

**DIVISION OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION****13th AU SUMMIT****PRESS RELEASE NO. 15/2009****AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: COMMISSIONER RHODA PEACE TUMUSIIME CALLS FOR AN ENHANCED AFRICAN INTEGRATED MARKET**

Sirte, 29 June 2009 - “Let us make agriculture a viable investment option that will open more opportunities for enhanced investment and growth of African Agriculture”. Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African

Union, was speaking today, Monday 29 June 2009, while addressing journalists at a press conference held at the margins of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU in Sirte, Libya, under the theme: “Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security”.



On the issue of exportation and importation of commodities, the Commissioner stressed on the need for AU Member States to encourage the processing of agricultural products within Africa, so as to create employment and encourage integrated markets, given that integration is a top priority on the agenda of the African Union. “We have land, water and other resources, thus, we need to invest in agriculture for

economic growth and food security”, she said.

Mrs. Tumusiime further explained that regional integration also offers Africa the opportunity to concentrate and capitalize on the areas and products where each region and/or country has a comparative advantage, and from which it can benefit from its

competitive edge. “This has also got the potential to enable Africa to scale-up its infrastructural development, thereby improving the environment for trade”, she noted.

The Commissioner said that, notwithstanding the competing national priorities, governments should invest more in agriculture as it has a positive multiplier effect on other sectors. She further underscored the need for African governments to convert the continent’s annual food import bill of US\$33 billion into investment in agriculture.



Other issues discussed during the press conference include: the theme of the 13th AU Summit, “Investing in agriculture for economic growth and food security”; the impact of high food prices on food security in Africa; the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); Africa’s self-sufficiency; and land policy in Africa.

Commissioner Tumusiime underscored the necessity to work hand in hand with development partners at the national level, as well as with the civil society to enhance agriculture development in Africa. She linked food security to poverty eradication, saying that food security is not only production of food, but also the raising of household incomes and national revenue to be able to afford food and nutritional security.