



**SPEECH DELIVERED BY HER EXCELLENCY,
Mme TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,
COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE
ON THE OPENING OF THE 9TH PAN AFRICAN MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF
VACCINE LABORATORIES IN AFRICA, HOLDING IN ANTANANARIVO,
MADAGASCAR, 29 TO 31 AUGUST, 2016.**

*The Honorable Minister for Higher Education and Research,
The Representative of the Honorable Minister for Agriculture and Animal
Production,
The Representative of the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Excellencies, Ambassadors, Senators,
General Directors of the MESUPRES,
Representative of the Mayor of Antananarivo town,
Directors of Organizations and establishments , the President of the University
of Antananarivo,
All International Partner, Stakeholders and their Representatives, Invited guests,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I bring you warm greetings and best wishes on behalf of the African Union Commission Chairperson H. E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on this auspicious occasion that marks the opening Ceremony for the 9th Meeting of Directors of Vaccine Producing Laboratories in Africa. I am

delighted to be part of this gathering of the best minds in Animal disease prevention and control and we are very grateful for the very warm reception and hospitality extended to us by the Government and people of Madagascar. I was reliably informed that this meeting hosts the largest number of dignitaries and representation and we are indeed encouraged by your show of commitment to the improvement of livestock development and the alleviation of poverty in Africa.

Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, as you may be aware, AU-PANVAC is the only Centre of excellence on the African continent responsible for ensuring the production and use of good quality vaccines by AU Member States; and the initiative to establish this centre arose from the need to control animal diseases which continue to be a major militating factor in the development of the livestock industry in Africa.

Despite the experience gained and the lessons learned from the recent success achieved with rinderpest eradication, the development of the livestock sector in African is still being seriously constrained by the burden of other infectious animal diseases. Diseases such as Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), Rift Valley Fever (RVF), African Swine Fever (ASF), and many others are threatening to dwarf the monumental strides made and efforts being put into livestock development in Africa. To worsen the situation, recent increase in international travel due to globalization and trade has significantly led to the emergence of diseases and provided opportunities for diseases to spread across geo-ecological and international boundaries. It is on record that Africa is the only continent burdened with almost every prevailing animal disease. These diseases constantly reduce Africa's capacity to achieve self-sufficiency in food

proteins to assure livestock owners' welfare and continue to pose significant impediments to national, regional and international trade in livestock and livestock products. In Africa these diseases alone cause annual losses estimated at US\$4 billion. Using Quality Assured vaccines is one sure way of controlling these diseases.

Honorable Ministers, Excellence's, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, In 2011 the global Veterinary Community celebrated the eradication of Rinderpest a disease which had caused havoc among livestock communities. I am glad to point out that Africa, and indeed AU-PANVAC, alongside its sister agency, AU-IBAR, played a major role in that success. That success renewed our courage and resolve to maintain the world (including our continent, Africa) free from Rinderpest and to set the stage for the control and eradication of other diseases which are a militating factor to livestock development in Africa. The task of eradicating Trans-boundary animal disease is a regional problem which can only be eradicated through a regionally coordinated strategy. The position of AU-PANVAC as the Centre of Excellence in Africa for the Quality Assurance of all vaccines produced in Africa will ensure the harmonization of vaccine Quality in Africa and contribute significantly towards the control of animal diseases in Africa.

Honorable Ministers, Excellence's, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, you may recall that barely two years ago, the African Heads of State and Government adopted a Declaration at the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. They made a commitment to ensure that the agricultural growth and transformation process is inclusive and contributes at least 50% to the overall poverty reduction

target; and to create and enhance the necessary support and conditions to realize this goal including ending hunger by 2025. In a call for action, the Heads of State and Government committed themselves to an expedient process of translating the declaration into results and impact. At their request the African Union Commission had through an extensive and continent wide consultative process developed a strategy and roadmap which is currently translating those goals into concrete results and impacts.

You will further recall that in January 2015, the African Heads of States and Government endorsed the Livestock Development Strategy for Africa (LiDeSA), which is a 20 year strategy whose goal is to transform the African livestock sector for enhanced contribution to socio-economic development and equitable growth. The LiDesSA is a result of extensive consultations carried out with all stakeholders in the livestock sector on the continent and is, therefore, the guiding strategy for the development of the sub-sector for the next 20 years. One of its four objectives is to enhance animal health and increase the production, productivity and resilience of livestock production systems. It is in pursuit of this objective that PANVAC working together with its sister agencies, AU-IBAR and PATTEC, will formulate its programs and carry out its work.

The African Union Commission pays particular attention to the continent-wide programmes run under its three technical offices; AU-PANVAC, AU-PATTEC and AU-IBAR for livestock health and development as part of its contribution not only to regional and international trade but also and especially towards a food secure and poverty free Africa. Indeed, livestock forms part of the priorities under the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development programme (CAADP) which, as you know, is the strategic framework and process for

increased agricultural production, productivity, food and nutrition security on the continent. The LiDeSA, which I alluded to above, is part and parcel of the CAADP agenda. I am, therefore, proud to see that PANVAC is contributing towards this cause and has today positioned itself as a major player in the international arena, thus fulfilling the mission for its establishment. Please keep it up.

Honorable Ministers, Excellence's, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, this meeting contributes directly towards the Growth and Transformation Agenda 2063 and the realization of the Malabo Declaration. The use of Quality assured vaccines and reagents contribute directly towards the growth and transformation of the livestock sector and the economy. On account of its importance, the AUC has directed all AUMS to use only vaccines certified by AU-PANVAC and I am glad to note that international organizations such as the FAO has included the use of PANVAC certified vaccines in their requirements. On the production side, the quality of vaccines produced has increased from less than 70% in 2010 to 83% in 2015; and the number of batches submitted for quality control has also increased dramatically from barely 100 in 2010 to more than triple that figure presently. This shows the increasing role vaccines and diagnostics are playing in our economies.

Honorable Ministers, Excellence's, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted to acknowledge that AU-PANVAC has in the past received tremendous support through partnerships with several global and regional organizations; most of which are represented here today, in the furtherance of animal disease prevention and control. Through these supports, the Centre was capacitated and strengthened to achieve quite a number of success in the past two years amongst

which includes its recognition as an FAO Reference Centre for Training in Vaccine quality control by the FAO which came soon after its recognition as a collaborating Centre of the OIE; its designation as a global Rinderpest holding facility for holding rinderpest virus materials and emergency preparedness vaccine seeds which has resulted in the transfer materials already to AU-PANVC; the establishment of a Mutual Recognition Process for the registration of Veterinary vaccines in the East African Community supported done in collaboration with GALVmed, a process that will pave the way for the harmonization of vaccine registration not only for the EAC but the entire continent; the development of a Cold Chain Manual done in collaboration with the KYEEMA Foundation; the development of a PPR ELISA Kit and the full implementation of the Quality Management System with in the last few months. The list is truly impressive and commendable. This new status present complex challenges and even greater responsibility which requires substantial effort, resources, commitment and networking among all stakeholders in order to sustain.

It is my hope that this Meeting will provide the necessary framework to strengthen further your support for AU-PANVAC in the implementation of its mandate of providing quality assurance service for vaccines and the production of essential diagnostic reagents which has increased tremendously in the last two years. I would like to appeal to the meeting to consider payment for quality control services by AU-PANVAC on a cost recovery basis especially for Commercial companies. Organizations should also consider sponsoring these meetings or activities as it is done in other sectors such as sports. We would also be glad to see organizations seconding their staff to AU-PANVAC or sponsoring the recruitment of staff for PANVAC for specific period of

time which will also be an advantage to the organizations. All these will no doubt strengthen the capacity of AU-PANVAC to deliver on its mandates to the global community.

Honorable Ministers, Excellence's, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the light of this, allow me to give special thanks to the OIE, FAO, EU, USAID, Australian AID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, GALVmed, KYEEMA Foundation, IDRC, individual Governments and diplomatic missions; and a host of others too numerous to mention, who have directly impacted on the activities of AU-PANVAC and to hope that this support will continue for the benefit of Africa and mankind in general.

Finally, I wish to once again thank the Government and people of Madagascar for hosting this meeting and for the very wonderful welcome they have accorded us.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in thanking IMVAVET for the wonderful organization of this meeting, particularly Dr. Mamisoa and his team, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that this meeting is a success. I once again thank the honorable Ministers for gracing this occasion and also thank all our invited dignitaries and guests for honoring our invitation and according this occasion the befitting status.

Thank you.