

Speech by Commissioner Phil Hogan at Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR)

16th December 2015, Nairobi

- Check Against Delivery -

- Director, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,
- I am very pleased to be here with you today. I have struck up a very good working relationship with my African Union counterpart, Commissioner Tumusiime. Recently, we were speakers on the same panel in Expo Milano, about fostering agribusiness investments in Africa. She suggested I visit with you at the Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources.
- Accordingly, participating in this meeting with IBAR is an important component of my mission to the WTO 10th Ministerial Conference.

- As Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, I want to deliver the message that the EU appreciates the long standing partnership with IBAR dating back to the 1960s.
- At that time, we formed a partnership with a view to eradicating the Rinderpest disease.
- This task was indeed successfully accomplished in 2010 and it is a significant achievement. **This was one of the only two livestock diseases ever to be eradicated.**
- The lessons learnt in this exercise have been most useful in the management and control of other diseases affecting cross-border and livestock trade. Thank you for your continued leadership and expertise - it is appreciated.
- Today, our close partnership continues and is focused on a number of important areas:
 - Veterinary and Fisheries Governance;
 - Sanitary and Phytosanitary standard setting;
 - Conservation of African animal genetic resources;

- And the partnership plays a leading role in the management of pollinator bee diseases and pests, with the EU contributing more than 77 million Euro.
- Indeed, without a healthy bee population, plants which are crucial for the human food supply cannot be properly pollinated. Therefore, paying attention to bee health is a crucial part of meeting the food security challenge. I commend you for your efforts in this field.
- **Agriculture plays a vital role in Sub-Saharan Africa.** It is a key contributor to the continent's food and nutrition security. And it provides a livelihood for the continent's millions of smallholder farmers.
- However, we know that productivity is often low, and traditional production systems are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. This can have a negative impact, leading to loss of income, displacement and sometimes conflict.

- There is a clear need to transform the agricultural sector and develop more intensified production systems which can cater for the needs of Africa's fast growing human population, while also protecting the continent's vital natural resources and environment.
- In the EU, we believe strongly that our many networks of cooperation with African partners can contribute to this process.
- Africa remains a major strategic development and trading partner for the EU, and agricultural exports play an ever-increasing role in the development of the continent.
- However, we believe we can do much more. By diversifying the export base; by adding value through processing; and by modernising and transforming agricultural production, more employment opportunities will be created and more livelihoods will be improved.

- We can also do more to develop and strengthen food standards. Doing so would remove an important barrier for African farmers and traders who wish to export to the EU.
- We must work together to build the capacity of all actors in this sector - from the Regional and Pan-African institutions to the smallholder farmers.
- This will be a key element to reducing poverty, generating income and also to protecting African consumers.
- As representatives of the PANSPSO project, you have played an important and constructive role in improving African participation in a number of global fora:
 - The World Animal Health Organization (OIE);
 - The Codex Alimentarius Commission;
 - The International Plant Protection Convention;
 - As well as in the meetings of the SPS Committee of the World Trade Organization.

- The skills acquired in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary domain have enabled African countries to bolster regional and international food trade.
- This has led to the negotiation and establishment of important Trade Agreements within and between regional economic communities in Africa.
- The enhanced engagement of African countries in the discussions of the SPS Committee, the number of trade concerns raised against trading partners, and the eagerness to access new markets by complying with sanitary and phytosanitary measures is a direct result of the support provided by the PANSPSO project.
- So in conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the European Commission, let me thank you for your efforts in promoting the sustainable international trade of agricultural products - **not only in Kenya, but in Africa as a whole.**

- Your initiatives have directly assisted African Union Member States, allowing them to join forces and thereby enhance their effective contribution to the formulation of international standards.
- *Thank you again for inviting me here today, and the best of luck for your work in 2016.*