

**Remarks by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman, Africa Food Prize Committee**

**The 2016 Africa Food Prize Launch**

**Venue:** La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra Ghana

**Date:** Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Recognizing Dignitaries:**

*1. AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, **H.E.***

***Rhoda Peace Tumusiime***

*2. Former President of Ghana, **H.E. John Kufuor***

*3. NEPAD CEO, **Dr. Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki***

*4. AGRA President, **Dr. Agnes Kalibata***

*5. YARA Vice President for Partnerships and External Affairs,*

***Sean de Cleene***

*6. Honorable Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of*

*Mission, CAADP PP Delegates, Distinguished Ladies and*

*Gentlemen*

In their Malabo Declaration and their call for action, African Heads of State and Government committed to meet bi-annually to review progress on commitments and institute a mechanism for recognizing exceptional progress including awards. Today, we unite in making that ambition a reality as we inaugurate the Africa Food Prize. This marks a significant milestone in the drive towards an agricultural transformation agenda in Africa. This prize is the preeminent African award recognizing extraordinary individuals or institutions whose contributions to African agriculture forges a new era of sustainable food security and economic opportunity for our people and continent.

Launching this world class prize at the opening of the 12<sup>th</sup> CAADP PP provides an authentic continental seal of approval, a moment to galvanize the aspiration and contributions of the various stakeholders involved in the realization of the Malabo declaration which operationalizes the next 10 years of CAADP. This is in line

with the transition this year from the Yara Prize to the Africa Food Prize making it the most prominent prize in Africa.

The prize was mooted 10 years ago by Yara International ASA as the Yara Prize in Oslo, Norway. This transition to the Africa Food Prize ensures it is an African prize by Africans, for Africans in Africa for agriculture transformation. At the heart of the prize is the collaboration of a multiplicity of partners working together to transform agriculture.

Some of these partners such as African's leaders in the public and private sector are embracing the potential of agriculture to deliver a more secure and prosperous future. Therefore it is clear that there are many exciting initiatives being done by African public, private and not-for-profit institutions. In that regard, this award is not starting from scratch but builds on the principles laid out by African countries to intensify a focus on agriculture to drive economic development. In recognizing extraordinary contributions

we are building effective transformative processes that catalyze our shared goal of making Africa food secure.

It is with great honor and pleasure that I now declare the African Food Prize officially launched

### **A Clarion Call:**

This prize is a clarion call for a generation of bold, innovative solutions designed to reach for new heights and achieve great things. Africa needs its own widely-publicized laureates who put bright spotlights on these solutions that can be replicated across the continent to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty. With continued funding and support from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and its partner Yara International, the Prize will be conferred annually by an independent committee with the first award ceremony scheduled for the 2016 African Green

Revolution Forum (AGRF) in September and hosted in Nairobi, Kenya.

I am happy and proud to announce the committee members led by myself. They lend their personal credibility to this process of identifying the best that Africa has to offer in agriculture. They include:

- **Joachim von Braun**, Director of the Center for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn University, and Professor for economic and technological change
- **Dr. Eleni Z. Gabre-Madhin**, Former CEO of the Ethiopia Coffee Exchange and Winner of the Yara Food Prize in 2012.
- **Prof. Calestous Juma**, Director of the Agricultural Innovation Policy in Africa Project at Harvard University
- **Dr. Papa Abdoulaye Seck**, Senegal's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
- **Sheila Sisulu**, Special Envoy for Food and Nutrition Security

of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Republic of South Africa.

I am confident the award will grow in stature and prestige to celebrate Africans recognizes whose contributions to African agriculture catalyze and inspire a new era of sustainable food security and economic opportunity for all Africans.

### **Appreciation**

**To African Governments:** I recognize the support from African governments in advancing investments in the agriculture sector geared at advancing food security and the surge towards economic empowerment and security for Africa's farmer.

### **To partnering organizations**

I rally behind all your efforts towards making agricultural transformation a reality for Africa's people all over Africa through your tireless and consistent work across the agricultural value

chain whether in markets and access to trade or financing, policy and research.

**Thank you for your attention.**