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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference on "Making Sustainable  
Agriculture a Future for Youth in Africa" (Rome, 2 July 2017)  
*- Information from the Commission*

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Delegations will find in Annex a joint letter from Commissioner Phil Hogan and Estonian Minister for Rural Affairs Tarmo Tamm, together with the Concluding remarks of the above-mentioned Conference.



*Dear Colleagues,*

*The second AU EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference "Making Sustainable Agriculture a future for youth in Africa" took place on 2 July 2017 in Rome, back to back the FAO Conference. This event was co-chaired by the European Commission, the African Union Commission and the Estonian Presidency of the Council. It was remarkably successful, in terms of participation as well as substantial and constructive discussions.*

*The overall aim of this Conference was to contribute to reinforcing the AU EU Partnership by building up political engagement on agricultural policy ahead of the Africa-EU Summit in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, on 29-30 November. Agriculture ministers have an unrivalled understanding of agricultural production systems, processing and market management. We have a potentially critical contribution to make towards a common vision on how to generate sustainable and inclusive growth, supporting job creation in the agri-food sector and rural economy for African youth, and ensuring a sustainable management of natural resources.*

*The agri-food sector is by far the main employer in Africa and the only sector with capacity to create the jobs that will give African youth the economic opportunities to stay and build their home countries. The success of the agri-food sector is essential to deliver food and nutrition security, raise farmers' incomes alleviating poverty, and to reduce migratory pressure. These challenges demand not only diplomatic initiatives, but a response from all sectors implicated and not least agriculture.*

*The outcome of the Ministerial conference is summarised in the 'Concluding remarks' of the co-organisers (Annex 1), including a list of tangible and realistic deliverables which could constitute a valuable input for the Africa EU Summit. These include:*

- *Making the case for innovative funding to back EU agri-businesses prepared to invest with African partners in the sector;*
- *Promoting partnerships between agricultural universities and research institutes, using educational exchange programmes;*
- *Partnering African countries in developing and protecting their geographical indications.*

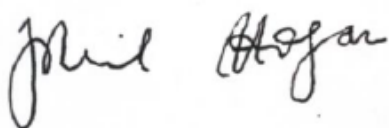
*The list of deliverables also covers Research, Innovation and the role of digitalisation in agriculture, improved Agriculture Water Use and Management and action on Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Losses and Waste.*

*The Second AU EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference sets the scene to put agriculture at the forefront of the renewed AU EU Partnership, in line with the priorities set by the Communication on the Africa EU Partnership<sup>1</sup>. This is important in view of the crucial role the agriculture and agri-food sectors play in ensuring food security, creating of jobs (tackling root causes of irregular migration) and achieving the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.*

*On the basis of the positive outcome of the Second AU EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference, we invite EU Agriculture Ministers to actively contribute to the preparation of the AU EU Africa Summit 2017.*

*There is an opportunity to join forces to deliver collectively on these outcomes and increase therefore the visibility of EU engagement with Africa, particularly in the strategic agri-food sector.*

*Yours sincerely,*



*Phil HOGAN*

*Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development  
European Commission*



*Tarmo TAMM*

*Minister for Rural Affairs  
Republic of Estonia*

*Encl.:*

*Concluding remarks of the co-organisers of the AU EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference*

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THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

## MAKING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE A FUTURE FOR YOUTH IN AFRICA - Concluding remarks -

This was a **meeting of partners**, and also an opportunity to:

- Recognise the African countries commitment to mutual accountability, on the progresses made in the Malabo implementation.
- Reaffirm the European support for the implementation of the Malabo Declaration, within the framework Africa's Agenda 2063, and particularly the recently launched AU Business Plan for Implementation of the CAADP-Malabo Declaration 2017-2021.
- Last but not least, because we are in Rome, to strengthen the relations between the AU and the EU members of FAO with the organisation of regular meetings between the EU delegation and the AU member states delegations.

### **Broad areas of agreement:**

#### **On Responsible investments and market access:**

- The **farming and agri-food business communities have a key role to play** for agricultural transformation. **Governments and public sector must promote a stable, responsible and inclusive business environment.**
- **The European Union is preparing the launch the European External Investment Plan (EIP)** - an innovative instrument to leverage private investment and to promote enabling conditions for investments in Africa. **Sustainable agriculture is of primary importance in the targets of the EIP.**
- Similarly, the African Union Country Agribusiness Partnership Framework (CAP-F), as well as the AU continental Agribusiness Strategy, are useful mechanisms for mobilising private sector investments, promoting jobs and wealth creation in Africa, particularly for youth and women.
- We discussed **options for strengthening the Africa-EU dialogue via an Agricultural Business Forum**, as a way to increase cooperation between Africa-EU agricultural businesses.

- **Exchange programmes between AU-EU young farmers** should be further investigated, including within the VET programmes. The involvement of young farmers' organisations is essential to this end.
- The CFS Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investments in Agriculture and Food systems need to be implemented by all. Beyond that, we agreed on the need to establish **guiding principles for investment policymaking, to promote enabling conditions for responsible investments in Africa and to make such responsible investments thrive in the agri-food sector** – this is a process that would need further engagement on both European and African sides.
- **Building capacity to access markets** is a must, as well as making the most of trading opportunities, especially in relation with the European Partnership Agreements.
- The **Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) capacity building** efforts of the AU Commission, particularly the food safety initiative, were acknowledged. This is an avenue that needs further exploring within the AU-EU partnership.
- The European Commission is also willing to support an **AU Continental Strategy to develop Geographical Indications**, as this would bring more added value to producers, as well as create better market opportunities for African products.
- **Integrated agro-industrial parks can offer supportive business environment and connect farmers to markets** while offering job opportunities to youth and women, in line with the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa 2016 – 2025.

#### **On Research, Innovation and Digitization in Agriculture**

- We concluded that there is a need to **expand the number of countries involved in the R&I Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)** and enhance involvement of the private sector.
- **Collaborative research and innovation activities between the EU and Africa**, including through professional development and mobility opportunities such as the EU's Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Actions and ERASMUS + and other types of Horizon 2020 projects need further advancement.
- On ICT and digital technologies more needs to be done to **support the connectivity of smallholders to internet, uptake of advisory and extension e-Agriculture solutions**.

## **On Water Use and Management in Agriculture within a Climate Resilient environment**

- We consider **supporting feasibility assessments and investments on planning sustainable water use in agriculture.**
- We **agreed to contribute to the development of the water pillar of a possible Africa-EU Charter** on the sustainable development of natural resources over the next years.
- The conference was an excellent opportunity to identify further policy work needed on water and agriculture as an important pillar of broader AU-EU cooperation, through **integrated water resource management (IWRM) for a sustainable agriculture.**
- Further use of Earth observation technology, data and services for the management of water resources needs to be considered, building on **Copernicus data and information and on the African-wide Earth Observation services** currently being developed in the framework of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) and Africa initiative.

## **On Climate Smart Agriculture and Reducing Food Losses and Waste**

- Speakers supported the **integration of climate-relevant measures**, including agro ecological practices, **in agricultural policies, programmes and investments, in line with the Paris agreement's Nationally Determined Contributions.**
- **Focus on regional Climate Smart initiatives is key**, as they are in the best position to know what is needed and at what scale.
- Pests, both known and emerging ones (Fall Army Worm, for example), need to be addressed via African frameworks and programmes for effective plant protection.
- We also made further steps on building consensus on the needed partnerships to implement AU Malabo declaration on reducing post-harvest losses. **A Food Loss and Waste Finance Coalition will be created, that could also explore creation of a Food Loss and Waste Fund.**

### **To conclude,**

The conference showed a **significant political momentum for AU-EU policy cooperation on agriculture and rural development.** All these aspects and others that were not mentioned in this brief concluding remarks will be part of a conference report done by the European Commission and the AU Commission, that will be presented for the 5th Africa-EU summit in November 2017.