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Opening Remarks

by

Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture,  
African union Commission

at the

Meeting of the Africa Committee of the International Fertiliser Development Centre (IFDC)

Monday, May 19, 2014 Rabat, Morocco

Thank you Master of Ceremonies

- Fellow board members, Honourable Deputy Minister, IFDC staff and distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the 2014 Meeting of the Africa Committee of the International Fertiliser Development Centre (IFDC) and I wish to convey to you warm greetings and best wishes from Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The Commission of the African Union appreciates the constructive and productive partnership we enjoy with IFDC under the able stewardship of Dr. Amit Roy in furtherance of our shared objective of promoting fertiliser development and application for African agricultural transformation. In this connection, I would like to commend the technical support provided by IFDC in the Technical Convening Group of policy experts whom I received in my office in January this year. The Group comprises AFAP, ReNAPRI, AFSA and AUC-NPCA, among others in support of our common efforts to make the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security attain its intended objective of setting the scene for Africa's agricultural transformation over the next decade.
- Your presence here today is eloquent testimony of your dedication to increasing food security in Africa and the world through improved inputs particularly, fertiliser.
- Ending hunger is a complex and never-ending mission. It is more important now than ever before as we highlight the OAU/AU 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary under the Theme: ***Pan Africanism and African Renaissance***. For us as the African Union, we set for ourselves the target as 2025 when we want to see hunger off the map of Africa.

- By 2050, Africa's population will more than double to 2 billion in a world that will have 9.6 billion people. To meet global food demand, production must increase by at least 60 percent. Africa's requirement alone for additional food will increase by 178 percent. What a task!
- This puts enormous pressure on the Africa farmers to provide adequate quantities of nutritious food for their families.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to agricultural development. The challenge is great, but together we are making progress and we must sustain the momentum.
- Effective agricultural policies, public-private partnerships and new fertilizer technologies – all have reversed decades of declining per capita food production on the African continent. In fact, GDP in much of Africa has grown by 5%-6% a year, signaling that agricultural development is economic development.
- Reiterating commitments across the continent, the African Union has declared and launched 2014 the Year of Agriculture and Food Security under the Theme: ***Transforming Africa's agriculture for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods through harnessing opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development.***
- 2014 also marks over a decade since the launch of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). As you know, the CAADP framework has been critical in elevating agriculture in Africa. Since 2003, 40 AU Member States have signed CAADP compacts, [13 countries](#) have surpassed the CAADP goal – dedicating 10 percent or more of their annual budget to agriculture and many of these countries have formulated credible investment plans ready for implementation.
- Still, [223 million Africans](#) are undernourished.
- We must remain vigilant in our continued efforts to get fertilizer in farmers' hands and farms.
- Since the Africa Fertilizer Summit in 2006, governments, donors, international organizations and regional economic communities are finally recognizing fertilizer as essential to food production in Africa. The landmark event began the process of empowering smallholder farmers with the tools they need to increase food production and participate in global markets.
- Today, the Summit's *Abuja Declaration* is the marker that African Union Member States use to measure their progress.
- In pursuit of the target of 50 kilogrammes of fertilizer per hectare, set at the 2006 Abuja Summit, most African countries are instituting programs to make fertilizers affordable for

farmers. Fertilizer use per hectare increased in 13 countries across the continent between 2006 and 2010. This is still quite low compared to 54 countries.

- Programs to train private sector agro-dealers were launched in 15 countries. In Rwanda, for example, there were less than 10 agro-dealers in 2006; now there are more than 1,000. This is a remarkable achievement.
- Public-private partnerships are key to sustaining and increasing agricultural growth.
- Nigeria and Ethiopia are two of the leading AU Member States making great strides. In Nigeria, 4.5 million farmers accessed subsidized fertilizer in 2013. The government's renewed commitment to agriculture is resulting in the development of six new urea plants.
- Over the past five years, Ethiopia's agriculture sector has sustained 10 percent growth and has made an increase to 15% of national budgetary allocation to agriculture far surpassing the CAADP target of 10%. The country is installing four new blending plants to produce site-specific fertilizers. In farmer trials, these fertilizer blends have produced 20-30 percent increases in maize and wheat yields.
- As members of the Africa Committee of the IFDC Board, we must ensure that we champion the efforts driving successes like these to multiply across the continent. IFDC has grown tremendously in the past few years. With increased donor support and partnerships, we have a great opportunity to make real, lasting change especially in the context of Africa Agenda 2063 on the Africa We Want, that is ***“an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.*”**
- We are happy to have with us today the Honorable Dr. Mohammed Sadiki, Morocco's Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Marine Fisheries. Dr. Sadiki has played a key role in improving agricultural productivity in Morocco. I am sure many of you have heard about the Green Morocco Plan expected to create 1.15 million jobs by 2020 and triple the income of nearly 3 million rural residents. You have also heard of the OCP which is erecting a plant to produce fertilisers solely for Africa. We look forward to the rest of Africa leveraging Morocco's best practices and success stories in this regard.
- We have missed the presence and usual active participation and valuable input of Honourable Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Rwanda, who has had to attend to another urgent and important official engagement but remains committed to our common cause and sends his all warm greetings and best wishes.
- Again, colleagues and friends, thank you for being here. I look forward to our continued productive dialogue.