



Speech of the Acting Director AU-IBAR

**WORKSHOP TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY INPUT TO UPDATE THE EASTERN AFRICA REGIONAL DAIRY
VALUE CHAIN AND TO OUTLINE A DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR A HARMONIZED REGIONAL DAIRY
VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

1st to 5th November, Naivasha Kenya

Dr. David Balikowa, the Senior Livestock Officer EAC

Directors from the six EAC Member States

Managing Directors and Executive Secretaries Dairy Regulatory Boards from the Six EAC Member States

The Senior Livestock Officer COMESA

Regional and National Dairy Value Chain Experts

Fellow Colleagues from AU-IBAR

Distinguished Guests in all your Different Capacities

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocol Observed

I am greatly honoured to welcome you to this important **Workshop to Provide Preliminary Input to Update the Eastern Africa Regional Dairy Value Chain and to Outline a Draft Framework for a Harmonized Regional Dairy Value Chain Development Strategy.**

We are very pleased that we can hold this Meeting physically given the relaxation of covid-19 restrictions across many of our countries and globally. Physical engagements are irreplaceable for strategic dialogues. It is important that we all observe protocols to curb spread of covid-19 so that we stay safe and healthy.

Distinguished Guests,

This is a joint activity of the East African Community and the AU-IBAR Sustainable Development of Livestock for Livelihoods in Africa (the Live2Africa Project).

The Live2Africa Project is one of the first initiatives of AU-IBAR towards implementation of the continental aspects of the twenty year Livestock Development Strategy for Africa. The Live2Africa Project takes cognizance of the immense livelihood contribution and business opportunities that the livestock sector presents with the high and rising demand for animal source foods, low per capita consumption against globally recommended standards, and the deficit in supply on the continent that is largely met by importation.

The Live2Africa Project aims to build systemic capacity to build an enabling environment for growth of the livestock sector; as well as to take catalytic action along priority regional value chains to trigger both commercialization and inclusive sector transformation for at scale increase in livestock production, productivity, value addition and trade.

Distinguished Guests,

In 2019 at a Stakeholder Consensus Building Exercise stakeholders selected the regional dairy value chain as the focus of the Live2Africa Project focus in this region. Dairy is one of the fastest growing and most dynamic sectors in the East Africa region, and the region is collectively the leading milk-producing region in Africa.

The IGAD and SADC regions selected red neat and live animals, ECCAS and ECOWAS selected poultry and North Africa, like this region, chose the dairy value chain.

Distinguished Guests,

To avoid replication of efforts, and to focus investments, a subsequent Stocktaking Exercise to identify priority actions for the selected regional livestock value chains, identified three Strategic Areas for support to the Eastern Africa Regional Dairy Value Chain:

The first Strategy was to establish an enabling environment for a competitive dairy value chain in the Eastern Africa region;

The second Strategy was to strengthen the capacity of producers, producer organizations and other value chain actors to access input and output markets;

The third Strategy was to enhance value addition and market access for milk and dairy products in the region.

Under the first Strategy the key intervention is the formulation of a harmonized regional dairy value chain development strategy.

Distinguished Guests,

While each Member State has taken its own path to development of their dairy value chain, they are intricately interlinked across the region from shared natural resources, access to inputs, to markets and trade. As the sector has grown and its benefits been realized in the region, the challenges and constraints of not having a harmonized regional strategy been increasingly highlighted.

The endorsement and coming into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement adds another layer, effectively expanding the market for East Africa's dairy sector by opening up markets for interregional and continental trade.

This context calls for a shift away from business as usual to an upgraded perspective of development of the regional dairy value chain based on harnessing both Member State and the collective comparative advantages of the region.

It calls for an updated understanding of the country value chains, and a re-imagining of an integrated regional value chain. Each country will have a different focus and priorities which must inform the regional approach to delivering a more competitive but coordinated strategic development agenda for dairy in the region. Some of the more enduring challenges and constraints in the dairy sector in the region can only be addressed through a harmonized regional approach.

Distinguished Guests,

Lessons learned in the region in the development of policies and strategies for the dairy sector in the region, which is largely private sector driven, and predominated by the informal sector, underscore the necessity of wide consultations.

This Workshop therefore is intended to only initiate the process by giving a platform for preliminary dialogue and discussion to update the country and regional value chains and to begin to outline a framework for a harmonized regional dairy value chain development strategy.

EAC, COMESA and all Member States are represented at this Workshop alongside Experts: your input is critical to beginning the envisioning and articulation the regional value chain upgrade and strategy, and to discuss an approach to strengthening regional regulation. It our hope that this will start to embed this initiative at Member State and Regional levels.

Further consultations at country and regional level with a wider more representative group of stakeholders will be undertaken, and once the drafts are completed a regional validation and an exercise to develop action plans.

Distinguished Guests

I thank you once again for honouring the invitation to participate in this Workshop and look forward to your engagement, contributions and the outcomes.

AU-IBAR remains seized upon working with Eastern Africa Member States, EAC and COMESA to develop the Eastern Africa dairy sector.

I declare this Workshop open.