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**STATEMENT BY H.E MRS RHODA PEACE TUMUSIIME
COMMISSIONER OF RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRD GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE,
FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

3RD TO 5TH DECEMBER 2013

Your Excellences,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed,

I would like to express the appreciation of the African Union Commission for the invitation to share our views on theme of Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change.

Agriculture and Food Security feature highly on the agenda of the African Union. Climate change continues to impose itself in our pursuit of the goal of food and nutrition security and poverty reduction. It is, therefore, pertinent and most welcome to see initiatives such as this Conference to discuss ways and means of advancing climate-smart agriculture.

There is a general consensus that climate change is a serious and long-term threat that has the potential to affect every part of the globe and the African continent in particular. Climate change is expected to disproportionately affect African economies and poor and vulnerable people within those countries. Particularly, in the agricultural sector, the impacts of climate change are already being felt and responses are urgently needed. The agricultural sector in African countries not only contributes a significant part of the Gross National Product, but it is also a source of livelihoods and employment for a large proportion (70 – 80%) of the African population.

Africa's population has just passed 1 billion and is due to double by 2050. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has estimated that sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest proportion of undernourished people and Africa will need to provide adequate food supplies for over 20 million additional people each year. At the same time, climate change threatens agricultural production's stability and productivity. In many African countries where agricultural productivity is already low and the means of coping with adverse events are limited, climate change is expected to reduce productivity to even lower levels and make production more erratic thus exacerbating the devastation of livelihoods.

This may also jeopardize development gains achieved through development co-operation and make it more difficult to reach our development objectives including those agreed at the Millennium Summit that are described as the Millennium Development Goals. Adapting to the impacts of climate change is, therefore, critical. It is not just an environmental issue but also affects the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. Therefore, agriculture in African countries must undergo a significant transformation in order to meet the related challenges of achieving food security and responding to climate change.

The African Union Commission has been in dialogue with its stakeholders, partners and Member States on strengthening and mainstreaming the climate dimension in the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). Through CAADP, 35 Member States have signed CAADP compacts and 27 of them have prepared National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) that provide opportunities to integrate the scaling up of practices that potentially

augment development, food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation into an existing continental and country-owned sustainable agriculture development framework. Particular attention to building resilience has been taken especially in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region.

Accordingly, properly designed National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans provide an opportunity for climate smart agriculture. In so doing, the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans not only significantly raise investment in sustainable agriculture but also integrate food security and sustainable agriculture into national policies, sustainably intensify agricultural production while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other negative environmental impacts of agriculture and target populations and sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change and food insecurity.

Therefore, we should put more efforts on Climate Smart Agriculture and its influence on African citizens. In particular, as the 2014 was declared by AU Heads of State and Government the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security and to mark the 10th Anniversary of CAADP with the theme: “Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, through Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”, it will provide us ample opportunity to discuss ways and means of reinforcing mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change into the agricultural transformation agendas of African countries.

Hence, I would like to use this opportunity to also invite you all to join the series of events lined up by the AUC for 2014 to reflect on our collective contribution and recommit ourselves in transforming agriculture in Africa through CAADP for achieving food and nutrition security, wealth creation and building resilience and prosperity on our Continent. At the same time,

Excellences and Distinguished Participants, I would like to assure you that the African Union Commission is committed for the success of the voluntary Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture, and wish you a fruitful deliberations and productive endeavors contributing to a prosperous Africa.

Thank you.