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**STATEMENT BY MME ROSEBUD KURWIJILA**

**COMMISSIONER, RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**Delivered at the  
COMESA-CAADP PARTNERSHIP MEETING and RWANDA CAADP  
ROUNDTABLE**

**March 28 -31 2007**

**SERENA HOTELS, KIGALI, RWANDA**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda,  
Honourable Mr. Anastase Murekezi, Minister of Agriculture and Animal  
Husbandry, Republic of Rwanda**

**The Secretary General of COMESA Mr. Erastus Mwencha**

**Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic community**

**Distinguished Development Partners**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to address you at this important Rwanda CAADP Country Round Table Meeting. Allow me to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government the of Republic of Rwanda, the NEPAD Secretariat and COMESA for organizing this historical Meeting which will discuss and reach consensus among key stakeholders on the framework to implement the Rwanda agriculture development agenda and hopefully agree on early actions for investments within the framework of CAADP.
2. Before I proceed any further, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Rwanda for being the pioneer in the implementation of the CAADP Round Table process amongst the six phase one countries in the COMESA region. I would also like to thank the Government and the people of Rwanda for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us since our arrival.
3. Let me also thank the Development Partners for their continued support and commitment to the development of the Agricultural Sector in Africa.

Their presence here with us today for the Rwanda CAADP Round Table is a true testimony of their commitment.

4. **Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen**, despite notable progress and some success stories in some African countries, agriculture has not played an effective role in lifting its populations out of poverty. Statistics show that between 1992 and 2002 the number of undernourished people in Africa increased by 20%. In this new century, these statistics are inexcusable and should not be tolerated on a continent that is so rich in natural and human resources. If the African people are to be food secure, agriculture has to lead the way through increased productivity and greater market access for agricultural commodities.
5. In response to the challenges in agriculture over the past years the African Union Heads of State and Government demonstrated commitment and political support at the highest level to revitalize the agriculture and water sector, by endorsing CAADP, committing to allocate 10% of their national budgetary resources to agriculture as well as adopting the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water. All these commitments aimed to enhance agricultural growth and food security in line with the Millennium Development Goals. In order to implement these Decisions, numerous were efforts undertaken at RECs and Country level to develop strategies and programmes in line with the CAADP targets and principles.
6. The AU Commission is cognizant of the fact that agriculture investments within the CAADP framework should mainly be at the country level. Complementary activities at regional and continental level should support

and add value to country agricultural activities. To this effect, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and RECs continue to play a catalytic, facilitative and advocacy role in supporting the efforts and initiatives of national governments at country level.

7. The Commission of the African Union commends the government of Rwanda for putting agriculture at the core of its development agenda. We strongly believe that the outcome of discussions here will lead to concrete and definitive areas of action for implementation with tangible commitments of investments that will enhance agricultural productivity in Rwanda.
8. **Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen**, in view of the slow progress and lack of synergy in the implementation of CAADP, the African Heads of State and Government in 2005 requested the African Union Commission to integrate the CAADP framework and the Sirte Declaration. This was done and presented to the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture in Bamako in 2006 who recommended it to the Summit of Heads of State and Government. The Heads of State and Government adopted it and requested the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat to play a leadership role in coordinating its implementation.
9. As requested by Heads of State and Government, the AU commission and NEPAD Secretariat met to discuss the process to align and coordinate activities for consistency and coherency in the implementation of CAADP-Sirte framework. In this regard a joint meeting between RECs, NEPAD and AU Commission was held in Midrand in November 2006, to discuss and agree on proper alignment of activities, coordination and clarification of

roles based on the comparative advantage of the three institutions. The three institutions agreed to meet twice a year as a forum to report on achievements and challenges in the implementation of CAADP-sirte in order to inform policy organs of the African Union and RECs on developments of agriculture in Africa.

10. **Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen**, the African Union Commission would like to underscore that the process to accelerate the implementation of CAADP at the country level has not been easy. Despite the support enjoyed from all our partners, allow me to express some of the issues that have not been clear in the cause of implementing the CAADP Agenda at the country level.
11. You may recall that following the endorsement of CAADP by the African Heads of States in Maputo in July 2003, Member States have been supported to prepare their respective National Medium Term Investment Plans (NMTIPs) and identification of the Bankable Investment Project Profiles (BIPPs), whereas RECs have been supported to lead the process of CAADP implementation at country level through the Country Round Table mechanism.
12. Your Excellency, at one point, the two processes were misunderstood as being mutually exclusive. On the contrary, it is very clear that at country level there is need for a comprehensive stock taking and analysis that takes into account all initiatives that include country strategies and the National Medium Investment Plan and Bankable Projects where they exist. It is very encouraging to note that Rwanda has taken an inclusive approach, in its

Country Round Table exercise and this should set precedence for the other countries as well. The African Union Commission believes that a country should own its own process and development partners should rally behind it for support as is inherent in the NEPAD principles and the African Union Vision.

13. The African Union Commission reaffirms its commitment to play a leadership role in close collaboration with the NEPAD Secretariat, the RECs, the Member States and development partners to ensure coherence in the implementation process of CAADP at country level and the realization of tangible investments of priority areas.

14. In conclusion, Your Excellency, let me thank, the Rwandan Government for its remarkable efforts to align the CAADP principles in its national agriculture development process. I would also like to convey my gratitude to COMESA and NEPAD for their leadership in driving this process forward. At this juncture, let me now in a very special way convey my sincere thanks, on behalf of the African Union Commission, to our development partners who have continuously and tirelessly shared our African vision in the implementation of the CAADP agenda. It is on this note that I wish to reconfirm African Union's commitment to collaborate with all development partners towards the implementation of CAADP.

**I thank you.**