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**Statement by Her Excellency, Mrs. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace  
Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture,  
African Union Commission  
on the occasion of the  
Second Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers  
responsible for Meteorology / African Ministerial Conference on  
Meteorology (AMCOMET),**

**Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 15 – 19 October 2012**

- **I thank you Master of Ceremonies and Permanent Secretary for Transport, Communication and Infrastructure Development Mr.....**
- **Your Excellency, Joyce Mujuru, The Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe**
- **Honourable Ministers**
- **The Secretary General of the World meteorological Organisation (WMO) Dr Michel Jarraud**
- **Representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Development Bank, United Nations Agencies – UNISDR, UNEP, and Civil Society Organizations**
- **Distinguished delegates,**
- **Excellences, Ambassadors**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me also recognize the young entertainers who have shown us good steps in taking forward our culture.

Bonjour! Keifa! Good morning! Jambo!

It is an honor and privilege for me to be here in Victoria Falls where Zimbabwe hosts one of the first seven wonders of the world, and to take

part at the Second session of the African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Meteorology /African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET). On behalf of Her Excellency Dr. Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and, indeed, on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to express profound gratitude to the Government and the People of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the kind hospitality accorded to my delegation, I would like to particularly appreciate their prompt response for hosting this meeting at a short notice. This does not surprise those who know Zimbabwe's track record of commitment to Pan African ideals, and Your Excellency, The Vice President, your presence is an indication of the value you attach to African initiatives. You are most welcome Your Excellency the Vice President. May I also express the AU Commission's special gratitude to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) for its valuable meteorological data and information as well as analysis and advice to Member States, its strong partnership and long standing support to AMCOMET, its gracious hosting of AMCOMET Secretariat in the interim and its demonstration of firm commitment to ensure Africa's meaningful participation in the global efforts to address Weather and Climate-related issues. I would also like to seize this opportunity to convey our sincere appreciation to all our partners that are

working consistently and diligently with the African Union Commission and other Pan African Institutions to ensure sustainable and relevant weather and climate services in support of socioeconomic development in Africa. As you know, we have very many institutions related to meteorological services. It is only the Central African region that does not have such an institution. We have been working with these institutions through different programmes.

In a special way, the African Union Commission salutes the AU Member States most of which are represented here, for the attention paid to critical issues for Africa's development including meteorology and climate services. We are grateful for the leadership, guidance and support provided by Honourable Ministers in this regard.

**Your Excellencies – Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

You may recall that the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) was established to work with the African Union Commission and to serve as a high-level mechanism for the development of meteorology and its applications in Africa. The first session of AMCOMET was convened in 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya under the chairmanship of the late

Honourable John Michuki to whom we owe glowing tribute for his wise leadership, adopted a Ministerial Declaration that included, among others, the preparation of an integrated African strategy on meteorology and a related framework for action and the need for the importance of mobilizing necessary resources to facilitate this process. It would be recalled that at the said session, WMO was requested to serve as the interim Secretariat of the Conference with the support of the AU Commission, and I must say that the AUC together with WMO in partnership we have proved our worth in executing this mission. Let me, at this juncture, commend the outgoing Bureau of AMCOMET for the clear and dedicated leadership that laid a firm foundation for the incoming Bureau to take forward outstanding and emerging issues as we finalise issues of institutional arrangements. I would like to request that we focus more on what to do at Member States level. Member States need our services. Services of meteorology nature are very important.

Two years after, this second session of AU Conference of Ministers responsible for Meteorology /AMCOMET under the chairmanship of Zimbabwe now offers an opportunity to take stock of the results achieved so far and to pave the way for further successes to take Africa to greater heights. I am particularly delighted that the AMCOMET Secretariat together

with the AU Commission will be presenting to this august body the initiatives and actions taken since the establishment of AMCOMET to consolidate our current achievements and to move to a higher level in a continuous pursuit of Africa's management of climate and weather challenges to sustainable development. In view of the deliberations of the current session, there are urgent decisions to be taken to facilitate the work of the AMCOMET Secretariat and the African Union Commission. Among other things, Your Excellences may wish to consider during this session, will be:

- a. The adoption of the draft African Strategy on Meteorology to guide and foster Weather and Climate Services for socioeconomic development in Africa, which is our ultimate objective, and I am glad that we have been focusing on ensuring that the Central African region is well serviced;
- b. Providing guidance for the implementation of the Global framework on Climate Services in Africa and to strengthen its ownership by Africans given Africa's repositioning as a dynamic force in the global arena;
- c. Charting the way forward on how resources to sustain these activities and operations could be mobilized in this era where the financial

crisis is taking its toll even on the African continent. We need to find innovative ways of financing and not only the traditional systems. We need to focus more on the type and quality of delivery of services at country level. In that way we will have heeded the clarion call on provision of quality services.

Related to this, I would like to state that the institutional setting of the AMCOMET, in particular in the context of the AUC specialized Technical Committees adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, is an important issue. As you may all recall, the decision to reconfigure the number of African Union Specialized Technical Committees to 14 was taken by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in a spirit of synergising our efforts, enhancing team spirit, and rationalization of resources, as well as facilitating development of complementarities between various sectors dealing with sustainable development in Africa, from agricultural development to natural resources management, from environment to climate change and climate services. I wish to use this forum to assure you that the AU Commission will transmit to the January 2013 AU Summit the important outcomes of Honourable Ministers' deliberations which are aimed at taking forward these and other issues of

strategic importance for the betterment of Africa. As you are aware the African Union at the highest level has placed meteorology and climate services high on its agenda and remains keen to ensure that obstacles posed to Africa's development by climate change and climate variability are addressed promptly and appropriately. I am sure you are all aware, the AU policy organs have developed a unified negotiation structure and a common position for global climate change negotiations. The said structure includes the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) which is also supported by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and then the African Group of Negotiators. This structure is serviced and backed up by the AU Commission and this has been the case since CoP15 in Copenhagen through CoP16 in Cancun and recently CoP17 in Durban. This mechanism has facilitated ease of flow of information and also interaction amongst different stakeholders.

**Your Excellencies – Honorable Ministers,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We will continue to combine and coordinate our efforts when, in five weeks' time in Doha, Qatar, the international community will meet for the 18<sup>th</sup>



session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Climate Change and Climate variability is, since the seventies, a big concern for the weather and climate services of African Countries. It is high time for our continent to find long term solutions to the effects of the recurrent drought which undermine the development efforts in the Sahara, Sahel, Kalahari deserts and in the Horn of Africa. The same applies to devastating floods such as those being witnessed in West Africa, for example, Nigeria and others. The natural disasters are on the increase and most of them are related to meteorology and hydrology.

I know that the meteorological and hydrological services of our countries had for long gotten neglected and degraded. The Structural Adjustment Programmes didn't leave the services strong. But these services still remain on the front line for these efforts and it is important that while our governments step up financial and technical support to revamp these services, our negotiators, during the forthcoming climate talks, should also ensure that Africa's Voice is united, loud and clear not only on the political issues, but also on scientific and technological issues.

Your Excellences, Honourable Ministers and other distinguished participants, I wish to reaffirm the fact that the African Union Commission, together with its partners and in particular the WMO, will continue to

support the work of AMCOMET to promote Weather and Climate services in favour of Africa's sustainable development and prosperity so that the increasingly unpredictable weather and climate trends do not erode gains so far registered or hamper further progress.

I thank you for your attention.