

AFRICAN UNION

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI-  
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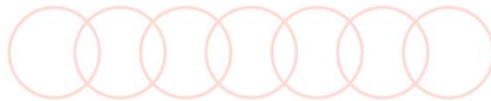
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On the occasion of the

**“High-Level Meeting on Renewed Partnership for  
Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa”**

at the African Union Conference Centre (AUCC)

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



30<sup>th</sup> June - 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2013

**Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government of AU Member States,**

**Excellencies, Former Heads of State and Government,**

**H.E. Mr. Luis Inacio 'Lula' da Silva, President of the Lula Institute and former President of Brazil,**

**H.E. Mr. Jose' Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,**

**H.E. Mr. Carlos Lopes, UN Under-Secretary General and ECA Executive Secretary**

**Hon Ministers and Heads of Delegations,**

**Colleagues Commissioners,**

**Distinguished Representatives of Inter-African and International Organisations,**

**Dear Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all on behalf of the African Union Commission to this 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”**.

Let me at the outset thank Your Excellencies Mr. Luis Inacio ‘Lula’ da Silva and Mr. Jose’ Graziano da Silva, respectively President of the Lula Institute and former President of Brazil, and Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, for the joint efforts in organizing this very important and timely meeting.

Available information suggests that nearly a quarter of the population of Africa are affected by hunger, with the number of undernourished people about a staggering 240 million. Of these, more than 40 percent are children under five years of age, which lead to irreversible mental and physical disabilities. And, despite its vast agricultural potential, it is a net importer of food and agricultural products.

Ending hunger and malnutrition in Africa is not an insurmountable challenge, as shown by countless examples globally. As we gathered on 25 May 2013 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity and the African Union, Africa with its Diaspora also looked forward towards the next fifty years.

On this occasion, we made a pledge to past, present and future generations, that Africa will be prosperous, integrated and people-centred, and that it will be at peace with itself.

The fulfilment of this pledge, **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**, is the surest way to end hunger in Africa.

Ending hunger and malnutrition is therefore about agriculture, fishing, food production and food security; about ownership, utilization harnessing and protection of Africa's natural resources; but it is also about growing and diversified economies that create decent jobs and economic opportunities, raise incomes and are geared towards building shared prosperity.

Ending hunger and malnutrition furthermore, is about building capable African developmental states with social policies and safety nets at continental, regional and country levels (such as the recently

established African Risk Capacity); at community, family and individual levels and that cater for the needs of the most vulnerable.

Ending hunger and malnutrition is about investing in Africa's most import asset, its people – through health, education, science, technology, research and innovation, and meeting basic needs such as food security, clean water and sanitation, shelter and affordable energy.

These key priorities of our African agenda today, we believe, is what we must pursue with confidence and with single-minded dedication.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Why are we so confident that this goal of ending hunger is within our reach?

Africa has the potential not only to feed itself and ensure shared prosperity, but also to contribute to global food production and security. It is blessed with abundant arable land, water resources, and a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

In addition, we have a growing and youthful population full of energy, creativity and a willingness to work. More than 70% of the agricultural workforce of Africa is female. Our challenge is to help

them to organise and ensure that the requisite resources are made available to enable our people to engage in successful agriculture and agro-businesses.

It is in recognition of the importance of agriculture in ending hunger, that the AU Heads of State and Government adopted, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) at the Maputo summit in 2003 as a framework guiding policies, strategies and actions on agricultural development and transformation.

Through CAADP, Africa committed itself to tackle hunger and malnutrition and ensuring food security by raising agricultural production and growing its agro-businesses. The majority of African countries are making steady progress in translating their commitments into actual policies, strategies, and investment priorities. To date, thirty (30) AU Member States signed their respective CAADP compacts and moved to develop and implement national Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans that capture both growth and resilience considerations.

It is not difficult to link the recent positive performance of the economies of African countries with such a focused effort being exerted in the agricultural sector. The number of countries that are

allocating an increasing proportion of their annual budgets to agriculture has been on the rise over the last few years.

To date, ten (10) amongst the fifty-four Member States reached the CAADP target of 10% investment in agriculture. Amongst them are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Niger and Senegal who already exceeded this mark. Ghana is expected to be the first African country to reach the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG1) of halving poverty and hunger, and to do so before the target year of 2015<sup>1</sup>.

According to the Nepad Agency, to date nine countries exceeded the target of 6% growth in agricultural production (Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania) and another four have achieved growth of between 5 and 6 per cent.

Clearly, much more needs to be done to sustain and deepen this momentum, but we are on the right track.

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<sup>1</sup> CAADP Post-Compact Review. Technical Review Report. AUC, NPCA and the ECOWAS CEDEAO. Dakar, June 2010

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

While addressing the structural production challenges is clearly a necessary condition to end hunger and achieve self-reliance, it is by no means a sufficient condition. Hunger is not just an issue of production and availability of food. It is also about distribution, storage, processing, access, affordability and quality.

Needless to say, hunger has dire implications on health and human resource development which place enormous constraints on economic growth prospects of African countries.

That is why, a unified and multi-sectoral approach is required, united behind the African agenda, and with focused action by all relevant stakeholders.

The issue of ending hunger cannot be successfully addressed without taking into account the fundamental role of women. Women by far constitute the largest proportion of the agricultural labour force in Africa. They are engaged in the whole food value chain as producers, processors and traders. Women are also the primary providers of food to their families. Yet, women farmers in Africa face significant structural barriers in accessing land, credit facilities, improved and high-yielding seeds and other inputs. It goes without saying that if you deprive the majority of your agricultural labour



force of the necessary facilities, productivity is compromised, thus creating and perpetuating a vicious cycle of hunger and underdevelopment. Designing and implementing targeted programmes specifically addressing the plight of women farmers in this regard is, therefore, a precondition for eradicating poverty and creating prosperity in Africa.

We also recognise that the future African farmers will be much younger. This is a huge demographic dividend that Africa needs to utilise effectively. However, the majority of the young men and women are currently seeing few opportunities in working and living on agriculture. There is a need to make agriculture and the rural economy at large an appealing and rewarding enterprise, enough for the African youth to commit their lives and futures to it. In this respect, we must develop specific programmes for engaging the youth in Africa in food production, processing, and trade. We are therefore particularly pleased that we are joined by a number of youth and women farmers in this meeting, and look forward to your inputs in this regard.

Africa also needs to take a closer look at its food trade policies. Presently, inter-African trade in cereals is only 5 percent of total. Our regional and continental infrastructure development projects, aimed at connecting people, economies and countries, is a critical part of boosting intra-Africa trade in agricultural and food products.

At the same time, our integration project also requires that Africa addresses the barriers to food trade at the national, regional and continental levels, so that food from regions with surplus can seamlessly move and is traded in regions with food deficits.

Africa must also invest in and develop the entire value chain of its agricultural products, and build viable agro-businesses as part its industrialisation process.

In this regard, our work under CAADP, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the Industrialization plans (AIDA) are all geared towards supporting and working with the private sectors, Regional Economic Communities and Governments so that they are at the centre and are encouraged to facilitate this process.

Another area I would like to touch on is food losses that occur at every stage of the agricultural production, processing, distribution and use in Africa. According to some estimates more than one-third of food produced in Africa, worth about 4 billion USD, is either lost or wasted every year. It is estimated that the food lost can feed 48 million people in Africa. Africa cannot afford to lose so much of its food each year, while so many of its populace go hungry every day.

That is why Africa's must also invest in agricultural infrastructure, including storage, reliable energy and transport, as well as markets and trade facilities. We must invest in post-harvest technologies so that these losses are reduced and eventually eliminated.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In addition to arable land, Africa and its islands have untapped oceanic resources, which can make a contribution to end hunger, ensure food security and a shared prosperity.

West Africa, for example, is one of the most diverse, and economically important, fishing zones in the world. Fisheries in the West African marine region, where total landings of fish have risen from 600,000 tons in 1960 to 4.5 million by 2000 have made it one of the most important sources of foreign exchange in the region<sup>2</sup>.

According to the African Development Bank, in 2008, "*nearly 10 million people in Africa or 1.5% of the continent's population depend directly on fishing, fish farming, fish processing and fish trading for their livelihoods.*"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>See Nepad website *Fisheries: PAF* <http://www.nepad.org/foodsecurity/fisheries/about>

<sup>3</sup> ADB (2008). *Review of the Performance of the current Fisheries portfolio of the ADB. Brief to the Board.* <http://www.afdb.org/>

At the same time, the sector faces challenges such as illegal fishing by foreign fleets, weak regulatory and enforcement capacities to protect against over-fishing and environmental degradation, piracy and the impact of climate change. The productivity and growth of Africa's 'Blue economy' is also undermined by lack of domestic investment in the development of Africa's maritime transport infrastructure. These challenges particularly affect the continent's small island states.

It is in this context that the continent developed its Partnership for African Fisheries (PAF) and the draft African Integrated Marine strategy (AIM)<sup>4</sup> as a way of dealing with these challenges, but most importantly to enable Africa to take charge of this important natural resource so as to contribute towards the prosperity of its people.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

The goal of ending hunger in Africa is not only achievable, but it can be achieved in a shorter time than we are made to believe. We have the resources and the opportunity to learn from successes. From what we have witnessed recently, those who have shown the will and the determination to act have made significant progress in fighting hunger.

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.fishforall.org/ffa-summit/outcomes.asp> for the Abuja Declaration on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in Africa, adopted by the Heads of State Meeting of the NEPAD "Fish For All Summit" Abuja, Nigeria, 25 August 2005.

The Brazilian experience on ending hunger that has been registered under the leadership of President Lula is a shining example to the rest of the world. Indeed, there are other success stories of ending hunger around the world from which we can take useful lessons and adapt to our situation as appropriate.

Within Africa, we also have successful experiences to share. For example, while Ghana's agricultural sector grew at more than 5 percent a year over the last decade, it has succeeded in cutting hunger levels by 75 percent between 1990 and 2004; making it the fastest progress on reducing hunger in the world. We can learn from Malawi which has succeeded in moving within a span of few years from being a net-importer of maize to become a net-exporter; and a food donor to those in need. Ethiopia and Rwanda too have made spectacular progress in curbing hunger.

### **Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

As mentioned before, we are celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/ African Union (AU), which we launched on May 25, 2013 under the theme "Pan Africanism and African Renaissance".

This occasion has brought great joy to Africans, its Diaspora and all peace-loving global citizens alike, as we see the continent of Africa

now freed from the yoke of colonialism. Having defeated colonialism, our next battle is to conquer hunger and poverty in Africa through investing in our people and building a shared prosperity.

In this regard, Africa has started consultations and interactions with the African citizenry and the African diaspora on the development of a common vision for the next fifty years - Agenda 2063. In line with this goal, the African Union has declared 2014 as the year of Agriculture and Food Security.

We wish to call on you to use this occasion to reflect on what should constitute Africa's Agenda 2063 on Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security. It is our firm belief that with strong political commitment and leadership, Africa can rise to the challenge of eradicating hunger: For there can never be true African Renaissance until we end hunger and ensure food security across the length and breadth of Africa!

Before I conclude, let me stress that the African Union Commission cherishes its collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Lula Institute in forging a renewed partnership to end hunger in Africa by 2025. This is not the first time the African Union is collaborating with the FAO.

Africa also has long historical and cultural ties with Brazil and in recent years these ties have been expanded to the scientific field, since we share some similar agro-ecological environments.

In addition to learning from its own experiences, Africa can learn from Brazil's Zero Hunger Programme and other similar initiatives in China, Vietnam and South Korea among others. Let me therefore also thank the distinguished ministers from China, Vietnam and South Korea for accepting our invitation to share their experiences with us.

It is my fervent hope that this meeting would promote and unify African and international efforts in the fight against hunger until we reach a time when no-one in Africa or anywhere on our planet, suffer from the misery of hunger and poverty. This is a challenge we all must confront, a challenge that we must overcome.

I thank you for your kind attention.