



NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY

Women in Agriculture Conference

9-10 October

Durban, South Africa

CALL TO ACTION

Preamble

We hereby make this Call to Action as women in agriculture and as institutions that support the economic growth and empowerment of the African woman. The Women in Agriculture Conference held on 9-10 October, 2014 in Durban, South Africa comprising traditional authorities, leaders of government, pan-African institutions, business, civil society and the private sector calls for increased support for women farmers particularly in agri-business activities.

With 2014 declared as the year of African Agriculture and Food Security by the African Union in commemoration of a decade of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), agriculture continues to occupy a significant position on Africa's development landscape.

Recognising that within the agriculture value chain, women are responsible for up to 80% of food production, 60% of the harvesting, 80% of food storage and transport from fields to villages, 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs, and 60% of marketing activities.

Therefore our shared objective is the strengthening of inclusive growth, employment generation and sustainable livelihoods for African women producers and agri-business entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship should be at the centre of agriculture and food security activities.

Under the prevailing conditions we are cognisant of the fact that major strides are being made in policies and institutional considerations for empowering women in Agri-business. This includes addressing among others:

- *Strengthening state and private sector led interventions for agribusiness development for women (access and control to means of production, processing and markets)*
- *Functional markets and institutions for women in agribusiness*
- *Complex relationships that prevents women from taking a lead role in agri-business*

In order to consolidate and scale-up best practice in agriculture-based entrepreneurship, we call on African Leaders, the private sector and all stakeholders to support:

- ✓ *The establishment of a Fund for small scale agri-business promotion for women in Africa.*
- ✓ *The development of African seed production systems to enhance agri-business promotion in a sustainable manner*
- ✓ *Capacity building and training especially on business plan formulation and development*
- ✓ *Support for research and gender disaggregated data on the agri-food chain systems for evidence based policy making*

We are also mindful of the fact that major strides are being made in technologies and financing innovations for Agribusiness development. We call on Africa's leadership to support:

- *Innovation for private sector investments, inclusive growth, jobs & wealth creation through provision of women friendly financial institutions, services and loan products*
- *The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a catalyst for women's empowerment, economic transformation and sustainability*
- *Empowerment of women through participation in the development of macro-level strategies, rural microfinance and non-financial services policies development*
- *Enabling environment that takes into cognisance of the social cultural, traditional and gender based value systems*

In order to consolidate and scale up best practice in agriculture-based entrepreneurship we call on African Leaders, the private sector and all stakeholders to support:

- ✓ Generation of knowledge, skills and technology development along the agriculture value chain*
- ✓ Placing extension services at the core of a systems approach to agribusiness development in Africa.*
- ✓ Recognising the important role that the youth in particular young girls can play to enhance the brand of the agriculture sector*

We welcome the commitment of the African Union through the Malabo Declaration of 2014 which re-affirmed support for the Abuja Declaration on Agribusiness and Agro-Industries in Africa.

We strongly encourage our African governments, pan-African institutions, civil society, private sector, international organizations and development partners to commit to supporting the establishment of a fund for women smallholder farmers in Agri-business activities including facilitation of organisational development for women agribusiness entities.

Call on the NEPAD agency to make the Women in Agribusiness conference an annual event.

Urge the NEPAD Agency and other relevant institutions to work with African Governments, women groups and other stakeholders to support and facilitate implementation of this Call for Action.

Request the NEPAD Agency to present this Call for Action to the NEPAD and AU Policy Organs, particularly the AU Heads of State and Government.

Adopted by Participants

10 October 2014