



**Remarks of Dr. Nick Nwankpa, Acting Director
African Union – InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources**

At the Togo National World Bee Day Celebration

20th May 2023

Distinguished Stakeholders in the Apiculture Sector in all your various capacities

I salute you today as the African continent joins the rest of the World to celebrate the World Bee Day 2023.

I bring warm greetings from the Chairperson of the African Union H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and H.E Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment.

Distinguished Stakeholders,

My Office, the African Union – InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is the technical agency of the African Union mandated to provide leadership for the development of animal resources on the Africa continent.

AU-IBAR is very proud to be associated with all the 35 Apiculture Platforms, across Africa, pinnacle multi-stakeholder platforms, that were either established or strengthen under the AU-IBAR - *icipe* Bee Health Project that was funded jointly by the European Union and African Union.

It is with great pleasure that I particularly Congratulate the Togo National Apiculture Platform for organizing and celebrating this important day in your country today.

Distinguished Stakeholders

The 2023 World Bee Day Theme “Bee Engaged in Pollinator-Friendly Agricultural Production” is a very important call for our times today: and not just for the apiculture sector, but for all humanity.

Pollinator friendly agricultural production means healthy environments, healthy food, healthy animals, healthy humans. It means more food, better quality food, and sustainable environments. Any environment that is healthy for honey bees and other pollinators, is healthy for all and sustainable.

Distinguished Stakeholders,

It calls for us, in Togo, and across Africa to think of bees and other pollinators differently

- It calls us to conserve and grow honey bee and other pollinator populations. Africa has some of the most diverse and adapted bee genetic resources. These need to be well documented and programs for their preservation and promotion supported.
- It calls for us to conserve and grow our natural habitats so that wild populations of honey bees and other pollinators can proliferate. A study in Tanzania showed that a

decrease in natural habitats of wild pollinators adversely affected crop revenues as much as between 4 to 29% among small holder farms¹.

It calls Africa to recognize the value of and promote both natural and commercial honey bee pollination services. Recent data showed that globally the annual market value of crop production directly linked to pollination was estimated between \$235 and \$577 billion²³, representing about 9.5% of the total value of world agricultural food production.

In comparison the global market for pesticides was worth nearly \$84.5 billion in 2019⁴; and the agrochemical market reached \$243.1 billion USD in 2019⁵. Despite the known value and utilization of pollination services globally, very few African Member States are harnessing commercial honey bee pollination services.

- Policy and institutional support is needed to grow capacities for pollination services. Currently about one-third of all food produced in Africa benefits from commercial honey bee pollination services⁶, but this is from just a few countries.
- Importantly Member States need to implement:
 1. **The Continental Guidelines to mitigate potential risk of pesticides on honey bees and other pollinators.**
 2. **The Policy for the Harmonization of Pesticides Regulation in Africa** which outlines a framework for (i) pesticide regulations (Registration; labelling; packaging; advertising; standards, compliance and regulation) (ii) Control of pesticides Imports and exports (iii) Pesticides control, handling and storage (iv) Distribution and sales/licensing (v) Pesticide application, application equipment and use (certification) (vi) Inspection; and (vii) Re-evaluation and post registration surveillance.

These documents can be found on the AU-IBAR ecosystem.

Distinguished Stakeholders

The Apiculture sector is one that holds many solutions for our times and the future, and Africa is key to many of those solutions.

¹BBC. The Untapped Potential of Africa's Honey Bees. [The untapped potential of Africa's honey bees - BBC Future](#)

²Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). 2017. The Assessment Report on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production.

³Meenakshi Sushma. 2020. Pollinator Week: Economic Impact of Pollination Cannot be Underestimated. In Economy. [Pollinator Week: Economic impact of pollination cannot be underestimated \(downtoearth.org.in\)](#)

⁴The Business Research Company. 2020. Pesticides Global Market Opportunities and Strategies To 2023. [Global Pesticides Opportunities And Strategies Market Report \(thebusinessresearchcompany.com\)](#)

⁵Jason Chen.2020. Global Markets for Agrochemicals. BCC Research. [Agrochemicals Market Share, Size & Industry Trends Report \(bccresearch.com\)](#)

⁶BBC. The Untapped Potential of Africa's Honey Bees. [The untapped potential of Africa's honey bees - BBC Future](#)

Among the crops that depend on insect pollination are many fruits and vegetables at the core of African traditional diets. Over time we have under valued these diets and invested less in cultivating and researching on them, eroding their contribution to our diets. These crops will be critical to meeting nutrition diets of the vulnerable, especially of children, of women at reproductive age, the aged and those in poor health.

Distinguished Stakeholders

*“The African Union theme of the year 2023 is **“The Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation”**. The apiculture sector must organize and take full advantage of Africa’s single market.*

World trade in honey was over 2.89 billion USD in 2021 growing by 25.7% from 2.3 billion USD in 2020. Currently Africa has only 0.4%⁷ of these trade sales, despite producing 10% of global honey, meaning it is not integrated in the world honey market. Only 1.55% of African honey enters international trade. Honey value chains have a high distributive factor, with benefits accruing to rural populations.

Under the Bee Health Project, African Member States, with the technical support of the African Standardization Organization (ARSO) developed African Apiculture, hive and bee hive products standards which Member States adopted, and should be supported to fully implement to enhance capacity for intra and Inter-African trade in hive products and pollination services.

Distinguished Stakeholders,

Honey is money! It is liquid gold, especially now as more and more people recognize the nutritive and other health benefits from honey and other hive products.

Africa has an unprecedented youth dividend in its large youth population. Data indicate that if well harnessed, youth should generate 11–15 percent GDP growth between 2011 and 2030⁸. Failure to provide meaningful work among young people can play into frustration, social unrest or unmanaged migration⁹.

Rural penetration and distributive capacity of beekeeping is a clear advantage for African households and especially women and youth. Our governments should place this sector high on the agenda for creation of profitable and sustainable rural employment.

Distinguished Stakeholders,

Our Heads of State and Government, at their Summit in 2022 endorsed that:

⁷Workman, D. 2018. Natural Honey Exports by Country. <http://www.worldstopexports.com/natural-honey-exporters/>

⁸ibid

⁹UNFPA. 2014.

- Beekeeping should be recognized and supported as economic sector with a high employment creation capacity, possibilities for high and sustainable incomes, and for trade. The sector should be fully supported with policy, institutional, regulatory, research, animal health and agribusiness development frameworks and resources.
- Honey bee pollination services should be recognized as a critical input for enhancing production of especially highly nutritious crops that are the domain of women, for cash crops that smallholder farmers depend on, for boosting the growth of Africa's fruit industry, for fodder production and for conservation of biodiversity.
- Therefore, pollination services, as a key input, should receive policy, regulatory, institutional and public and partner investment similar to pesticides and agrochemical as a key input
- Increased investment is needed for conservation, health and promotion of growth of Africa's honey bee genetic resources and colonies populations as critical resources for preserving both crop and wider vegetation biodiversity and environmental health in Africa and globally.

Distinguished Stakeholders,

I wish you a successful and educative World Bee Day Celebration.

I call upon all our development partners and regional, continental and global financing institutions to designate funds and financing to implement and invest in realizing the commitments endorsed by African Union Heads of State and Government, and by the international ministerial conference, critical to the growth, contribution and sustainability of Africa's beekeeping sector.

Thank you for your kind attention.