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PRESS RELEASE

A Road map for promoting regional agricultural commodities value chains development in Africa charted by RECs in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, with the facilitation of AU SAFGRAD.

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso – 19 October 2017. A 3-day workshop on how to improve the competiveness of Agricultural commodities through regional value chains development for boosting intra-Africa trade was closed today in Ouagadougou, the capital city of the "*Country of upright people*" (Burkina Faso). Attended by representatives from RECs, stakeholders and experts in agriculture, agribusiness, agro-industrial development, trade and investments as well as Continental and regional organizations, development partners, the meeting started on October 17th.

The aim of the workshop was to share the informations on the strategic agricultural commodities at regional level, the current situation of the implementation of regional value chains, challenges and opportunities as well as to chart a road map for further actions. This is in response to actualizing the Malabo 2014 blue print for agricultural transformation for improved livelihood and share prosperity in the continent.

Group picture at the opening ceremony of the workshop

The meeting provided the fora to strengthen regional interests and ties while fostering greater engagement between RECs, development partners and regional and international institutions. The gathering was a follow-up to the AUC/NPCA facilitated CAADP Partnership Platform side event meeting held in Kampala in May 2017.

AU SAFGRAD, African Union specialized technical office for research and development in semi-arid zones of Africa, was hosting this experts' meeting as part of its Programme to support the development of strategic agricultural commodities value chains.

The Opening session was chaired by Mr. TINGA Ramde, the representative of the Minister of Agriculture and water resource management of Burkina Faso, the host country. In his welcome address, he welcomed participants to Burkina Faso and emphasized the importance of regional

integration and cooperation in promoting peace and facilitating industrialization for sustainable livelihood for shared prosperity. He concluded by congratulating AU-SAFGRAD for organizing the workshop as a prompt follow-up towards implementing one of the recommendations of the recently concluded 2nd Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, rural development, water and environment (ARDWE).

In her speech, the representative of ECOWAS Commission, Dr Vivian IWAR, welcome participants to the ECOWAS region and highlighted some of the support activities of the ECOWAS Commission to Member States in the region.

The Coordinator of AU-SAFGRAD, Dr Ahmed ELMEKASS, in his opening remarks welcome participants and pointed out the commitment of Africa Union Commission to implementing the Heads of States and Government road map for achieving accelerated growth in African agriculture for improved livelihood and shared prosperity as contained in the Malabo 2014 declarations. "*Africa has plenty of opportunities and resources for agricultural transformation".* Stated Dr. Ahmed ELMEKASS, AU SAFGRAD Head of mission. Further he added: *"In June 2014, Member States committed to achieve seven Malabo commitments by 2025 including: ending hunger, tripling intra Africa Trade, promoting climate resilient agricultural Systems, and investing at least 10 percent of public expenditure in agriculture to unlock private sector investments among others. These targets are meant to contribute to inclusive growth and shared prosperity for Africans."* While concluding, he highlighted the invaluable contribution of AU SAFGRAD in the area of agricultural research and development in the Semi-Arid zone of Africa. Among these achievements the recent training of Young researchers from 35 African Member States in the area of the impact of Climate change on African Agriculture.

After three days of intensive work, experts have discussed important issues such as "Visioning, identifying challenges/opportunities and partnering for regional value chains development" and "criteria to be used in prioritizing regional strategic commodities".

Finally, the workshop proposed a concrete Road map for promoting regional Value chains development. Harmonizing market information system among REC's, effective coordination among REC's, organizing strong linkage between VC's actors and utilizing research tools are among the main objectives of the Road map charted in Ouagadougou by Experts from RECs with the assistance of regional and international institutions.

For more information, please contact:

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