



**3rd African Union - European Union Agriculture
Ministerial Conference**
Rome (Italy), 21 June 2019

Declaration

The Ministers for Agriculture of the Member States of the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU), the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, meeting in Rome on 21 June 2019 for the third AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference, under the theme of ‘*Promoting sustainable regional agri-food value chains*’:

- (1) Recall the importance of the agricultural sector in fighting food and nutrition insecurity, poverty and ensuring the creation of decent jobs, in particular for youth and women in rural areas. They reaffirm their commitment to implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the AU Agenda 2063 as well as the Paris Agreement.
- (2) Reconfirm the commitments made at the AU-EU Summit of 29-30 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. In particular, they reiterate their support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) in order to promote Africa’s agricultural production and productivity, ensuring the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability, and to support family farmers and the creation of agri-food and agro-value chains.
- (3) Welcome the report by the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA), set up by the European Commission, and support its key recommendations for short and medium term actions to: 1) support rural governance and an innovative local action programme, based on a territorial approach; 2) mainstream environmental sustainability and promote climate action; 3) start a knowledge, innovation and networking initiative for transformation of agriculture and rural areas; 4) improve access to private finance and to EU cooperation instruments for small and medium-size agriculture and food businesses; 5) scale up sustainable value chain development, regional integration and intra-regional trade and 6) bring together European and African expertise for agriculture and rural development.

- (4) Welcome the participation by both continents in the public consultation on the TFRA's report and take note of the planned establishment of a high-level task force for guiding the implementation of the recommendations of the TFRA report and the Action Agenda.
- (5) Underline the importance of enhancing opportunities for sustainable production and transformation as well as for intra-regional and continental trade in agricultural products in Africa and in this connection highlight the need for conducive policies and increased responsible investment. In this context, it is important for Africa to take concrete steps in making the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) operational. Furthermore, they welcome initiatives to strengthen capacity building in order to stimulate increased use of existing market access opportunities in the EU. They call for further facilitation of intra-regional trade and regional integration, including through harmonising standards, especially those related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Specifically, they welcome the increased focus on food safety at national, regional and continental levels, aimed at addressing the growing burden of food-borne diseases and at facilitating trade of agri-food commodities, especially within an AfCFTA context (including through the operationalisation of Annex 7 to the Protocol on Trade in Goods: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures). They also welcome the efforts around setting up appropriate food safety governance structures across Africa to holistically address the multi-sectoral impacts of food safety challenges on trade, public health, food security and nutrition. More generally, they underline the importance of cooperating on sanitary and phytosanitary issues, including antimicrobial resistance, and of enhancing the prevention of and fight against plant and animal diseases.
- (6) Intend to strengthen governance mechanisms for food security and nutrition, in particular by implementing the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (VGRtF), the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) as well as the policy recommendations on water, nutrition and forestry adopted by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). They call for enhanced efforts in this regard.
- (7) Stress that promoting sustainable regional agri-food value chains requires investment in higher, technical and vocational education, lifelong education, training and extension, as well as the encouragement of responsible private and public investment, consistent with the VGGT and the RAI. They also underline the need to create added value and to reinforce sustainability in agri-food chains, for instance through sustainable agricultural practices such as agroecology, the development of geographical indications and initiatives aimed at avoiding deforestation, among others. They call for enhanced collaboration in all those areas.
- (8) Recall the role of family farmers, rural youth and women and the need to target actions to their benefit in particular in order to encourage the setting-up of young farmers and generational renewal. Strengthening family farming, the role of women in the agri-food sector and in rural areas, and the socio-economic fabric of rural areas

could serve as a basis for finding local solutions to local needs and challenges for agriculture and rural communities.

- (9) Launch the Action Agenda attached to this Declaration, containing concrete initiatives based on the areas of work proposed at the conference. This Action Agenda will strengthen and complement the Abidjan Declaration of the fifth AU-EU Summit in 2017 and will contribute to the new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs. Working in partnership in these areas would require closer cooperation at three levels: people-to-people, business-to-business, and government-to-government.
- (10) Intend to intensify the AU-EU cooperation in agriculture, afforestation, sustainable forest management, agroforestry, sustainable food systems and rural development in the short term through the initiatives provided for in the Action Agenda, seeking synergies with other national-led actions, with due attention to climate change adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity and considering training, sustainable management of natural resources as well as research and innovation.
- (11) Intend in principle to meet again in 2021 in order to take stock of the progress achieved in cooperation and to advance the joint agenda further.

Done at Rome, on 21 June 2019, in two original copies in the English language.

**FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION
AND ITS MEMBER STATES**

**FOR THE AFRICAN UNION
AND ITS MEMBER STATES**

Phil Hogan

Commissioner for Agriculture
and Rural Development

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Commissioner for
Rural Economy and Agriculture

ACTION AGENDA

Heading	Deliverables	Concrete activities
Enhancing Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Agribusinesses	1. AU-EU agri-business platform	<p>Establish an AU-EU agribusiness platform within the overarching framework of the Sustainable Business for Africa (SB4A) platform in order to step up to a regional and later pan-African level the existing dialogue between the EU and African private sectors in African countries via EU Delegations, National Chambers of Commerce, European business organisations and national private sector organisations.</p> <p>The ongoing OECD-FAO pilot project implementing the Guidelines for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains (RASC) could complement the platform. This action could also support sustainable value chains, responsible governance of land in line with VGGT guidelines, and responsible investments, including the implementation of the RAI guidelines.</p>
Promoting Research and Innovation	2. Research and Innovation Partnership	<p>1. Launch research and innovation actions in Africa on climate change adaptation (at national, regional and continental levels) under the EU’s climate-resilient Development-Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative. These actions could include cooperation with the continental and regional CAADP research and extension organisations, country- and regional-level actions on agroecological intensification, agroforestry, breeding networks, livestock and pastoralism, the surveillance of emerging threats, and the water/energy/food nexus. Furthermore, through the collaboration on the Intra-ACP Climate Services project, new climate services are being built up, making use of the Copernicus Global Land Service.</p> <p>2. Expand the number of countries involved in the R&I Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and enhance the involvement of the private sector. Research calls at national level for project consortia consisting of European and African partners to support applied research on food environments and sustainable food systems for improved nutrition (triple burden of hunger and malnutrition).</p> <p>3. Support collaborative research and innovation activities by the EU and Africa, including through</p>

		<p>professional development and mobility opportunities such as the One Planet Summit fellowship programme, the EU's Marie-Sklodowska-Curie actions and ERASMUS + and other types of Horizon 2020 projects.</p> <p>4. The Pan-African Network for economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP) aims to share knowledge on policy impact analysis among the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and African institutions in charge of agricultural policy analysis in sub-Saharan countries. The aim of the network is to foster the capacity to ex-ante evaluate policy effects and measures, with a special focus on rural areas and related farming-food sectors. The collaboration includes training programmes driven by relevant needs in terms of policy measure analysis, e.g. fostering small irrigation programmes in the Sahel.</p>
Fostering Digital Agriculture	3. Digital solutions for agribusiness	<p>Support the creation of an international digital council for food and agriculture. Agriculture ministers present at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin in 2019 adopted the proposal that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) should develop a concept for an international digital council. This should advise countries on digitisation issues and promote the exchange of ideas and experience. The FAO accepted this request and intends to present a concept by the next GFFA.</p>
Stimulating Regional and Continental Sustainable Value Chains	4. Implementation of the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa	<p>Enhance cooperation on the action plan for the implementation of the AU's Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications (GI) in Africa. Cooperate on inclusive and sustainable value chains (particularly focusing on smallholder farmers), paying attention to intellectual property rights, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Africa GI training programme - The Africa GI web platform - Support for concrete GI pilot projects
Food Safety Governance	5. Strengthening food safety governance across the continent and supporting the	<p>Discuss the support for the implementation and operationalisation of the AfCFTA, in particular Annex 7 to the Protocol on Trade in Goods: Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures, and for the establishment of appropriate food safety governance structures.</p>

	establishment of appropriate food safety governance structures	
Strengthening Farmers' Organisations and Farmers' Capacities	6. Strengthening African farmers' organisations	Launch a multiannual EU cooperation programme with African continental, regional and national farmer organisations. The programme is to focus on farmers' integration into value chains, while strengthening the capacities of farmer organisations to influence policies and business environments and enhancing the governance, accountability and service delivery of farmer organisations. In this process, special attention will be given to smallholder farmers.
	7. African-European farmers' exchange programme	Within the framework of this exchange, African and European farmers will enhance their skills in operating an agri-business through interactions, targeted seminars and selected training that will expand their knowledge as well as create new networks. Among other things, this will help to enable small-scale farmers and low-skilled rural youth to integrate into local and global sustainable agricultural value chains and evolve to meet the quantity and quality standards required for national and export markets.
Promoting Sustainable Rural Development	8. LEADER Africa Initiative – landscape initiative	<p>Local action programmes to be supported by the EU on a pilot basis in Africa based on similar principles as LEADER programmes in the EU, and allowing African countries and local communities to test and adapt them to their local needs. These programmes should involve the local population in the design and implementation of sustainable territorial development strategies and landscape approaches, including integrated, multi-sectoral projects that address economic, social and environmental objectives, bringing together in a balanced representation the public, private and civil sectors within the local action groups.</p> <p>The EU financial support should concern only collective structures (associations, cooperatives, local trade structures etc.) and not individual, private actors.</p> <p>The landscape approaches will also include capacity building to improve land governance in line with VGGT, and promote inclusive and integrated land-use planning, sustainable land</p>

		management and land restoration, including further support to the Bonn Challenge and the Great Green Wall initiative; notably through the Regreening Africa programme. All these programmes rely on incorporating trees into croplands and pastoral areas, communal lands and other suitable areas through agroforestry or other forms of climate-smart agriculture and climate-smart forestry.
Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability and Promoting Climate Action in Agriculture	9. Improving environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and agrobiodiversity in the agricultural sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement bilateral pilot projects that demonstrate and promote climate-adapted cultivation methods and drought-tolerant varieties in Morocco and Zambia. 2. Support ten African countries to enhance the integration of measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the sound management of chemicals and waste in agriculture, forestry and fishery policies. Pilot their field implementation in at least four countries.