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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Third African Union – European Union Agriculture Ministerial Conference
- *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Commission on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 15 July 2019.

3rd African Union – European Union Agriculture Ministerial Conference

In view of deepening the political dialogue and cooperation between the two continents, **African Union (AU) Commissioner for rural economy and agriculture, Josefa Sacko and Commissioner Hogan co-hosted the 3rd AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference¹** on 21 June 2019 in Rome.

The conference was a significant contribution to the [‘Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs’](#) called for by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in September 2018. The Alliance calls for knowledge transfer, sharing of good practices, reinforcing strategic policy cooperation and dialogue between the EU and the AU to contribute to African job creation and to the development of its agricultural sector. The agriculture and food sector plays a key role in creating jobs and thus tackling root causes of migration, given its central importance in the economy of most African countries. Agriculture is also key to the achievement of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Therefore, the dialogue among agriculture ministers is very relevant to lift the political relationship with Africa to a higher strategic level. The Ministerial Conference brought together more than 400 high-level representatives and stakeholders from both continents, at all levels (government, business and people). They debated how to create an inclusive and sustainable agri-food sector in Africa.

¹ The programme and the concept notes of the different sessions of the conference are on https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/au-eu-conference-2019-jun-21_en

The AU and EU Commissioners, **for the first time, signed a political declaration that had been endorsed by all Member States, along with an Action Agenda**, designed to strengthen the intercontinental partnership at all levels of the food supply chain (multiannual cooperation programme with African continental, regional & national farmer organisations, food safety and research & innovation). It provides for actions from tackling climate challenges to a farmers' cooperation programme, building on the March 2019 recommendations of the [Task Force Rural Africa](#). Agriculture now leads the way in a process where others should follow.

The outcome of this Ministerial conference is part of concrete achievements under the new Africa-Europe Alliance. The Alliance sets job creation as the key target and African and European sustainable investments as the main vehicle. In this context, there is also an opportunity for EU private sector investment in Africa's agri-food sector. The goal is to set in motion a virtuous cycle of responsible investment, which will drive both food security and economic growth, which in turn will help providing African youth an opportunity to stay in their home countries and contribute to their prosperity. A close cooperation with the African Union will be crucial to ensure a successful implementation of the AU EU Action Agenda on Agriculture.

Moreover, it is important to show a collective EU action to transform African agriculture. The preparation of the 3rd AU - EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference has been a good example of cooperation with Member States. There is an opportunity for the cooperation between the Commission and Member States to continue. The Action Agenda is a 'rolling' one, thus Ministers are called upon to continue the work on these actions and contribute to transforming African agriculture and increase the visibility of EU engagement with Africa.