

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at EU-Africa Summit

6th July 2016, The Hague, Netherlands

– Check Against Delivery –

- Minister Van Dam, Honourable Commissioner, Ministers, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,
- First let me congratulate Minister Van Dam's bold and inspirational idea to bring together the agricultural policy leaders of Africa and the EU. Commissioner Tumusiime and I readily agreed to co-host this event.
- I salute the Dutch Presidency of the EU for making this day, at this marvellous location, a reality.
- In my view we should use this opportunity to develop one key guiding principle in our work: **our shared belief in policy as a tool for development.**

- I know this is a view that is shared by Commissioner Tumusiime – **indeed we have based our strong cooperation on this principle.**
- **The time is now ripe to get serious about making policy work.** And that means engaging the full capacity of agriculture ministries throughout Europe and Africa.
- I subscribe to the view that *'trade and investment, not aid, are the pillars of development'*.
- And agriculture has an absolutely central role to play. Let me quote the President of the African Development Bank, Mr ADESINA, who as you know is a former Nigerian Minister of Agriculture. He has often said agriculture must be treated as *'a moneymaking business and not as a development project'*.
- Developing the African agri-food sector to provide rewarding livelihoods for growing young rural populations must be our goal.
- And for trade, investment and business to flourish, we need the right agricultural policy environment. That's where we come in.

- I have witnessed a clear acceleration in the global policy debate in the last 12 months. This year, I attended Agricultural ministerial meetings of both the G20 and G7 – in the past, these were rare events. **Now they are becoming annual occurrences.**
- But the G7 and G20, for all their merits, cannot replace direct contact between the European Union and the African Union.
- That's why bringing together African and European policy makers is so important.
- Since being appointed Commissioner, I have been working closely with Commissioner Tumusiime, and we co-hosted a major conference on private investment at Expo Milano last year.
- We agree that the EU financial and budget commitment to Africa remains vital. But we also need to be honest enough to recognise its limitations. Aid budgets are under pressure and as African countries grow – you have ever greater needs.
- **And there is no greater need than the challenge of providing Africa's rural youth with decent jobs and prospects.**

- We know 60% of African populations are coming from rural areas. Research tell us that in total, over 350 million young people, up to 20 million per year, are reaching employment age in the period up to 2030 when the Sustainable Development Goals must be achieved.
- Without decent jobs in the agri-food sector, these young people will migrate to cities and be lost to the rural economy.
- The EU is already the world's largest donor and we have responded to this challenge with the Valletta undertakings in 2015, including a EUR 1.8 billion fund.
- But it is not enough. This is why the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development focusses also on the contribution of the private sector and developing the resources of individual nations.
- And as I mentioned earlier: making these targets into reality depends completely smart and sustainable policies.
- We as neighbours must find new ways to cooperate better.
- The experts here have spent 2 days debating 5 key topics that perfectly illustrate the contribution that policy can make in development and growth.

- The first relates to food losses and waste – this is an essential part of the drive to end global hunger. The 30% of food lost either post-harvest or at retail and consumer level is a scandal of the modern age.
- Secondly, we must continue to develop a climate smart agriculture. This will require policymakers at all levels to ‘think global, act local’.
- Thirdly, the question of market access remains one of our most difficult challenges. This is at the heart of both regional integration and indeed globalisation. The positive impact of regional integration can be huge, especially on the farming sector.
- It is essential that people are not left behind when borders open and new opportunities arise. Agriculture is absolutely critical to this process. In Europe, our Common Agricultural Policy owes its very existence to our single market.
- Our experience tells us that sustainable market policies are vital for farmers to become more productive and profitable: having the right policies in place on both sides of an open border is essential.
Again, policy is the key.

- Fourthly, when it comes to investment – while I am fully convinced that agriculture can only prosper with private investment, we have to ensure 2 conditions. First that the investment is responsible and socially and environmentally sustainable. And second that the countries wanting the investors have a business friendly environment.
- **This is all about policy yet again.** Finance is necessary and public-private partnerships can provide an especially good model, but what really matters is having the right policies in place to build these things in the right way.
- Finally, I am especially pleased that research and innovation have a strong place in the debate happening here.
- I very much look forward to hearing the results of the debates and recommendations later today.
- In conclusion, let me address the process and continued engagement between us going forward.
- EU relations with many African regions are in a state of change. We are moving to a partnership secured through bilateral agreements.

- On 10 June the Southern African Economic Partnership Agreement was signed in Botswana. This will add to the agreements we have already signed with Cameroon and the Eastern and Southern group and we expect more to follow.
- An EPA, which is a partnership agreement, marks a transformative change in relations, and provides a stable framework for trade and investment.
- In implementing these agreements, we need to take care that they really do benefit farmers and the agri-food sector, which is why policy engagement is especially important.
- Minister Van Dam has set the ball rolling here by bringing all agriculture ministries of the EU and AU together.
- The EU remains the fundamental partner for Africa. We are, and will remain, by far Africa's major trade partner.
- We have a model of regional integration that we can share. It allows us to be far stronger together than apart. We also have a lot of experience of shaping a single market.

- If there is one message for me to underline it is the need to focus on the people – the farmers and the rural youth who ultimately are the most important actors in this challenge.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that you will commit to European and African agriculture ministers meeting periodically. Every step brings us a little closer to our goal.
- I appreciate the great efforts and resources committed by the Dutch Presidency to this event, so let us ensure that we maintain momentum from it in the coming months and years. Thank you.