



The African Union

**REMARKS BY THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE FALL ARMY WORM

AU HEADQUARTERS, 4TH AUGUST 2017

OLD PLENARY HALL

**Your Excellencies,
Colleagues Commissioners,
Ambassadors and PRC Members
Members of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Allow me, on behalf of our distinguished Chairperson, H.E. Dr Moussa Faki Mahamat, to welcome you all to this event, welcome and goodafternoon.

We are here this afternoon because of the Fall Army Worm. What is the Fall Army Worm, and why do we regard it as a major threat to be addressed urgently and with all the resources at our disposal?

The Fall Army Worm, as our scientists have informed us, is a caterpillar that feeds on maize mainly but also on our staple crops such as rice, sugar, and cassava.

If we do not arrest its spread, it has the potential of seriously threatening the food security of our Continent.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

If we do not control its spread, it could worsen an already dire food security situation.

Our scientists, our entomologists are struggling with the situation, but the truth is that we need help, and we need it urgently.

The AU Commission is taking the matter seriously. Our sister Josefa Sacko, our Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, has already held a meeting with FAO regional office in Accra. We have contacted Dr Patrick Kormawa, the Head of the FAO office in East Africa.

We are seeking to increase our knowledge of the situation, the better to address it. We need to:

- Create awareness around across our Continent
- To share information with Member States

- Mobilize our political leaders to take action at national level
- Mobilize resources to support the AUC
- And strengthen the capacity of the AU Inter-Africa Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC) in Yaounde.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The leadership of AU Commission is determined to do everything possible to work with the Regional Economic Communities to support our member states to understand the nature of the Fall Armyworm and how to manage and control it so that its impact is minimized. To do this, the AU Commission is calling upon everyone to join hands with us in the fight against this devastating pest.

1. For the Commission to be effective in fulfilling its mandate, we need to receive regular and accurate information, from technical organizations, on the spread of the pest, its impact on crop yields, and

measures being taken to control it. It is only with such information that we can be able to inform and mobilize political leadership that is needed to fight this pest. Therefore, I call upon all technical organizations to support the AU Commission by undertaking surveillance and research on the impact of the Fall Armyworm and share the findings with us on a regular basis.

2. I call upon the press and media to partner with us to spread accurate information on the pest, especially on measures to be taken to control the pest. Our population will need to be kept informed and educated accurately on this matter.

3. I call upon our development partners to provide financial support in generating for knowledge on the Fall Armyworm and in our efforts to mobilize our leaders to fight the pest.

With these remarks, I want to thank everyone for responding to our call at short notice to attend this Press Conference.

Thank you all.