AFRICAN UNION
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ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION
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DECISIONS AND DECLARATIONS

Adopted by the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Sirte, Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on 3 July 2009

SIRTE DECLARATION ON INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FOOD SECURITY
Doc. ASSEMBLY/AU/12 (VIII)

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at our Thirteenth Ordinary Session in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from 1 to 3 July 2009,

RECALLING within the context of the theme of the Thirteenth AU Summit, Africa's collective responsibility and commitment to advance Africa's Agriculture with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as its framework for bringing about the required institutional and policy reforms, capacity development and increased investments thereby enhanced agricultural performance with direct impact on food security and socio-economic growth;

COMMENDING Member States advancing in embracing CAADP implementation and the facilitating support being provided by the Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities and development partners;

WELCOMING the strong support to and alignment with the CAADP agenda by a growing number of bilateral and multilateral development agencies;

AWARE and **CONCERNED** that hunger is a drain on economic development; a threat to global security; a barrier to human dignity and to the improvement of the standard of living of the people, and therefore every effort at national, regional, continental including at global levels should be made as a matter of urgency to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on reducing hunger in Africa;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of proactive measures and interventions to increase financing for Africa's Agriculture and continue to improve sector policies for accelerated economic growth and the attainment of the continent's food security targets;

AWARE that smallholder friendly value-chain development and access to markets and to financial services should be key elements to enhancing financial sustainability and growth of the agriculture sectors and related wealth creation;

MINDFUL of the fact that climate variability and climate change is and will be key factor to the agricultural development agenda and that it is imperative for Africa at all levels to raise productivity and improve resilience in agricultural systems;

NOTING that land degradation undermines food-security; increases the vulnerability of African economies to climate variability and change while, on the other hand sustainable

agricultural land management approaches can raise productivity and improve Africa's resilience to climate hazards;

ACKNOWLEDGING the potential contribution to investment financing through remittances (estimated at US$17 billion/year and which could raise to US$45 billion/year), knowledge, skills and related networks that could be realized by facilitating and harnessing increased participation of Africa's diaspora in Africa's development agenda;

NOTING the importance to identify most vulnerable sections of society including women, children and the physically challenged and ensure that their special needs to participate in economic activities are embraced and supported in agricultural development strategies and investment programmes;

WELCOMING the commitment of the United Nations High Level Task Force (UN-HLTF) to join other bilateral and multilateral agencies to strengthen CAADP and to operationalise the Global Plan of Action on Food Security (GPAFS) through CAADP in Africa;

CONSIDERING the Report of the African Union Joint Conference of Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Land and Livestock held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22 to 24 April, 2009, and the recommendations therein endorsed by the Executive Council;

RECALLING and **RELATING** to past rural economy and agricultural development AU Summit decisions and declarations,

UNDERTAKE TO:

1. Meet our individual and collective responsibilities and commitments to provide necessary leadership on comprehensive and Africa-wide approaches to address the root causes of poverty and hunger, and accelerate progress towards achieving the growth and budgetary targets set out in the CAADP Agenda and Framework;

2. Support relevant policy and institutional reforms that will stimulate and facilitate accelerated expansion of agriculture related market opportunities by modernizing domestic and regional trading systems, removing obstacles to trans-border trades, and increasing access by smallholder farmers to inputs and the necessary commercial infrastructure and technical skills to fully integrate them into the growing value chains;

3. Develop and implement continental and regional level strategies that embrace climate change mitigation and adaptation measures as integral components in our agriculture development agendas and ensure that Africa's positions and interests are recognized in the global dialogue on climate change, starting with the forthcoming Post-Kyoto protocol negotiations;

4. Expand investments in specially targeted social protection policies and measures through predictable public support best suited for the local circumstances with special focus on most vulnerable and poor sections of society including gender programmes;

REQUEST the Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to:

5. Continue to mobilise the necessary technical expertise and financial resources to support capacity development and related policy reforms to accelerate CAADP implementation in all Member States, including the signing country CAADP Compacts indicating the policy measures, investment programs, and required funding to achieve the six percent (6%) growth and ten percent (10%) budget share targets for the agricultural sector;

6. Create the tools and instruments to mobilize expertise and build capacity to support, within the CAADP Framework, agricultural and other national planning entities to:

   i. Support countries build capacity in project preparation;

   ii. Integrate and strengthen the use of tools to improve transparency of spending through Periodic Public Expenditure Reviews, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys, and output/results-based budgeting;

   iii. reform and strengthen spending patterns, service delivery modalities, and budget execution in general to improve efficiency and effectiveness of spending in the agricultural sector.

7. Undertake major initiatives within the context of CAADP to modernize regional trading systems and promote regional integration by:

   i. Establishing regional commodity exchanges to facilitate trade;

   ii. Setting up mechanisms to monitor and enforce the application of regional trade arrangements and policies;

iii. Building regional and country level capacities for quality management and certification services;

iv. Strengthening capacity in international trade advocacy and negotiations skills.

8. Facilitate the creation of Agricultural investment and enterprise development platforms in member states and the organization of Agribusiness joint venture fairs to:

i. promote the required public-private partnerships and business to business alliances to accelerate the development of competitive value chains and raise market shares in domestic, regional, and foreign export markets;

ii. foster commercial bank financing for all segments of the agribusiness value chain, in particular support the expansion of financial services to the rural areas.

9. Accelerate the emergence of cost competitive input procurement and delivery systems by:

i. fast tracking the implementation of the African Fertiliser Financing Mechanism, in particular making the required contributions to bridge the US$ 2.5 million gap for its immediate operationalisation;

ii. scaling up ongoing regional seeds alliances to ensure broad access by smallholder farmers.

10. Facilitate increased investment in Agriculture Research and Development (ARD) and support to strengthening Africa's scientific and technical information and knowledge base, including:

i. the creation of centres of excellence for Agricultural Research and Development along the value chain of strategic agricultural commodities and animal resource products;

ii. the establishment, in rural areas, of vocational training and workforce development systems to upgrade smallholder farming skills, raise long

term competitiveness, and encourage the youth to participate in the agriculture sector.

11. Establish a "South to South Forum for Agricultural Development in Africa" and expand engagement with the Diaspora through Commission's Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) to unlock additional sources of technology and investment financing in African agriculture;

12. Develop an African Agricultural-based climate change mitigation and adaptation framework providing strategic guidance and tools to national and regional level initiatives along programmatic approaches on technology transfer, knowledge management and financing to scale up adoption of sustainable land and agricultural water management;

13. Rally expert input and scientific knowledge to advance the recognition and integration of carbon sequestration on agricultural landscapes and carbon financing in global climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through the Post-Kyoto negotiations and other global and regional dialogue;

14. Establish an inter-Ministerial mechanism bringing together Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, and Water to advance inter-sectoral approach in addressing the climate change agenda;

15. Facilitate analytical support to member states on integration of gender in agriculture development agenda.

URGE Member States to:

16. Recommit to the Maputo Declaration of allocating at least ten (10) percent of their annual national budgets to the agriculture sector by 2015 to articulate the important role of agriculture in national development strategies for adequate resource allocation;

17. Scale up efforts to accelerate the implementation of the CAADP agenda at the country level, in particular the organization of country roundtables and the signing of CAADP compacts.

CALL UPON International Development Partners, and regional and non-regional stakeholders to:

18. Harmonise and align their investment support to African Agriculture through and along national and regional CAADP priorities, and in particular, join member

governments in mobilizing the necessary funding to meet the resource requirements of the priority investment programs identified in the regional and country CAADP compacts,

19. Ensure that agriculture financing initiatives are enhanced through African institutions and made accessible at country level.

REQUEST the Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat, in collaboration with the African Development Bank and other partners, to work with member states on the implementation of the actions contained in this Declaration and report on progress to the Ordinary Session of the Assembly in June/July 2010.

ALSO REQUESTS Regional and non-regional stakeholders to ensure that the African Development Bank and other African financial institutions have the necessary resources to deliver the requested assistance.