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**Keynote Speech by H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural
Economy and Agriculture
on the occasion of the Celebration of the hundred years of Dr Norman Borluag
Jinja, Uganda
10th July 2014**

Your Excellency Edward Ssekandi, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda

**Your Excellency Nicéphore Dieudonné Soglo, Former President of the Republic
of Benin and Member of the Board of the Sasakawa Africa Association**

**Honourable Professor Ruth Oniang'o, Chairperson of Sasakawa Africa
Association and Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education**

**Honourable Tress Bucanayandi, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and
Fisheries of Uganda**

Dr John Hardman MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Carter Center

Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation

**Dr Amit H Roy, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International
Fertiliser Development Centre (IFDC)**

**Amb Kenneth Quinn, President of the World Food Prize Foundation
Honourable Victoria Sekitoleko, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of
Uganda**

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor, on behalf of the African Union Commission and on my own behalf, to register appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this important Symposium on the Borlaug Legacy. I would like to thank the Government and people of the Republic of Uganda for the warm welcome and hospitality as well as the excellent arrangements for the success of this symposium and associated events. Starting from Makerere University on 8 July and then yesterday with the youth and later at the Agricultural and Trade Show in Jinja, the events do mark the road to ‘taking science, research, innovation and technology to the farmer’.

While I thank Uganda for graciously accepting to host this Symposium, I also wish to commend Sasakawa Africa Association for choosing Uganda to host. Uganda is one of the 40 AU Member States to have signed the Country Compact for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) which as you know is our overarching continental framework for increasing agricultural production and productivity, improving food and nutrition security and eradicating poverty. We also salute Uganda for having formulated a credible Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan that is already under implementation to advance the agricultural transformation agenda. Furthermore, Uganda is nearly on track to reach the MDG target of halving hunger. In 1990, the child malnutrition prevalence was 20.6 percent. It has decreased since then, falling to 17.2 percent in 2007 and it has been continuing to decrease. For these and many other reasons the choice of Uganda for this Symposium is a perfect one. Indeed, Uganda is one the AU member States where the Borlaug legacy for agricultural transformation is being pursued. I must point

out at this juncture that a number of AU member States where Sasakawa Africa Association has made interventions are emerging as champions of African agricultural transformation. And we find their best practices and success stories encouraging particularly their remarkable work in supporting and promoting crop productivity enhancement, post-harvest loss reduction and agro-processing; public private partnership and market access; human resource development for agriculture and monitoring and evaluation for results and impact and especially promoting smallholder farmers and agricultural technologies. The African Union is keen to see these models upscaled and replicated especially in this 2014 Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. Through the work of Sasakawa Africa Association and others we have noticed that Africa can make it the way Latin America, Asia and other parts of the world made it. Placing importance on smallholders and the kind of relevant supportive policies, together with the inclusion of supportive institutions i.e. for inputs, for marketing, extension, for value chain development etc made countries like India attain the green revolution.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fortunately, Africa has the potential and the opportunities are abound. Currently, Africa spends more than 40 Billion US Dollars a year on food imports but just imagine if this amount was invested in agricultural production! Africa's population is growing by about 3 percent per year, among the fastest in the world, and so is their demand for food and hence a market for agriculture. The African market is now close to one billion people, including 123 million middle class consumers. Africa's economic growth is strong, with 7 out of the 10 world's

fastest growing economies being in Africa. In addition, the growing urbanization in AU Member States augurs well for the agri-business and agro-processing industry, which in turn further catalyze agricultural production. All these are opportunities adding to the fact that Africa is endowed with abundant agriculturally suitable land that is yet to be fully and optionally utilized. It also has abundant water resources that can stimulate agricultural production through irrigation. Currently, only 4 percent of available water resources are being used for agriculture and only 6 percent of arable land is irrigated.

In addition, available technologies including those championed by Sasakawa Africa Association can significantly contribute in increasing agricultural productivity both on African farms and across different stages of agri-food value chain. A bulging population of increasingly educated youth and women are eager to be involved in innovative and gainful entrepreneurship and employment in this sector. Engaging and empowering them in order to bring their dreams into reality is a core objective of the AU through CAADP and is supportive of the long-term vision of Africa encapsulated in Africa Agenda 2063.

All these notwithstanding, Africa still leads the rest of the world as the most seriously affected by food insecurity: 1/4 of the world's undernourished, despite progress made in the last 20 years; there are more stunted children in Africa today than there were 20 years ago.

Food insecurity is primarily a rural phenomenon but, urban populations are also increasing enduring the risk of food insecurity due to growing urban

dwellers and the pace of food production being outmatched by the rate of population growth. As we heard at Makerere University, if food production is growing at a lower rate than population growth, there is a gap and it is a problem.

Therefore, we all need to deliver significant results and demonstrate impact to end hunger by 2025.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

Aware of the potential of agriculture in eradicating hunger and poverty on our Continent, the African Union Heads of State and Government endorsed CAADP in 2003 in Maputo where they committed to allocate at least ten percent of their annual public budget to agriculture.

In this continuous effort to reduce hunger and poverty on the continent through an accelerated Agricultural Transformation, The Year 2014 was declared by our leaders as the African Union Year of Agriculture and Food Security to mark the tenth anniversary of CAADP. In taking this forward, since January 2014, the African Union Commission in collaboration with other Pan African institutions and with support from partners, has engaged in a series of major events for achieving better awareness and wider engagement with African Citizens on advancing agriculture for food and nutrition security as well as poverty eradication. African leaders have renewed their commitment by adopting an AU Declaration to sustain the CAADP Momentum through achieving specific goals and targets for agricultural transformation. Also, commitments have been

taken by Partners in aligning, harmonizing and coordinating their program support and Mutual Accountability for results and impact on the ground.

At the 23rd Ordinary Session of the African Union on 27 June 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, our Heads of State and Government adopted the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The Commitments of our leaders included:

- The Recommitment to the principles and values of the CAADP process;
- The Commitment to Enhancing Investment Finance in Agriculture;
- The Commitment to Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025;
- The Commitment to halving poverty, by 2025, through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation;
- The Commitment to boosting intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and services;
- The Commitment to enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other related risks;
- The Commitment to Mutual Accountability to Actions and Results.

Committing to zero hunger would require that African Union Member States:

- At least double current agricultural productivity levels through inputs quality and affordable inputs for crops, livestock, fisheries, knowledge, information and skills, irrigation and mechanization;
- Reduce post-harvest losses (PHL) at least by half by 2025;
- Integrate measures for increased agricultural productivity with social protection initiatives focusing on vulnerable social groups through food and cash reserves, early warning systems, identified communities for interventions, and increased consumption of locally produced food items;
- Improve nutritional status, particularly for children who are the present and future of our continent that is rising.

Our leaders' commitments and recommitments reflect the aspirations of the African citizens as we gathered from the consultations we; the African Union Commission, conducted with governments, private sector, civil society and our partners across the continent prior to the Malabo AU summit. This further reinforces the fact that the AU professes to be people centred in pursuit of the goal of a united, strong and prosperous Africa, a dynamic force in the global arena. The prusuit and achiement of these goals will also be in line with the Theme of the just concluded 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, which is Pan Africanism and African Renaissance. It is also part of the Africa Agenda 2063 on the Africa We Want.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, Sasakawa Africa Association is celebrating the centenary of Doctor Norman Borlaug, the father of the “Green Revolution” in Latin America and Asia and an eminent personality of agricultural research and development in Africa through his leadership in conducting the work of Sasakawa and other similar dedicated approaches in other regions of the World.

His research on wheat and his efforts in strengthening the capacities of scientists and extension workers to bring the technologies and innovations to the farmers resulted into higher yield in wheat production in developing countries through double wheat seasoning, increased disease resistance among others.

Because of his achievements to use quality seed, fertilizer, appropriate technologies and irrigation to prevent hunger and poverty globally, one has reason to believe what has been said by some that Dr. Borlaug has "saved more lives than any other person who has ever lived."

We highly commend Sasakawa Africa Association’s Mission in furtherance of the Borlaug legacy to transform African extension advisory services in partner countries to assure greater family food security and more profitable participation in commercial activities along the value chain, while respecting natural resources contributes to the Continental efforts in ending hunger in Africa.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year, the AU Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the CAADP principles, and to new investments in agriculture that embrace the full value chain, improve markets and trade, and provide finance at a scale to meet the wealth and job creation potential of the continent.

As education levels rise, civil societies become more vibrant and progress achieved in political and economic governance on the continent, Africans are beginning to and will demand more of their political leaders over the coming decade.

Political leadership is essential in the next decade to discern opportunities and threats, implement the vision for African development, and execute a strategy to both respond and lead others to take the steps necessary.

The African Union Commission pledges to the Republic of Uganda and all AU Member States, civil society organizations such as Sasakawa Africa Association and other agriculture sector actors commitment to the already mentioned goals for an Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods in Africa and continued support to accelerate the Countries CAADP National Agricultural Investment Plans and CAADP priority programmes implementation to end hunger in Africa by 2025.

Let us all contribute in eradicating hunger on our continent by 2025.

Definitely together we can do that.

I thank you