exerting efforts towards ensuring that the CAADP flame continues to be alive – in terms of constantly reminding African leaders of their Maputo commitments but also for them to do more. That is why we have for example a recent Decision by the AU Heads of State and Government proclaiming the Year 2014 as the AU year of Agriculture and Food Security, which will among other things provide an opportunity for us all to reflect on what should constitute Africa’s future Agenda on Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security.

Your meeting today is very significant because it provides you with a unique opportunity to consult and articulate your key messages to the leaders – who will assemble during the next couple of days here – on ending hunger in Africa so that your voices are reflected in the Declarations and decisions they may consider to take.

I therefore wish to conclude my remarks by wishing you a very fruitful dialogue.

With this remarks, it is now my privilege and honour to declare the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Session Officially Open.

I thank You.