

**HER EXCELLENCY TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,
COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**

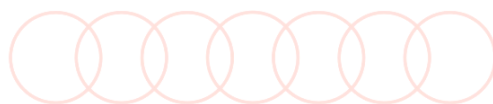
ADDRESSES THE

**CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICERS/DIRECTORS OF VETERINARY
SERVICES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

ON

AFRICA AGENDA 2063

7 MAY 2014 NAIROBI, KENYA



All protocol observed.

I wish to, first of all, thank you for the work you do in your respective countries and also together in regional and international fora. I would like you to know that the African Union Commission values the sector you are working for because livestock is important.

Given the increasing importance of the livestock sector in Africa's socio-economic transformation agenda, I made mention in my statement yesterday, of Africa Agenda 2063 and the need for you as Chief Veterinary Officers/Directors of Veterinary Services of Member States of the African Union to make an input as the document is being finalized for adoption by the AU Heads of State and Government at their Summit next month in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Different sectors are being informed of what is taking place in this process and being asked to make input.

I later requested Prof. Ahmed El-Sawalhy, Director of the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) to find time out of your programme here so that I can talk about this in detail and seek your valuable views and comments. I am glad we now have the opportunity to discuss this important subject.

As you firm up Africa's common position on animal health and animal standards to be presented at the 82nd General Session of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) at the end of this month in Paris, France, also know that similar efforts are being exerted in developing a common agenda and common approaches to advance our interests internationally by, for example, concretising Africa's common position for global climate change negotiations at the end of this year in Lima, Peru the same way the African Union did in previous Conferences of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and also at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and others. Indeed, when we stand together we are stronger and our voice is heard in the international arena and our interest and concerns are taken into account in the global architecture. I, therefore, commend your efforts as a collective to make Africa's presence felt in international negotiations and make the case for Africa on livestock matters especially at OIE. This is very important. In fact, for climate change, the AU has a Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), supported by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), serviced by the African Group of Negotiators (AGN). We would like you to continue working hard to ensure that the standards being set for animal health do not stop African

animal and animal products from accessing lucrative international markets. You should try to assert standards as well that take into account our own peculiarities. I am aware that much of the funding for our participation in the preparatory meetings of that nature, is provided by our partners and there may be fear that if African negotiators are proving to be so assertive, the funding for their participation could be curtailed. I would like to make an appeal to AU Member States to endeavor to fund participation of our own delegations to such meetings especially those making preparatory work for eventual global standards on livestock.

Also as the world is gearing up for post-2015 Development Agenda, Africa is also participating in that process and in the same vein developing the Africa Agenda 2063 of “**An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena**”. This is being done as part of marking the 50th Anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity, predecessor to the African Union. As you know, the Golden Jubilee is being commemorated under the Theme: **Pan Africanism and African Renaissance**.

On the post-2015 Development Agenda, we have been engaged in consultations with Regions and Member States of the African Union in order to place Africa's concerns high on the global agenda being formulated. Her Excellency Sirleaf Johnson, President of the Republic of Liberia is one of the co-Chairs of the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel packaging together key issues in this regard. In this role and in her role as Chair of the High-level Committee of AU Heads of State and Government, she has played a critical role in ensuring that Africa's interests are reflected adequately. As you may know, the MDGs that are coming to an end next year were made without Africa making as much input though we appreciate some of the components such as education of girls, access to water and sanitation, food and nutrition, and combating HIV/AIDS and others. This time round, we have done everything possible to ensure that Africa is well represented and issues of interest to Africa are duly taken on board. It is on the post-2015 Development Agenda that global partnerships will base their interactions and support.

Remember that when the United Nations Millennium Declaration and Development Goals were being formulated in 2000, Africa was considered to be the '21st Century's development challenge' but as the post-2015 development agenda is being drawn, Africa is being seen as a rising, competitive and respected continent and we need to seize the moment. That makes Africa Agenda 2063 pertinent and opportune for us to debate Africa's present and future

We have, indeed, come a long way. Since 2000, Africa has witnessed accelerated progress on such indicators as maternal, child and infant mortality; on access to primary education for boys and girls; on women's empowerment and on nutrition and food security. Investment (both public and private) in critical infrastructure has picked up. Also in the ICT Revolution, Africa has emerged as a very good case study on how technology can be used to leapfrog development. African higher education enrolment has increased and our economies have recorded sustained growth, with a number of our countries amongst the fastest growing in the world. Also encouraging is that the vast majority of African people live in countries that are now democratic, peaceful and with improved governance.

Specifically in the livestock sector a lot of achievements have been registered and some of them were mentioned yesterday including the eradication of rinderpest and the successful implementation of various programmes and projects across the African continent.

And yet, as we assess our past and present, we are mindful that our major challenges, such as poverty, inequality, the burden of disease, hunger, underdevelopment and conflicts in some parts of our continent persist, and remain major obstacles to African development. I know you are trying to work together to combat transboundary diseases but I know there is more you can do to get livestock to a higher level we can be proud of.

We are also mindful that for the economic growth to be sustainable, transformative and lead to shared prosperity, we have to implement plans to diversify our economies, grow and improve our agriculture and to integrate our continent - at a much faster pace. The livestock sector must contribute to this drive. I know you are doing your best. But what can be done to assert livestock in the development agenda for the African continent. I know that countries experiencing constraints occasioned by limited resources may not position livestock high on agenda but it is important to understand and appreciate that it is not government alone that should do the business of development. And to this end, I would like to know how much you have engaged the private sector. Government departments have all along been tuned to delivery through government systems but it is now time to engage with the private sector and influence the private sector to do much better for livestock. There is, for example, need for value chain development because, why should Africa continue to import livestock products from outside? Why don't we follow the example of Ghana which imports meat from Burkina Faso. This can be expanded for other AU Member States to import meat from lead livestock countries like Chad and Niger, among others. Furthermore, how do we develop agri-food systems based on livestock? I know that South

Africa is doing well and Botswana is exporting livestock products to Europe. Many other AU Member States have the potential to do likewise if not better.

I am aware that we have challenges in Africa and the need to improve infrastructure to be able to improve intra-African trade from the current level of 10 per cent. As you are aware, the African Union, through the Programme for Infrastructure Development (PIDA) is addressing this challenge head on. There are plans embedded in the Africa Agenda 2063 to promote strong railway and road linkages. We are also engaging China on setting up regional aviation hubs.

It is these realities, the achievements and the challenges, which prompted the African Union, as it celebrated 50 years since its founding, to engage Africans from all walks of life in consultations on the future they want. That is what I would like us to do with you now.

Agenda 2063 is therefore our vision for an Africa that is integrated, peaceful, prosperous and people-centred. It builds on the vision of Pan Africanism, the continental plans of the last five decades, and brings those and more recent strategies and plans together into a coherent framework for transformation. To implement this vision, Agenda 2063 framework will include milestones that we need to achieve in the immediate, the next two, three and four decades, to realise our dream.

Some of the priorities milestones and eventually Pan African Development Goals are already in the 3rd Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of the African Union Commission recently adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

These include investing in our people, their health, education, security, nutrition and general well-being; expanding agriculture and agribusinesses; investments in science, technology, research and innovation; and accelerating infrastructure development such as transport, energy, ICT, water, sanitation and other social and economic infrastructure.

It includes our drive for economic diversification and industrialisation, through value-addition and beneficiation of our minerals and other natural resources; expansion of manufacturing, the services sectors, including tourism and building our blue and green economies.

Central to all of the above, is our drive for African integration, which we have to pursue relentlessly, or perish. As you are aware, the African Union is vigorously struggling to remove barriers to intra-Africa trade, as well as

deploy joint efforts and investment in building our productive capacities. The infrastructure projects in energy, transport and ICT are also about connecting Africa, our economies and our people.

These processes augur well for the livestock sector as well.

Indeed, as the recent tragedies of transboundary livestock as well as human diseases illustrate, for example avian influenza, diseases know no borders and unless we have stronger health systems everywhere and unless we cooperate to strengthen our early warning systems, we are all affected. No single country can on its own deal with threats such as transboundary diseases, terrorism and so on.

It is in this context that your views and recommendations would be most welcome to enrich the Africa Agenda 2063 from the perspective of the livestock sector. How does for example the African livestock sector contribute to not only trade in livestock but to agro-processing and agribusiness for better returns to the African citizens in pursuit of socio-economic development?

Thank you.

