



**ADDRESS OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION TO THE
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON MEASURING SEED
SECTOR PERFORMANCE IN AFRICA**

**24 OCTOBER 2016
ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE**

From AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, I send warm felicitations to you all on the important occasion of Expert Consultation Workshop on Seed Sector Performance in Africa. I had looked forward to being with you today but alas, the often-changing demands of my office see me diverted elsewhere today. Nevertheless, colleagues representing AUC at the Expert Consultation have received adequate briefing and will play their required roles accordingly.

First, let me congratulate the Indices Groups for managing to score a first all parties get-together. May this opportunity lead to greater things to come in the huge task of monitoring the performance of the African Seed Sector. And may I also congratulate the several national and regional experts from all over Africa who have managed to come. May you all give of your knowledge and expertise of the terrain to ensure that the outcomes adequately meet the situations and requirements on the ground.

At this juncture, permit me to remind all of us why this workshop is of great importance to the AUC. When the AU Heads of State and Government approved the African Seed and Biotechnology Program, ASBP, in 2007 and requested its immediate implementation, it was with a sense of urgency: the urgency of ensuring that we rapidly take measures to cure the myriad of woes that are inherent in the African seed sector so that the sector can emerge as a credible pathway to our cherished goal of continental food and nutrition security.

In the efforts towards this goal, there is need to continually monitor the performance of the seed sector and keep the Heads of State and all partners

apprised of developments, gaps and opportunities. This requires us to be armed with relevant indicators and other measuring protocols. We are fortunate that the five or more professional Indices groups have already advanced along this path and we look forward to their assistance in sharpening our own initial efforts so that we are properly armed for our job of reporting to the AU.

We look forward beyond this workshop and anticipate the outcomes from it becoming embedded in the ASBP to strengthen the latter's M&E component. Not only that, we invite all the Indices Groups to join forces with AfricaSeeds and operate as part of ASBP, the over-arching chapeau covering all seed sector activities taking place on the African Continent. Further, we look forward to recommendations by which new knowledge will flow from this expert consultation to enhance the seed components of the CAADP Results Framework at national, regional and continental levels. Finally, we wish to remind of the need to incorporate the needs of the informal seed sector. The informal sector presently meets at least 80% of the seed needs in Africa and nearly 100% of seeds for minor crops which are neglected by seed companies. While our development agenda calls for rapidly growing the private sector as a priority, it is prudent also to address key needs of the informal sector, not only to play an enhanced role but even more importantly, it is from among the ranks of informal sector practitioners that the future seed companies will be created.

I wish to express thanks to our partners GIZ, CDI, BMGF whose continuing efforts in the seed sector are indeed very much appreciated. Particularly, their partnership with AfricaSeeds which is enabling AfricaSeeds to host this workshop goes to build up the capacity of AU's seed agency to be able to carry out the huge mandate that has been entrusted to it. AUC's commendations also go to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for its continuing support to AfricaSeeds and for all the courtesies extended to the attendees of this workshop.

Once again, greetings to you all and may this workshop bring fulfillment in all your expectations. And may the cordial atmosphere of Abidjan and the warmth of its inhabitants add to your enthusiasm to deliver the goods that we all await.

Have a good workshop and God bless us all.

Dr, Janet Edeme