

**AFRICAN UNION**

**الاتحاد الأفريقي**



**UNION AFRICAINE**

**UNIÃO AFRICANA**

---

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 517 700 Fax: 517844  
website: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)

---

**REMARKS OF H. E. TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,  
COMMISSIONER, DEPT. OF RURAL ECONOMY AND  
AGRICULTURE, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD  
SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CFSSD-6)**

**27 -30 OCTOBER, 2009**

**DELIVERED ON HER BEHALF**

**BY**

**DR JAMES N MBATA, DEPT. OF RURAL ECONOMY AND  
AGRICULTURE, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Invited Guests,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I should say that I am very delighted to be part of such a distinguished gathering to discuss issues pertaining to the role of Agriculture, Food Security, Poverty alleviation and sustainable consumption and production in the continent. I am here on behalf of Her Excellency Mme Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, at Africa Union Commission (AUC). She could not be here with us today, due to some other urgent and pressing matters of the Commission.

However, H.E has requested me to represent her at this significant event of the Sixth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development, focusing on “Sustainable Consumption and Production for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Reduction” in the African Continent.

### **Our common Problem**

I wish to preface my remarks by recalling that in the recent past the issues of global food crisis and high food prices, economic meltdown, high energy and transportation costs, climate change, floods, desertification and droughts have all negatively impacted on the continent. These have indeed undermined some of the recent gains made by some African countries towards attaining those aspects of the MDG goals related to Food security and poverty reduction in particular.

Africa is already experiencing the effects of climate change in the form of extreme variations in weather patterns and changing ecosystems. Increased severity and frequency of droughts, floods, storms and tornadoes; water stress, erosion of coastal areas, higher incidence of vector-borne diseases, among others, are all having a drastic effect on African economies and livelihoods. Not too long ago, the continent witnessed a devastating flood that killed and ravaged many homes and communities in parts of West Africa. Empirical evidence suggest that an estimated 30 per cent of Africa's coastal infrastructure and settlement will be flooded if the current trends in global warming is not checked. There is also ample evidence that the production of subsistence and cash crop, as well as animals and livestock have all been negatively impacted by climate change and this has accentuated the current food crisis on the continent which could jeopardize the efforts by Member States to fight hunger and reduce poverty.

### **Our common goal**

Ladies and Gentlemen: this meeting therefore could not have been convened at a better time than now, when Africa is grappling with many challenges that hinder the improvement of living conditions of people in the continent particularly those in the rural sector where most of the poor small-holders subsist and depend on agriculture, directly or indirectly, for their livelihoods. Agricultural productivity, entrepreneurship and value addition, therefore, are all potential drivers of poverty reduction in rural-based economies such as those of many African countries.

Thus, it is highly expedient for the continent to evolve models of development that will ensure a balanced and judicious use of our limited resources to satisfy current developmental needs as well as to meet the needs of future generations.

## **Our Common Strategies**

Ladies and Gentlemen: because of today's challenges for a sustainable production and consumption society, we in the African Union Commission together with our development partners have initiated several strategies and programs that emphasize the judicious use of our scarce resources to meet the basic needs of the teeming population of the continent particularly with regards to food security, poverty reduction and economic growth. These initiatives include:

### 1) The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)

The CAADP framework addresses long-term growth options such as increase in productivity and the development of rural infrastructure and markets as well as and short-term emergencies such as food crisis and high food prices through safety nets and the use of various automatic stabilizers through a judicious use and management of the natural resources and the environment. As part of the implementation of CAADP, more than two dozen countries, under the leadership of two of the RECs; i.e., COMESA and ECOWAS, are actively involved in refining sector policies, developing investment programs, and establishing the necessary partnerships and alliances to successfully implement the CAADP agenda and achieve its targets of 6% annual agricultural growth rate and 10% agricultural share in national budgetary allocation.

### 2) Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa

The right and access to land is fundamental in ensuring food security and poverty reduction within the continent. It is in this respect that AUC, in a joint initiative with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African

Development Bank (ADB) has developed a Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa to assist member states to initiate and implement land policy reforms for strengthening land rights, enhancing productivity and securing livelihoods while conserving this scarce resource for future generation.

3) African Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD) AMESD, which is being hosted by the AU Commission and funded by the European Union through the EDF9, seeks to provide decision makers with reliable, timely and accurate monitoring information in terms of an early detection of water and food stress and thus provide a better assessment of the impact of policies and other interventions necessary for environmental sustainability.

4) Climate for Development Program in Africa (CLIMDEV-AFRICA)

Africa is expected to be the most vulnerable continent to the negative impacts of the effects of climate change due to poverty and low adaptive capacity, although it contributes very little, if any, to emission of Green House Gases that lead to global warming and climate change.

CLIMDEV-Africa which is a joint program of AUC, AfDB and the UNECA, is an essential step aimed at ensuring that adaptation to climate change in Africa is both timely and effective, and that it is fully integrated within the development process of the continent particularly in the areas of agriculture and health that are most likely to be affected by climate change.

### **Our Shared Values**

Chairperson, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen: these are by no means the only areas where the AUC is collaborating with some of our

development partners and standing shoulder to shoulder to develop projects, programs and alliances with relevant stakeholders and mobilize resources for the effective implementation of projects in the various thematic areas relevant to Sustainable Consumption and consistent with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the outcomes of the World Summit Sustainable Development. However, since time would not allow me to elaborate on all the strategic areas where AUC has initiated activities and programs, such as in transportation, waste management, control and disposal of obsolete pesticides, I believe that these topical issues will also receive adequate attention during the course of your deliberations.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is our hope that in the course of this meeting useful discourse and dialogue would ensue to help develop and support appropriate policies and frameworks that are owned and driven nationally by African countries and can be translated into concrete actions capable of poverty reduction, economic growth and sustainable development.

I thank for your kind attention.