

AFRICAN UNION

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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: 011-551 7700 Fax : 011-551 7844
website : www.africa-union.org

OPENING REMARKS

BY

**HER EXCELLENCY TUMUSIIMERHODA PEACE,
COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**

AT THE AFRICAN UNION

ON THE OCCASION OF

**HER OFFICIAL WORKING VISIT TO THE INTER-AFRICAN
BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES (AU-IBAR),**

NAIROBI, KENYA 2-4 October 2012

The Director and all Members of Staff of AU-IBAR

Thank you for welcoming me. I feel honoured that I am here to meet with you.

I bring you **Greetings** from the political leadership of the African Union Commission and, indeed, from your colleagues at DREA.

I would also like you to know that we do **appreciate** the role played by the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources across the continent and your contribution is recognized especially to households' and nations' wealth and welfare in terms of Millennium Development Goals related to food security and nutrition security, and also poverty eradication through the promotion of intra-African trade and international trade and indeed, economic growth.

In the same vein, I bring you **Encouragement** to maintain a focus on delivering on the mandate of AU-IBAR for a flourishing livestock sector.

As you know, all of you, all of us here, as Pan Africanists we are all called upon to serve in different capacities each one of us contributing to the over-arching objective of a united, strong and prosperous Africa. And indeed, Africa is on the rise.

This is what is expected of all of us serving the African Union both at the Commission Headquarters and in regional technical offices as well as other good offices, to do well so that the

African continent continues to shine. Not many years ago, skeptics were saying that Africa was falling apart. Now they are saying that Africa is shining because, among others, Africa is maintaining a impressive economic growth. But I must say that regional technical offices like AU-IBAR stand at the frontline of our shared struggle to emancipate Africa. You deliver services to our Member States both directly and through regional frameworks which we at the Commission Headquarters do not do. You are doing a commendable job. I would like to say please keep it up. Aluta continua.

What unites our work are the four pillars and the four core functions as articulated in the AU's Strategic Pan, which as you know are:

PILLARS:

- Peace and security takes centre-stage, for example in the Horn of Africa where IBAR stands at the centre
- Regional integration in collaboration and coordination with regional economic communities
- Institutional capacity building at continental, regional and national levels to ensure sustainability
- Shared values including democracy, rule of law and so on.

FUNCTIONS

- Policy harmonization from pastoral policy to land policy to veterinary governance and others;
- Partnership building to complement and support African led and African driven development agenda;
- Resource mobilization towards implementation of continental policies, programmes and projects such as CAADP, PIDA and many others;
- Advocacy for Pan African causes including livestock development and a multiplicity of others under the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture and other Departments of the Commission. You should not see yourselves as being removed from the Commission. You are part and parcel of the entire network of AUC. As you know our Department alone together with its six regional technical offices including IBAR covers livestock, crop agriculture, fisheries, forestry, water, land, environment, climate services, climate change, disaster risk reduction and desertification. Our leaders and nations appreciate our collective efforts and shared achievements on all these fronts and more is being asked of us. That means we are not there yet. Hence the need for all of us to concentrate on doubling our efforts to this end. We are international civil servants, we have to deliver on what we is expected of us.

As we focus on the bigger picture that I have just depicted, each of us is expected to accord due attention to a number of issues. For example, personal career development, socio-economic development and spiritual development among others. And so, promoting good working relations as well as inter-personal rapport is critical if we are to attend to these key aspects as well.

Even as we consider this, there is a tendency to look at Discipline in the sense of

- Punctuality
- Meeting deadlines
- Completing assignments
- Neatness and tidiness (cleanliness and orderliness)
- Adjusting to occasional, actually full-time pressure of work. Wherever we are we must deliver. IT makes us do more work. Work follows us wherever we go.
- And such other professional ethics which we have to observe when working in a respected institution.

In the same vein, it also behooves us to pay particular attention to matters of self respect, respect and care for others, team spirit and other family values.

In examining ourselves, it is important to consider all these values and also ask ourselves questions like

- How can I do better what I am doing well? Striving to improve.
- How can I minimize or eradicate any negative tendencies? Avoid falling prey to those tendencies, behave maturely.

But the 'me, myself and I' questions need to be twinned with the 'togetherness' questions:

- How can we communicate better to build greater understanding?
- How can we bond better and support one another better for the greater good?
- How do we portray our institution's image?
- How can we move forward the agenda we have been called upon to achieve.

Many questions can be asked. It does not matter at what level you are. Respect each and everybody because each one's contribution counts.

This is through regular formal meetings and informal gatherings, well organized and coordinated ensuring cross-fertilisation for human and institutional development. While respecting work, respect one another.

It is through the tying together of these pieces that we can get the whole in terms of our own wellbeing and the advancement of the ideals that we all aspire and profess to champion. That is

how we have been working together on advancing Intra-African Trade, the AU Theme this year, and more of this effort will be required as we take forward next year's Theme of Pan Africanism starting January 2013. And as we go on, am sure you are also aware that 2014 has been declared by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government as the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security. This places IBAR and DREA as a whole under a spotlight as to what we do to step up our contribution to the delivery on these expectations. As you know, our overarching figure of CAADP will be 10 years next year.

Let's be at peace within ourselves and with each and every one of our neighbours so that we tie the critical pieces together as we focus on this bigger picture.

This is the message I have come with for you from Addis Ababa and I am keen and I am available to listen to your views and comments on how we can forge ahead together better in all respects. We are going to have an open, interactive and productive session. I would like to see AU-IBAR continuing to do better and attaining greater heights. I am going to have another series of discussions individual and if it spills over I will continue tomorrow.

Thank you.

