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Speech

by

**H.E. Mrs Rhoda Peace Tumusiime,
Commissioner Rural Economy and Agriculture,
African Union Commission**

on the occasion of

**the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding
between the International Centre for Insect Physiology
and Ecology (ICIPE) and the African Union Commission
(AUC),**

Nairobi, Kenya, 22 February 2011

Prof. Christian Borgemeister, Director General ICIPE

Heads of Department

Staff of ICIPE

The officials from the AUC

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to bring you the warm greetings and best wishes from H.E Dr. Jean PING, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who mandated me to sign this Memorandum of Understanding on his behalf. All of us value this partnership and we do appreciate the work and contribution of ICIPE.

Our shared goals of improved agricultural and livestock production, rural health, resilience against climate change, and scientific manpower development can only be achieved through a framework of collaboration and cooperation that the AUC and ICIPE are engaged in. Through the PATTEC Coordination Office, which is one of the technical offices, which will channel the benefits from the cooperation agreement, we are renewing what was already done on the 12th of January 1989. At the first signing of a MoU between ICIPE and the then OAU, it was our dear brother and teacher and Founder of ICIPE Professor T.R. Odhiambo, who signed on behalf of ICIPE. Allow me at this point, to pay glowing tribute to this great son of Africa, who always said that ***the development of Africa has to be research-led*** and that is why, he created ICIPE and left a memorable legacy. Since its inception in 1972, ICIPE was the precursor to the establishment of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and has trained highly specialized experts, who are serving beyond Africa and who contributed and continue to contribute greatly to the well-being of the African people in various fields of human endeavour.

Today, Christian and I have signed the MoU on behalf of our predecessors and respective Organisations. This MoU will contribute to the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action in particular the promotion of policies for socio-economic development of AU Member States. It also responds to the pillars of the African Union particularly the one on development.

This is, indeed, part of the core functions of the Commission, one of which is partnership building in advancing the mission and vision of the Union. I noted that the areas of our mutual interest and collaboration include, among others: (i) Insect crop and livestock pests of socio-economic importance; (ii) Development of adaptation strategies in Africa with reference to food security; (iii) Development of policies for insect pest and vector management and (iv) Training and capacity building at various levels of human resources development. These endeavours will, as has all along been the case, contribute to: 1. Improved sustainable food security and environmental health; 2. Reduction of malaria, trypanosomiasis and other vector-borne diseases; 3. Increased livestock productivity; 4. Conservation and sustainable utilization of the agricultural production base and important natural ecosystems by encouraging and utilizing arthropod diversity; cataloguing and sharing biodiversity data and discovering endemic wealth by bioprospecting for useful natural products. We are also pleased with the collaboration between ICIPE and AU-IBAR both at the level of ICTRC where ICIPE is a member of the Executive Committee; and also at the level of apiculture where ICIPE and AU-IBAR are working to improve honey production in Africa and also towards creating a Centre of Excellency in Apiculture.

The Commission and specifically my Department is committed to the implementation of this MoU and you can rest assured that through our common efforts, we shall contribute effectively to solve some urgent issues (food security, climate change mitigation, poverty reduction, etc.) affecting AU Members States.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you for your hospitality and encourage you to continue working on the primary objectives and functions of ICIPE. I thank you.
