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## **Opening statement**

**by**

**Her Excellency Madam Rhoda Peace Tumusiime,  
Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture,**

**African Union Commission**

**during the official Launch and the Opening of the Inception  
Workshop of the Standard Methods and Procedures in Animal  
Health (SMP-AH) project.**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27TH AUGUST 2012**

- Deputy Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development in Eastern Africa,
- Director of AU-IBAR
- Representatives of USAID Missions in East Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia
- Representatives of our Technical Partners, OIE,FAO and ILRI
- Representatives from IGAD, COMESA and EAC.
- Directors of Veterinary Services
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of H.E the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I welcome you all to Addis Ababa, the Headquarters of the African Union. I take this opportunity to thank you for accepting our invitation, and making time to be part of the inception workshop and the launch of the Standard Methods and Procedures in Animal Health project.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you know, in Africa Agriculture provides livelihoods to more people than any other sector. It supports rural economies and is a key driver for food security and poverty reduction. The contribution of livestock to the agricultural capital stock in Africa is enormous and stands at more than 50%, and on average accounts for 30% of agricultural production. About 160 million people, mainly small-scale farmers, are engaged in livestock keeping. Therefore, economic growth in Africa is largely dependent on growth in the livestock sector. That is why livestock is highlighted within the framework of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Livestock keeping is particularly important in the drier parts of Africa, where arid and semi-arid conditions prevail, traditional livestock production practices of nomadic and transhumant pastoralism are an efficient way to exploit the fragile base which cannot support rain-fed agriculture. In such systems, livestock is critical for household food security and poverty alleviation. However, pastoralism

faces many challenges including drought, inadequate water, environmental degradation, conflict and animal diseases. Animal diseases, especially transboundary animal diseases (TADs), erode the assets of pastoralists, restrict market access for livestock and livestock products and have major impacts on livelihoods, household food security and national economies.

Distinguished participants, transboundary animal diseases are a shared concern for all the countries particularly in the IGAD region given the free movement of livestock and livestock products across borders for pasture or trade. Management of these diseases, therefore, requires coordinated and harmonised approach at regional level.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it, therefore, gives me great pleasure to address you at the inception workshop and the launch of this project that aims to enhance coordination and harmonization of surveillance and disease control activities in the IGAD region. This approach will facilitate free movement of livestock and livestock products across national borders for trade purposes thus promoting regional economic integration in line with IGAD and AUC policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, collaboration among stakeholders is key for addressing the coordination and harmonisation of disease regulations in the IGAD region. I, therefore, call upon all stakeholders along the livestock value-chain including Member States, Regional Economic Communities of IGAD, EAC and COMESA as well as technical partners such as OIE and FAO to play their roles for ensuring the successful implementation of the project.

During the 4 days' meeting, you will have an opportunity to share information on transboundary animal diseases in the region, other similar interventions in IGAD region, as well as critically review the proposed activities in order to enrich the project deliverables. I also expect you to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder to ensure successful implementation of the project.

Distinguished participants, let me take this opportunity to once again thank the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for providing funds to implement the SMP - AH project and the participants for accepting our invitations and we consider this a demonstration of our collective commitment to achieving the objectives of this project.

It is, therefore, my pleasure and honour to declare the SMP Animal Health project officially launched and to declare the inception workshop formally open.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.