

**FARMERS MAJOR GROUP STATEMENT TO THE AFRICA
CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON SDGs, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 1ST
NOVEMBER, 2013**

Thank you Chair.

I am greatly honored to be addressing this very important meeting on behalf of African Farmers.

Agriculture employs 70% to 80% of our people in the region (majority being small holder farmers and livestock keepers), and our economies are primarily agricultural economies. These small-scale farmers, many of them women, produce around 70% of our food.

The role that rural communities, small holder farmers, and livestock keepers could play is crucial in our efforts to achieve sustainable development, improve food security and reduce poverty in rural and urban areas.

At the same time, the widely spread forms of industrial, and conventional agriculture are not sustainable. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, around 500 million hectares of land are already affected by degradation in Africa due to unsustainable use.

We are pleased to note that sustainable agriculture; food security; and nutrition are high on member states' list of priorities.

However, we would like to emphasize that business as usual is not an option and will never make Africa food secure..

We need to take bold steps towards this and we recommend the following to be reflected in the formulation of our targets and indicators;

- Growth in investments in sustainable agriculture
- Enhanced and better balanced distribution of agricultural produce in the region
- Reduction in post harvest food losses and wastages
- Provision of support to our small holder farmers (particularly women) and vulnerable communities,
- Safeguard food sovereignty and land tenure
- Promotion of sustainable production systems in livestock rearing, crop farming, fisheries and forestry.
- Transformation to sustainable, diverse and resilient agriculture and food systems that conserve natural resources and ecosystems, and reverse land degradation.
- Agricultural subsidies and trade policies must be reformed and adapted to take into account the needs of small-scale farmers.

Agriculture also remains one of the crucial sectors affected by climate change and which supports food and livelihoods security of millions in Africa.

Our farmers and livestock keepers are dealing with the effects of climate change on their own, and in turn this hampers our efforts towards sustainable development, poverty eradication and in achieving food security in the region.

We need to support our farmers and livestock keepers to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change and in ensuring resilient livelihoods.

We therefore strongly recommend formulation of targets and indicators that support them as they deal with the effects of climate change including protection of their productive assets such as inter alia animals, crops, tools and seeds during natural disasters.

Moreover, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 60% percent of all diseases affecting people and around 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. Partly this is caused by unsustainable, and low welfare practices in animal production systems. Closely related is the rising non-medicinal use of antibiotics in livestock production (growth promotion), which leads to increasing antibiotics resistance in humans, which leads to rising healthcare costs.

We therefore call for targets to increase food security and improve farmers' livelihoods and under Health to reduce the non-medicinal use of antibiotics in livestock production, and reduce the number of human deaths from zoonotic diseases.

I thank you Chair.