



WATER, CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT DAY

AFRICA PAVILION

Closing Statement of H E Rhoda Peace Tumusiime Commissioner, Rural Economy and Agriculture

Executive Secretaries

Distinguished Guests

The Press Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Throughout the day today, distinguished authorities on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation; and Water Resources Management have discussed here a multitude of political, technical, institutional and financial solutions for promoting climate resilient development at all levels, as well as various proposals for translating those solutions into action.
2. As we close today's discussions, it is important for us to note the following:
 - Climate change in Africa means more frequent and prolonged droughts, on one hand; as well as frequent and devastating flooding on the other. This poses a critical threat to the performance of the agricultural sector and the rural economy on which the majority of Africa's population depend for their livelihoods and, in turn, has direct implications for the fight against poverty, and the extent to which MDGs targets can be achieved.

- Projections of general increase in average temperatures for Africa are predicted to result in increased rainfall variability and, in turn, changes in the distribution and accessibility of water within the hydrological cycle.
 - Changing rainfall and river flow patterns will affect all water users;
 - shifting rainfall patterns will affect cropping systems and the prevalence of such diseases as malaria;
 - increased uncertainty and shifting crop water requirements threaten Africa's largely rain-fed agricultural sector;
 - while risks and uncertainties are growing around water-borne diseases, droughts, floods and landslides.
3. For Africa, therefore, success in climate change adaptation and mitigation depends largely on improving the capacity to manage the water cycle specifically in terms of information, institutions, investment, infrastructure and inclusiveness in implementation approaches.
 4. We need to ensure that we invest in water security and climate resilience to avoid laying to waste the resources and efforts so far put into achieving the MDGs. In as much as we need to prioritise infrastructure development, we also need to invest in climate information both for decision making and improving preparedness of the vulnerable and affected communities at local level.
 5. That said, caution must be exercised to avoid searching for perfect solutions but rather to initiate action with what we have and improve the systems as we go along.
 6. It may not be possible to reiterate all the key points of the discussions today in these closing remarks. Suffice it to say that the African Union Commission expects that the outcomes of the Water, Climate and Development Day will be put together in a report with proposals for implementable actions to enable the Commission; other pan-African

institutions; and the AU member states to effectively follow up both in policy and practice.

7. The immediate follow up of the outcomes of today's segment will be considered at a High level Ministerial Dialogue on 6h December for further political guidance on the immediate action towards elevating the status of water in the global Climate Change negotiations.
8. In conclusion, I wish to thank the key speakers, presenters, facilitators and participants for dedicating time today to ensure the productivity of the Water, Climate and Development Day. This augurs well for the interaction between our political institution – AUC; our financing agency – AfDB; our coordinating body – AMCOW; and, indeed, our partners.