CAADP Day in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 21st July 2010

Theme: “Post-Compact CAADP implementation; the African private sector and investment in agriculture.”

Background
Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, CAADP is an African Union initiative that aims at helping African countries to reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development. CAADP compact advocates for allocation of 10% of the national budget to the agricultural sector and a 6% growth in the agricultural sector. This year’s annual CAADP day was held during the 5th FARA General Assembly in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The event attracted close to 200 policy makers, ministers, researchers and representatives for the farmers’ organizations, the media, the private sector, and development agencies with a view of discussing the various impediments to African agriculture and chart a possible way forward.

Remarks from the panelist
The panelists discussed in length the role of the private sector in driving agricultural development in the continent. The General Manager for Agriculture Development at Equity Bank, Madam Esther Muiruri told the gathering how the bank is funding small scale farmers in Kenya to improve their production process. She opined that by so doing they give financial services to farmers who would never have dreamt of affording the banking services, hence helping them increase production and improve their living standards. UBA Bank in Burkina Faso is also funding the agricultural sector, and particularly the cotton industry which is widely grown in Burkina.

Madam Lucy Muchoki, Chief Executive Officer, Pan African Agribusiness and Agro industry Consortium (PanAAC) illuminated the need for the private sector to take a leading role in agricultural development. She gave a case in Kenya, where the private sector is working closely with the Government through thematic working groups under the Agriculture Sector Coordinating Unit (ASCU). She added that there is need to integrate all the agricultural value chains to attain the envisioned agricultural growth.

While opening the CAADP day, Minister for agriculture in Burkina Faso, Hon Dr. Laurent Sedogo called for the review of the Maputo declaration by including the time frame in which countries should have complied with the CAADP compact to accelerate agricultural development in the continent. He added that Burkina Faso has already allocated not just 10% as CAADP compact requires but 15% of their national budget to Agriculture which he believed would have a long term impact on Agricultural development and consequently raise the living standards of the citizens.
The head of CAADP, Martin Bwalya in his speech during CAADP day emphasized the need for the private sector to play a significant role in agricultural development to ensure sustainable growth in the sector. He added that knowledge sharing is critical among all the stakeholders for it to be effective and of use to the progenitors and have an impact to users of such knowledge.

Below are the panelists during CAADP day:

In the panel from left: Mr. Alphonse Kadjo -General Director of UBA, Madam Lucy Muchoki - Chief Executive Officer of the Pan African Agribusiness Consortium, Hon. Kwesi Ahwoi -Minister of Food and Agriculture of Ghana, Hon Dr. Laurent Sedogo -Minister of Agriculture, Water resources and Fisheries of Burkina Faso, Mr. John Kaninda-Moderator, Hon Dr. Sam Sesan -Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security of Sierra Leone, Madam Esther Muhiri -General Manager Marketing Agribusiness of Equity Bank and Hon. Vincent Rubarema -Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of Uganda

**Conclusion**

It is evident that for Africa to attain food self sufficiency it has to change the agricultural systems, up their innovations and most importantly engage the private sector in the production process. Private sector-lead agricultural development has proved to be more sustainable and have a greater developmental impact in the long run. If all the stakeholders in the agribusiness come together with a similar goal, they would be able to give the sector the much needed competitiveness and growth.

Lastly, agriculture should do a little more than just feeding the hungry; it should be able to provide decent jobs, improve the living standards of the least in the value chain and give adequate return on investment. To achieve this there should be unity of purpose among all the players in the agricultural value chains.