



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

PRESS RELEASE

**THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME
PROMOTE HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING IN AFRICA**

Addis Ababa, 6th June 2017- The African Union Commission in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Kenya, has held the Third Continental Consultation on Home Grown School Feeding in Africa. The objective of the meeting was to strengthen national school feeding programmes across the continent as a key instrument for enhancing access, retention and performance in education in Africa.

Speaking on behalf of the Commission, H.E. Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology stated that the meeting would also be used to review and discuss the report on school feeding prepared by the consultant 'Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI)', after which it would be submitted to the Policy Organs of the African Union for adoption. He noted that the vision of the African Union as captured in its development framework, Agenda 2063, cannot be realized if our children cannot go to school because they are hungry.

Delivering the keynote address, Hon. Dr. Fred Okeng'o Matiang'i, the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Kenya thanked the World Food Programme and its partners for supporting the School Feeding Programme in Kenya. He stated that the foremost responsibility of African leaders is to raise our children responsibly and provide food for them. He observed that after more than five decades of the attainment of

independence, lack of food for school children should not be a problem we are still grappling with.

He further noted that if Africa wants to be respected in the world then it should be able to feed its children and ensure that its girls go to school. Hon. Matiang'i stated that Kenya is committed to supporting the African Union to ensure that School feeding becomes a success in Africa. He informed the meeting that Kenya in collaboration with the World Food Programme has been implementing the School Feeding programme since 1980.

"Today, the Government of Kenya supports 1.1 million children, while the World Food Programme caters for 500,000 children in Kenya" the Cabinet Secretary stated. He further added that Kenya intends to fully finance its Home Grown School Feeding Programme from 2018.

In his remarks, the representative of the Brazilian Government noted that the School Feeding programme which started in Brazil has spread throughout the world including Africa. He informed the meeting that under South-South cooperation, Brazil cooperates with many African countries in diverse areas including school feeding. He congratulated the African Union Commission and the World Food Programme for organizing this meeting and wished participants fruitful deliberations.

The WFP's Regional Director for West Africa, Mr. Abdou Dieng lauded the African Union for taking the initiative in organizing this meeting. He informed the meeting that the President of Benin has allocated 12 million dollars for the school feeding programme in Benin. He also thanked the Director of WFP's Centre of Excellence in Brazil for his assistance and cooperation. He expressed the hope that the recommendations that would emerge from this meeting would be fully implemented.

Mr. Daniel Balaban, Director of WFP's Centre of Excellence informed the meeting that he has had the opportunity to run the school feeding programme in Brazil and the benefits have been tremendous. He stated that the Brazilian Government created the zero hunger strategy, which included school feeding programme. Mr. Balaban noted that 30 percent of the food for school feeding in Brazil comes from smallholder farmers. School feeding should be considered as an investment and not expenditure. Concluding his remarks, he stated that Brazil would continue to support the African Union and its member states in the school feeding programme.

The meeting was attended by 90 participants including Ministers, Deputy Ministers and representatives from African Union Member States, Senior Officials from World Food Programme and the African Union Commission, Representatives of the Brazilian Government, Research Institutes, International Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

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