



OPENING REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY MADAM RHODA PEACE TUMUSIIME, COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AT THE OPENING OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF PAN-SPSO CONSOLIDATION PHASE HELD AT AU-IBAR 6TH FEBRUARY 2014 IN NAIROBI, KENYA

The Director of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA),

The Director of of the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

The Director of of the Inter-African Phytosanitary Centre (AU-IAPSC)

Representatives of COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, IGAD, and SADC

Representatives of the European Commission

Representative of OIE

Distinguished Members of the PANSPSO Steering Committee

The PANSPSO implementing team and other AUC staff present

I wish you a Happy New Year.

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project “Participation of African Nations in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards-setting Organizations Consolidation Phase Two (PANSPSO II)”.

As has traditionally been the case, this Steering Committee meeting was initially scheduled to take place in November 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana back-to-back with the Steering Committee meeting of Veterinary Governance (VET-GOV) Programme.

However, due to the timing of the just-concluded mid-term evaluation of the project, it was agreed not to hold the meeting as earlier scheduled. The intention was to enable the members of the Steering Committee to be appraised of the findings of the evaluation; and perhaps also it has allowed me to be here because at that time I was not going to make it.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On one hand, AU-IBAR assumes the overall responsibility of ensuring effective implementation and results-oriented monitoring for the PAN-SPSO project. On the other hand, the Steering Committee provides a three-fold strategic guidance to the project; : one, to ensure coherent implementation of activities in order to avoid duplication of efforts with other projects but ensure synergy and complementarity; two, to establish a process to alert members to any challenges in project implementation and provide the basis for making any needed adjustments for efficiency and effectiveness; and three, to promote discussions between AU-IBAR, the Inter-

African Phytosanitary Centre (AU-IAPSC), AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities on remedial actions to be adopted to avert technical irregularities that may otherwise lead to non-compliance with the contractual agreements.

As a Steering Committee, it is gratifying to note that we have done our best to make this project a success for the main beneficiaries, the AU Member States and our building blocks, the Regional Economic Communities. However, we recognize that diverse challenges remain especially in respect of Sanitary and Phytosanitary issues. But, at this moment, I wish to congratulate you all for your respective dedication to, and personal active involvement in the Steering Committee to identify the challenges and to propose the recommendations to resolve the issues constraining by the Project Coordination Unit.

We look forward to being appraised of the findings of the evaluation that will be presented to us by the Consultant. This will help inform us about the performance of the project and more importantly provide recommendations for our consideration on the best way forward to achieve the project's objectives.

As you are aware, the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union was concluded last week in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and launched

2014 the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security also marking the 10th Anniversary of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture is, therefore, at the forefront of the year-long programme of consultation, commemoration and consecutively all the related specialized technical Offices and our stakeholders in order to contribute to the renewed momentum for agricultural transformation aimed at a food and nutrition secure and poverty free Africa. In this regard, animal resources shall play an important role and the AU Policy Organs highlighted this point while considering the Report of the AU Ministers of Animal Resources which, as you may remember, was held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in April last year.

The African Union Commission and specifically the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, will continue to support, promote and sustain, with the involvement of RECs and Member States, the effective participation of African countries in the sanitary and phytosanitary standard setting processes and also encourage them in complying with the global agricultural standards which they participated in adopting. This is in line with the resolutions of the Conference of the AU Ministers responsible for animal resources in 2010 in Entebbe, Uganda, and the decisions of the AU Heads of State and Government related to the common positions and the SPS

committees. I would also like to call upon you to go beyond the project boundaries and see how we relate with the globe given the influence of so many products coming from outside, which we need to be sure of their sanitary and phytosanitary standards. We need to enhance capacity to understand them.

In the course of this Steering Committee meeting, we shall be briefed on progress made in implementing the recommendations adopted at the last Steering Committee meeting and the project activities as per the financing agreements. We shall also reflect on the challenges and build consensus on the way forward.

We expect that our implementing partners will continue to foster partnership through:

- Sustaining synergy and complementarity building, making judicious utilization of each partner's comparative advantages in advancement of our agreed priorities;**
- Holistic information sharing;**
- Piloting, broadening and sustaining good practices.**

In this regard, I look forward to your active participation and valuable contribution to the deliberations. As I end, I would like to add my voice to that of Director AU-IBAR in appreciating the support we continue to receive from our partners, the EU. I

now declare open the fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the PANSPSO Consolidation phase.

I thank you for your attention.

