



KEY NOTE ADDRESS

BY

**H.E Madam Rhoda Peace Tumusiime,
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on the occasion of the

**THIRTY SECOND GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FOR TRYPANOSOMIASIS RESEARCH AND
CONTROL (ISTRC)**

On the Theme :

**Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Research and Control for Sustainable
Agriculture and Rural Development: Promoting Partnership and
Learning Agenda in the context of African Renaissance**

8-12 September 2013 Friendship Hall, Khartoum, The Sudan



Thank you Dr Ahmed Rahman, Masster of Ceremonies

- **Your Excellency, First Vice President, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha**
- **The Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rangeland, Dr. Faysal Hassan Ibrahim**
- **Chairman of the ISCTRC Dr Sadou Maiga**
- **Executive Committee Members of the ISCTRC**
- **Representatives of International Organizations**
- **Eminent Scientists**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps**
- **The National Organizing Committee Members**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Your Excellency we are gratified by your presence on this occasion. Through Your Excellency, I would like first to express my appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of The Sudan for collaborating with the African Union Commission in the organisation and convening of this Conference, and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all of us. Our gratitude goes also to our cooperating partners.

I also welcome all of you to this important conference and I wish to say that I find the theme of the conference **'Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Research and Control for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development: Promoting Partnership and Learning Agenda in the context of African Renaissance'** quite appropriate as it is in consonance with **'Pan Africanism and African Renaissance'** which is the theme for the Golden Jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), predecessor to the African Union.

The theme of this Conference provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the progress made so far in addressing the challenges posed by Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis and the lessons learned that can be useful in informing, planning and implementing Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis research and control interventions in the future. This also falls perfectly in line with the the on-going exercise of developing the Africa Agenda 2063 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. Through this agenda, we want to achieve three objectives: 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.

Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis continue to be a big challenge in rural areas of Africa. The loss due to Animal African Trypanosomiasis (AAT) is substantial and it is estimated at US\$ 5 billion a year. Human sleeping sickness continues to be a public health challenge in many areas of rural Africa. Although the number of reported cases per year have declined to less than 10,000 cases, a lot still needs to be done. And this is the reason why we are gathered here.

Looking back, you would recall that control of African trypanosomiasis in Africa has been undertaken since the 20th Century, when the negative impact of the disease on human and animal health was recognised. These early efforts led to drastic reduction of the disease. However, the reduced burden of the disease led to a declining interest among the public sector authorities and other partners in investing in the control of the disease. Unfortunately, this lull led to the re-emergence of the disease and in the 80's and in the 90's the disease had re-gained its hold in areas where it had earlier been controlled and as such heavy losses in livestock were registered with accompanying adverse impact on the public health.

It was for this reason that the African Heads of State and Government, endorsed the establishment of the Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC) aimed at elimination and eventual eradication of tsetse and trypanosomiasis in the 38 states of Africa infested with the tsetse fly vector. Under the framework of PATTEC, national projects aimed at the creation of sustainable tsetse and trypanosomiasis free areas are being implemented and the PATTEC initiative, now on its 12th year, has now a fully-fledged specialized coordination Office in the AU Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, AU-PATTEC. The Coordinator of PATTEC, Dr Hassane Mahamat is also here. Since the creation of the PATTEC initiative, a lot of efforts and gains have been made in the control of trypanosomiasis. However, more needs to be done. For this task, in the context of Africa Agenda 2063 that I just talked about, we need to reflect on the key issues and lessons that will guide our strategies and operations in Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis research and control in years ahead.

As I mentioned earlier in my address, the number of reported cases of Human African Trypanosomiasis has reduced to below 10,000 per year. I urge you not to lower your guard and remain vigilant as previous periods of low disease levels have been followed by resurgence of the disease. I would, therefore, urge you and in particular the World health Organisation (WHO) and other Institutions to:

- Sustain efforts to support the control of Human African Trypanosomiasis (HAT).
- Work in close collaboration with AU-PATTEC in the efforts that are aimed at vector control.
- Increase advocacy on the disease with emphasis on the education of policy makers so that the elimination of HAT is treated as a high priority issue.

Our Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me, to highlight further issues we need to observe for effective and sustainable tsetse and trypanosomiasis research and control. Past experiences, show that Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis control activities are effective when integrated with other rural development activities. I urge you, therefore,

to consider the institutionalization of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis control activities in the National and Regional Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Compacts when they are being formulated and also in the related Investment Plans. I am glad to note that our Host, The Sudan, signed their CAADP Compact last month and we were privileged to witness the solemn occasion. CAADP provides a framework for national multi-stakeholder consultation processes. Countries should also include tsetse and trypanosomiasis control in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers to ensure mainstreaming of trypanosomiasis control and sustainable livelihoods at the community level. Further, it is now well known that Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis control activities contribute to all the four CAADP pillars: land and water management, private sector and market access, combating hunger and malnutrition as well as research and development. Livestock remains part and parcel of this framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen, tsetse flies know no territorial boundaries and our animal resources, being transboundary in nature are an important reservoir of sleeping sickness. In the past, areas where tsetse had been cleared were soon re-infested by tsetse flies from un-cleared areas leading to apathy and frustration among the tsetse control workers. Therefore eliminating and eventually eradicating tsetse and trypanosomiasis call for area-wide and regional approaches. At this juncture, I wish to commend the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) for the cooperation and support and for hosting last month here in Khartoum an African Ministerial Conference to advance regional collaborative strategies in combating tsetse and trypanosomiasis.

A window of opportunity now exists whereby the current fuller understanding of tsetse ecology and behaviour has made it possible to integrate a combination of two or more technologies in area-wide pest management approaches. For sustainable solutions to the challenges of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis, control projects need to embrace this approach and I am happy to observe that the projects currently being implemented

within the framework of PATTEC have embraced this approach and this is something which others must emulate to be successful.

Important lessons can also be drawn from the Multinational Tsetse Project funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) from 2006 to 2011 that was unique from the point of view of the level of investment that was made, and the scale of the area that was to be cleared of tsetse. Varying degrees of success were obtained in the countries that participated in the Project. It would, therefore be prudent to conduct a comprehensive post-project review of the 6 countries that took part in the Multinational Project to identify the best practices for the benefit of other countries that intend to formulate such a project and also identify factors that might hamper its implementation to the desired extent.

The challenge of tsetse and trypanosomiasis touches on several sectors, namely: agriculture, wildlife, rural development, animal health and public health, presenting one of the best 'One Health' models to date. Therefore, there is need for the various actors that transverse national, regional, continental and global levels to form strategic alliances for Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis research and control. I observe with appreciation the growing interest and enhanced collaboration between institutions in all areas of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Research and Control as evidenced by the number of networks and consortia that have evolved over time.

Ladies and Gentlemen, availability of quality data continues to be a challenge in evidence based decision making in Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis control. There is, therefore, need for investment in quality data collection and analysis to inform the interventions.

In addition, new novel technologies to control trypanosomiasis need to be generated through operational research. Further, in this era of climate change and climate variability, I suggest that research should also be undertaken to elucidate the effect of

climate change on tsetse distribution and the impact on tsetse and trypanosomiasis control.

Over the years, chemotherapy has been used as a tool for control of Human African Trypanosomiasis (HAT), however the main challenge has been toxicity of the drugs, drug resistance, high cost, and lack of new molecules and challenges of delivering the services to the needy in the rural areas. There is, therefore, need to sustain the gains made, by ensuring that the available technologies continue to be accessible to deserving rural communities. In this regard, public and private sector partnerships (PPP) should be encouraged to ensure that the badly needed drugs by the communities are made available when required; to provide new solutions for diagnosis; to enhance effectiveness of surveillance and case management systems and to support development of new therapies.

Our Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen, our technical experts in this field have the onerous task of ensuring the success of the control of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis on the African continent, to facilitate accelerated rural development in the affected countries with the support of our political leaders who are well represented at this Conference. It is, therefore, my expectation that this ISCTRC Conference will deliberate and propose appropriate solutions to many of the unanswered questions in this regard, building on the experiences from best practices and success stories.

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