



Fourth AFRICAN UNION – EUROPEAN UNION Agriculture Ministerial Conference

CONCEPT NOTE for the panel on Agricultural Research and Innovation

Timing: 10.00-11.30 (CEST)

- Subject:** **Agriculture research and innovation** for soil health, agro-ecology, agricultural economics and policy issues as well as other innovative approaches for sustainable farming systems and value chains
- Format:** One of four parallel thematic sessions – a high-level chair (ministerial level) will guide a discussion among a range of active players with differing experiences. Audience participation is expected.

CONCEPT

Ensuring global food and nutrition security is one of the main objectives of the EU-Africa scientific cooperation, where both continents join forces to address current and future challenges faced by African and European agri-food systems, such as climate change, pest outbreaks, land degradation and emerging crises such as COVID-19.

In November 2019, the Pan-African Network for economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP) was launched. PANAP is a network among African academic/research and institutional partners collaborating with the European Commission Joint Research Centre to build research capacity on agricultural economics and policy issues with a focus on Africa.

In March 2020, the European Commission published the Communication 'Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa' including a focus on stepped up cooperation in R&I with Africa. The global EU response to COVID-19 published in April 2021 also has a strong focus on R&I and Africa. Both are in line with the European Green Deal priorities, which includes developing a green growth model, improving the business environment and investing in climate research and innovation.

In July 2020, European Union and African Union Research and Innovation Ministers met for the first time, and discussed over four areas of cooperation: Public health; Green Transition; Innovation and technology and Capacities for science. Ministers highlighted the importance of investing into a green and sustainable economy through R&I Partnerships such as the EU-Africa partnership on Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and the EU-Africa partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE).

Green Transition in Africa is desirable and can be supported within the current and future R&I activities of the FNSSA partnership, by unlocking the potential of new green business opportunities in areas of sustainable agriculture. Activities such as the implementation of agro-ecological approaches for food production and of circular approaches to reduce food loss and make better use of agricultural and other organic waste, or the potential of One Health approach linking the health of the environment and humans to agriculture production, will be areas of future EU R&I investments in the short-term. In addition, activities under the green transition will give an important role to soil health, tackling problems of soil degradation and climate change in Europe and Africa.

Moreover, in August 2020, the Taskforce Rural Africa (TFRA) updated its recommendations to take account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the change in the EU's climate policy brought by the European Green Deal. The resulting report outlines that food and nutrition security has become of such fundamental political, economic and social importance that it must be at the centre of all future policy and planning.

The session Agriculture research and innovation will discuss the current and future R&I investments and results within the FNSSA partnership supporting green transition. Future investment opportunities for innovative green entrepreneurship ecosystem – “Silicon Valley of the Green Transition” will also be presented and discussed. The session will also share experiences in building strategic partnerships to harness research capacity, innovation and potential on the African continent from PANAP.

PROPOSED FORMAT AND POTENTIAL PANELLISTS:

- **Chair:** H.E. **Moussa Balde**, Minister of Agriculture of Senegal

Introductory remarks (5 minutes)

Moderator:

Juan Lucas Restrepo, DG of CIAT-Bioversity alliance

- 10.15-10.25:
Annick Sezibera, CAPAD (Confédération des Associations des Producteurs Agricoles pour le Développement): Agroecology as a sustainable green business
- 10.25-10.35:
Beatrice Egulu (AUC-DARBE), **Giampiero Genovese, (EC-JRC)**: Pan African Network for the economic Analysis of Policies
- 10.35-10.45:
Tony Siantionas, Director Scaling Positive Agriculture, World Business Council for Sustainable Development: Strengthening the engagement of the private sector towards agroecology
- 10.45-10.55:
Daniel Nahon, Emeritus professor, founder and director of CEREGE: The Silicon Valley of the Green Transition
- 10.55-11.10:
Samuel Rigu, CEO, Safi Organics: : Decentralized fertilizer production in local communities

- 11.10-11.20:
H.E. Martin Heydon, Minister of State of Ireland, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

*11.20-11.30:
Open floor discussion*

Chair's concluding thoughts (5 minutes)

