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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone 517 700 Cables: OAU, ADDIS ABABA

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**TALKING POINTS FOR THE COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL  
ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE,  
H.E. MRS TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE**  
**AT THE SIGNING OF MOU BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION  
COMMISSION**  
**AND**  
**AFRICASEEDS**

**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**26<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2016**

1. Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen! Let me first welcome you to the African Union Commission and to this ceremony for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission and the AfricaSeeds.
2. The Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the African Union Commission, was established with the objectives of promoting agricultural and rural development and ensuring food and nutrition security for Africans, and achieving sustainable development and improved livelihoods for the population. The Department also seeks to ensure the effective protection and development of the African environment underpinned by sound environmental and natural resources management including disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.
3. Your organization (AfricaSeeds), on the other hand, is involved in meeting the development needs of the African seed sector to ensure that there is adequate quality seeds for both food and cash crop production. Furthermore, your organization is an important institution of the African Union because it is implementing the African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme of the African Union Programme (ASBP), which was adopted in 2007 by the African Union Heads of State and Government. The ASBP came into being in recognition by the African Union Heads of State of the important role seeds play in the attainment of food and nutrition security in Africa.

4. Your organization has put in place mechanisms to optimize the seed value chain, promote policy advocacy and partnerships, and enhance seed production and marketing in the informal seed sector in Africa. Let me applaud you for the good work that you have so far done to promote the use of quality seeds in Africa.
  
5. I vividly recall during the commemoration of the year of Agriculture and Food Security in 2014, when your organization collaborated with the African Union Commission to develop a technical paper on agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, which was presented to the Honourable Ministers of Agriculture in Africa for consideration and adoption. This paper offered policy guidelines and options for developing the agricultural inputs market in Africa.
  
6. The culmination of that undertaking was the adoption of the Malabo Declaration in June, 2014 in which African leaders re-affirmed their intention to devote 10 percent of their national budgets to drive agricultural transformation in their respective countries. Under this declaration, African leaders also committed themselves to the following:-
  - i. Principles and values of the CAADP process
  - ii. Enhancing investment finance in Agriculture
  - iii. Ending hunger in Africa by 2025
  - iv. Halving poverty by the year 2025 through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation
  - v. Boosting intra-Africa trade in agricultural commodities and services
  - vi. Enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other related risks

vii. Mutual accountability to actions and results.

7. Since your organization is very much concerned about poverty reduction in Africa through the use of improved seeds, the Commission would work with you in achieving some of the targets envisioned under the Malabo declaration.

8. So far, my department (Rural Economy and Agriculture), in consultation with relevant stakeholders, has developed a strategy and a road map as well as a programme of work for implementing the Malabo declaration. We are currently mobilizing additional resources to implement the Malabo commitments.

9. The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and your organization marks a significant milestone in our relationship and also in our collective bid to promote agricultural development and reduce poverty in Africa. Majority of our people are farmers; so any effort to boost agriculture has a positive effect on their incomes and wellbeing. I therefore look forward to working with your organization to better the lot of African farmers.

10. I thank you.