

**OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. DR. MUSALIA MUDAVADI, E.G.H.;
PRIME CABINET SECRETARY AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR
FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS**

DURING THE AFRICAN FERTILIZER AND SOIL HEALTH SUMMIT

NAIROBI, 7th MAY 2024

Hon. Frank Tumwebaze, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of the Republic of Uganda and Chair of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment

Hon. Mithika Linturi, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development of the Republic of Kenya

Your Excellency Amb. Josefa Sacko, AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission (AUC)

Honorable Ministers of Agriculture

Commissioners of the African Union Commission

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning!

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you here today as we congregate to dialogue on matters of **African Fertilizer and Soil Health**.
2. This summit comes at a particularly challenging time when millions of Africans across the continent are facing severe food and nutrition insecurity. It provides an opportunity for us to reflect on long-term and sustainable strategies of how to feed the growing African Population.

3. We appreciate the Heads of State and Government from the African Union who have provided the Policy Framework and guidance on the key focus of this summit.
4. In particular, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has served as the framework for action for agricultural transformation across Africa since 2003. The CAADP, an AU initiative, supports member states in increasing investment and productivity of the agricultural sector.
5. In this regard, allow me to highlight some of the key declarations and commitments by our Heads of State and Government to drive agricultural productivity to improve food and nutrition security:
 - **The Maputo Declaration:** At the second ordinary Assembly of the African Union in July 2003 in Maputo, African Heads of State and Government endorsed the “Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” (Assembly/AU/Decl.7(II)). The Declaration contained several important decisions but prominent among them was the “commitment to the allocation of at least 10 percent of National budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development policy implementation within five years.”
 - **The Abuja Declaration:** In 2006, the declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution identified the critical need to increase fertilizer use to stimulate agricultural productivity growth to end hunger and poverty in Africa.
 - **The Malabo Declaration:** In June 2014, African leaders declared their commitment to end hunger in Africa by 2025. The declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods focused on accelerating agricultural growth by at least doubling current agricultural production levels, by the year 2025.
 - **The Soil Initiative for Africa:** In September 2020, at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa Forum (AGRF), the African Union Commission (AUC) issued a call for an ambitious long-term effort to systematically improve the health and productivity of Africa’s soils. Improved soil condition will be achieved by scaling proven and locally adapted technologies, including balanced and efficient

(inorganic and organic) fertilizer application, to improve productivity for all farmers and in many cases, sequester greenhouse gases. The forum emphasized policies, programs and institutional structures for an effective soil management system to improve and maintain soil fertility across Africa into the future.

6. I believe monitoring the implementation of these commitments and initiatives is ongoing. During this summit, there is need to review our performance and through lessons learnt, propose innovative solutions to address emerging challenges.
7. It is important to recognize that, we cannot achieve our aspiration of eliminating hunger and poverty if we do not take a sustainable approach to **soil health, prudent use of agricultural inputs, environmental conservation and embracing of technologies that can make our production systems efficient and effective.** The realization of this important goal will ensure that as we feed ourselves, we also leave an environment where our generations can be able to sustain themselves.
8. Though fertilizers are estimated to contribute more than thirty percent of the crop yield, we have witnessed in our country that fertilizer alone cannot sustain increased agricultural productivity and production. For example, observations have been made that maize yields have stagnated despite increased fertilizer use. This has resulted in input bundling, emphasis on balanced nutrition and soil sampling and testing.
9. In recognition of the need for integrated soil management, the Government in collaboration with other stakeholders has developed the **National Soil Management Policy.** This policy contains critical directions on **sustainable agricultural soil and water management, soil management and environment, technology development, dissemination and utilization, fertilizer development and investments.**
10. I encourage you to take time and attend the Kenyan Government side event to appreciate the progress made in this area and witness the launching of the National Soil Management Policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen

11. It is important to note that, depending on how a government's governance structures are designed, issues to do with fertilizer and soil health cut across different jurisdictions. This means we need to develop coordination mechanisms where all the stakeholders sit at the same table and develop action plans that address issues of fertilizer and soil health holistically.
12. I am also aware that it has been difficult for majority of the African governments to allocate budgets to agriculture and rural development at the levels anticipated in the Maputo declaration. This has been compounded by the competing resource allocation needs and the impact of the recent COVID-19 that affected the economic performance of most of the African countries and the world at large. As the economies recover, I urge this summit to come up with financing proposals that are practical and achievable. This will be the only way to reach the targets set within the action plans.
13. Let me conclude by wishing you fruitful discussions and a conclusive outcome that will define the use of Fertilizer and Soil Health in Africa.
14. Enjoy a comfortable stay in Nairobi and don't forget to sample our heritage and tourist attractions across the country.

Africa, together we can do it.

Thank you all!