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**KEYNOTE SPEECH: POLICY DEVELOPMENTS TOWARDS  
MAINSTREAMING ECOLOGICAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE  
INTO CAADP AND THE IMPLICATIONS**

**Delivered on Behalf of Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, Director of  
Agriculture, Rural Development and Blue Economy,  
African Union Commission**

**21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2023**

## **Keynote Speech: Policy Developments towards Mainstreaming Ecological Organic Agriculture into CAADP and the Implications**

Your Excellency Hon Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary,  
Republic of Kenya;

Your Excellency Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, State Minister for  
Agriculture Uganda

Your Excellency Hon. Mutula Kilonzo Jr, Governor Makweni  
County, Kenya

Hon Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Tanzania

Hon Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture Rwanda

Dr. Hans Herren, Co-Founder and President Biovision  
FOundation

Dr. David Amudavi, Executive Director, Biovision Africa Trust,  
and chair of the organizing committee

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It gives me much pleasure to participate in this event, the 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern Africa Agroecological Conference. I convey to you the warm greetings of the AUC Director for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa.
2. We wish to acknowledge the leadership and efforts of Biovision Africa Trust which hosts the African Union Ecological Organic Agriculture-Initiative Secretariat, for leading the planning and organization of this important regional Agroecology conference in line with our EOA Strategic Plan.

3. I also convey the gratitude of HE Commissioner and Director Agriculture and Rural Development to the Republic of Kenya for hosting this Conference.

### **Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests**

4. This 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference comes at a time when tripe global crises: the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have undermined gains made towards food security and ending hunger on the continent, further worsening nutrition insecurity. The on-going drought in the Greater Horn of Africa is the worst in living memory with far reaching negative impacts.
5. The combined and interlocking effects have severely challenged our food systems. This calls for multi-stakeholder dialogues and contributions on how to transform the continent's food systems by Member States, Regional Economic Communities, the AU, development partners, Non-State actors, media, private sector and most importantly our farming communities, women and youth. No one should be left behind!
6. The African Union Agenda affirms that sustainable agricultural transformation in Africa as outlined in Agenda 2063 can only be achieved through complementary and synergy among diverse partnerships working together for a common Pan African goal.

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7. The AU established the African Union Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative. An MoU was signed in 2022 with Biovision Africa Trust (BvAT) to host the Initiative's Continental Secretariat. The Secretariat is governed through an AU Chaired

Continental Steering Committee (CSC) which convenes twice annually to give strategic guidance on the implementation of the AU Executive Council Decision on Organic Agriculture of 2011.

8. Recently, the AU through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) adopted Ecological Organic Agriculture indicators for inclusion and tracking within the Biennial Review (BR) framework which is now preparing its 4<sup>th</sup> Cycle. An indicator to measure the extent through which policies and strategies on Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) are being integrated within broader agricultural systems by Member States was also adopted. This is in recognition of the important role of farmers' own seed in Member States agriculture sector. This is a big milestone that contributes towards ensuring that the Biennial Review Report that is made to our Heads of State and Government is reflective of the diversity of strategies towards achieving agricultural led growth and resilience.

9. There are number of complementary opportunities and strategies that should be at the core of enhancing the growth and impact of Ecological Organic Agriculture:

- Recent data shows that globally the annual market value of crop production directly linked to pollination was estimated between \$235 and \$577 billion<sup>12</sup>, representing about 9.5% of the total value of world agricultural food production. This an

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<sup>1</sup>Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). 2017. The Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production.

<sup>2</sup>Meenakshi Sushma. 2020. Pollinator Week: Economic Impact of Pollination Cannot be Underestimated. In Economy. [Pollinator Week: Economic impact of pollination cannot be underestimated \(downtoearth.org.in\)](https://downtoearth.org.in/pollinator-week-economic-impact-of-pollination-cannot-be-underestimated)

ecosystem service that is grossly under harnessed on the African continent.

- The on-going flooding underscores the need to better understand, support and protect water re-charge systems for better water percolation and drainage.
- Africa has adopted a one health approach that recognizes the interlink of humans, animals and their physical environments of which crops and other plants are core elements. Partnerships are crucial to harnessing these linkages
- African Union Commission is leading efforts to enhance delivery and access to safe and hygienic food, these sanitary and phytosanitary principles including traceability should be embedded in EOA.
- Carbon neutral approaches such as enhancing productivity, reducing waste in our food systems, value addition, changing from a perspective of food as perishable to food as transformable, are areas of low hanging fruit
- Africa has a huge and unprecedented youth dividend, which if well harnessed, is estimated to generate 11 -15% GDP growth between 2011 and 2030. Youth need gainful work that will allow them to bring their energies, innovation, entrepreneurship and agility into agriculture.
- Only four Member States are on track to meet Malabo nutrition targets by 2025: women are custodians of addressing nutrition in households and communities, their meaningful engagement is critical in shaping and implementing EOA.

10. This conference precedes the AU planned Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Summit in July this year. The main

strategy for success in implementing the Action Plan for will be harnessing multi-stakeholder partnerships and investments to drive policies, finance, research and development (R&D), markets and capacity for fertilizer and soil health management. Its implementation will also contribute to reversing soil degradation, accelerating inclusive agricultural transformation and ending hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

### **Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

11. This is one of several other multi-stakeholder platforms planned this year. Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome you to the continental platform, the 5<sup>th</sup> Africa Organic Conference (5<sup>th</sup> AOC) to be held in Kigali, Rwanda in November 2023.
  
12. The AU is delighted by the remarkable attendance and diversity of stakeholders participating in this 1<sup>ST</sup> Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference. The progress in the work being implemented by all stakeholders is notable, as is the commitment to sharing experience and knowledge exchange in alignment to AU's principles of transparency, partnerships, inclusivity and mutual accountability.

### **Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

13. On behalf of the Director Agriculture and Rural Development, I would like to thank our development partners who have supported this conference: the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and SSNC who have been

our key donor of the EOAI, GIZ for supporting the Knowledge Centres for Organic Agriculture (KCOA) in Africa, and Biovision Foundation. We recognize all other contributions. Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

14. To implement the Call to Action that emanate from this Conference, your collaboration and that of all stakeholders will critical.

15. I thank you and wish you all successful deliberations!