



STATEMENT

BY

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AGRICULTURE**

DELIVERED

**AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE
AFRICAN GREEN REVOLUTION FORUM
4 SEPTEMBER 2013 MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE**



Rt Hon. Alberto Vaquina, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique
Mr. Jorgen Ole Haslestad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Yara Incorporated
Mr. Steve Musiyiwa
Group Chairman, Econet Wireless/Vice Chairman of Alliance for a Green Revolution
Ms. Jane Karuku, President, Alliance for a Green Revolution
Distinguished Delegations and Participants
All Protocol Observed

On behalf of the African Union Commission and on my own behalf, I would like to take this opportunity to extend the appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us and to all participants at the this extra-ordinary meeting. I also extend sincere appreciation to the African Green Revolution (AGRA) and her partners for the tremendous work and thorough planning that has been put in place to have this event take place.

The African agriculture constituency holds fond memories of Maputo as the birth place of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

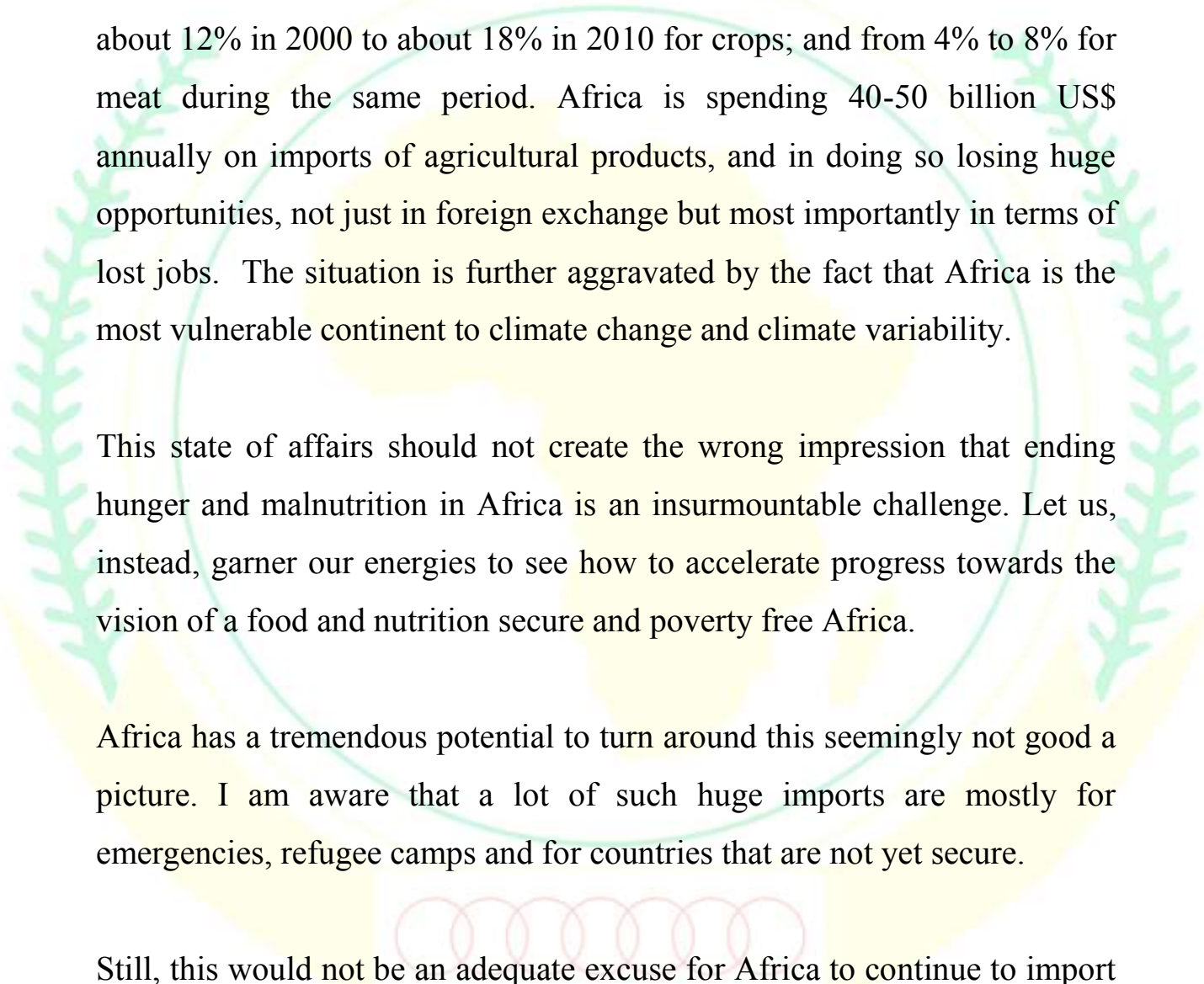
Let me start by indicating that the Commission of the African Union takes the African Green Revolution Forum as a strategic platform for consolidating our cooperation and collaboration and for enhancing our collective clarity on Africa's agricultural transformation agenda which is much more needed now than ever before.

This is my third time to attend the African Green Revolution Fora as I attended the first one in Oslo and that in Accra but I was unable to attend

the last one in Arusha owing to other engagements. I am, therefore, glad to be in your midst and to witness again how the Forum provides fundamental space for a wide range of stakeholders and partners from the scientific constituency, farmers, private sector and development community. It is encouraging and critical to be deliberating on issues pertaining to African agriculture, the mainstay of our economies and societies.

Let me pay tribute to those who have, over the past several years, built a solid foundation to make it happen. Former President of AGRA, Dr. Namanga Ngongi, an illustrious son of Africa, you did pave the way for Ms. Jane Karuku, yet another formidable daughter of Africa who is taking AGRA to greater heights. We, indeed, recognize that this is under the able Chairmanship of an eminent personality, H.E. Kofi Annan, and also the Chair of this Forum now, Steve Musiyiwa, who is the Vice Chairman of Alliance for a Green Revolution.

In the area of agriculture, food and nutrition security, we have made notable progress in the implementation of CAADP, in particular, with AU Member States increasingly placing agriculture high on agenda. They are also increasing commitment to a common vision and strategy known as of CAADP compacts which have now raised to 34 AU Member States, of whom 27 have developed formal national agriculture and food security investment plans. A number of Member States are allocating additional resources to critical investment to priorities that are able to bring better returns to this investment and as such, this is beginning to attract the attention of the private sector at different levels. We see the Maputo Vision taking off. Indeed, the recent positive performance of the economies of African countries cannot be delinked from such a focused effort being exerted on the agricultural sector.



In spite of these efforts and the vast potential, we continue to face challenges relating to food security occasioned by, among other factors, very low levels of agricultural productivity and investment. We end up with cereal yields in Africa averaging only 1.2 tons/ha compared to over 3 tons/ha for Asia and Latin America and about 5.5 tons/ha for the European Union. As a result, Africa's dependence on food import has risen from about 12% in 2000 to about 18% in 2010 for crops; and from 4% to 8% for meat during the same period. Africa is spending 40-50 billion US\$ annually on imports of agricultural products, and in doing so losing huge opportunities, not just in foreign exchange but most importantly in terms of lost jobs. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that Africa is the most vulnerable continent to climate change and climate variability.

This state of affairs should not create the wrong impression that ending hunger and malnutrition in Africa is an insurmountable challenge. Let us, instead, garner our energies to see how to accelerate progress towards the vision of a food and nutrition secure and poverty free Africa.

Africa has a tremendous potential to turn around this seemingly not good a picture. I am aware that a lot of such huge imports are mostly for emergencies, refugee camps and for countries that are not yet secure.

Still, this would not be an adequate excuse for Africa to continue to import food and yet our arable land can ably produce enough to feed the entire continent irrespective of any situation. Africa can even produce enough surplus to export and feed the world.

Over the last five or so years, we have witnessed steady economic growth within our continent. On average, economic growth has been steady within 4-5%.

We would like to avoid a state of affairs where countries grow economically but the food security situation lags behind. Look at how India is a world economic power but of recent it is facing an economic crisis, and has been growing economically, a large portion of its population is malnourished and food insecure. In fact, 60% of the world's malnourished and undernourished are found in India. If our food security situation does not improve in tandem with our economic growth and population growth, the trend will pull down our economic growth.

I, therefore, call upon all of us to reflect on what the challenges are and why, for example, research findings are not being aptly uploaded to farmers, and why we are not adequately scaling up and replicating best practices and success stories some of which have been documented in the African Agriculture Status Report that we launched this morning.

Increasing productivity is key to agriculture and yet we have witnessed a trend where most increases in agricultural production have been a result of area expansion rather than factor production. The African Union is thus partnering with research-related institutions, through FARA, to see how the situation can be improved upon.

Increasing productivity is a factor of many but interrelated actions which we must work on in a concerted manner. For instance, African **soils** are

being deprived of nutrients and we have to reverse this degradation if we are to realize our dream of a Green Revolution. To this end, we are mobilizing and supporting African governments, under the leadership of Nigeria, we are also working with AfDB and fertilizer-related bodies and countries on the continent to ensure the operationalization of the African Fertiliser Financing Mechanism (AFFM) which the African Heads of State and Government adopted in 2006. Fertilizer use on the continent has continued to be extremely low and this largely explains the low productivity.

We are, further, according similar attention to **seeds** by working with relevant stakeholders and partners in taking forward the flagship African Seed and Biotechnology Programme and Action Plan. We know that improved seeds and relevant **technologies** are important and so are markets, which we are also engaged in developing as part of the value chain development. As we focus on the inputs to the farm, we are keen to see the input and output markets continuing to grow and, so, marketing **infrastructure** remains critical and high on our agenda.

We are now confident that with the accelerated efforts on regional integration, infrastructure development and **intra-Africa trade** will provide the much-needed stimulus for farmers to increase production. This goes in tandem with the promotion of agroprocessing and agribusiness. We also devote similar attention to access to agricultural finance and the whole work and space of the private sector and our focus is to create effective partnerships. Further on **finance**, while we continue to encourage countries to continue their efforts towards meeting the CAADP target of at least 10% annual national budgetary allocations to agriculture, we are

analyzing the effectiveness of the budgetary increase in creating inclusive growth.

These and other ideas that will be generated and expounded on during the African Green Revolution Forum which we are in now should be able to contribute to the ongoing exercise of developing the Africa Agenda 2063 titled on A Shared Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, which will be considered for adoption by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2014. And so, your contributions should reach us by the end of October this year. Through this agenda, we want to achieve three things: firstly, to agree on the Africa we want, secondly, to set short and medium term milestones and concrete strategies on how we will get there, and thirdly, to define the role each of us should play to achieve this agenda.

The work that AGRA has been doing and continues to do contributes significantly to Africa's agricultural development objectives. I will just cite a few: in countries where AGRA has been working a lot of work has been done in specific areas including granting financing to supporting specific value chains as well strengthening input and output markets, mainly seeds.. From the AU standpoint, we see AGRA as a very strong and coherent, important partner because AGRA translates the decisions, actions and work of CAADP into concrete interventions.

Another most important milestone is that a number of well-articulated interventions are taking place in agricultural research and development but experience has taught us that because of limited specific approaches

and mechanisms for effective coordination and harmonisation of our work at continental level, is the reason why we don't have a common and coherent message to the global world on whether agriculture has actually achieved a lot or not. Our efforts have not been adequately coordinated and as such we have not sufficiently tracked, reported and communicated the progress in a more consistent and coherent manner all agricultural interventions on the African continent.

The African Union and sub-regional organisations are keen to keep track of what is taking place in agriculture and as part of sustaining the CAADP Momentum, have developed a CAADP Results Framework – a draft of which I am sure has been circulated amongst participants to take note of and internalise.. The intention is to be able to consistently and coherently track all continental interventions including those by the public sector, private sector, NGOs and civil society to our common agenda of agricultural transformation. This is part of Sustaining the CAADP Momentum.

As you may all be aware, 2014 has been declared the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security. As such, all of you are urged - wherever you come from, wherever you are placed and in whatever you do, to be part of building the case for agriculture and demonstrating what agriculture can do on the continent in the entire year of 2014. We would like you to speak to the theme of 2014 which will be made known to you soon.

In July 2014, the African Union Heads of State and Government will be meeting to reflect on the progress in the last 10 years and to make

recommitments in agriculture. I wish to urge you all stakeholders and partners to use the present African Green Revolution Forum to discuss and come up with specific actions that you will require Heads of State to take note of as part of their recommitment to advancing agriculture.

Excellency, Right Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and gentlemen, This is the time to change the face of agriculture in Africa. The global community is increasing focus on Africa. Let us take advantage of this and make it happen. On our part, at the African Union, we pledge to mobilise the political leadership to harness these opportunities.

I wish you productive deliberations and I thank you for your attention.