

COMMUNIQUE

The Third General Assembly of the African Apiculture Platform on Honey Production, Bee Health and Pollination Services

MEETING OUTPUTS, DECISIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS

21st – 23rd September 2016, Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village, Kigali Rwanda

I. BACKGROUND

The Third General Assembly of the African Apiculture Platform (AAP) on Honey Production, Bee Health and Pollination Services, was held from 21-23rd September 2016 at the Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village, Kigali, Rwanda. The theme of the General Assembly was **“Promoting Intra and Inter Regional Trade of Honey and Other Beehive Products in Africa”**. This theme is well aligned to the Malabo Declaration Agricultural Transformation Agenda which aims to triple intra-African trade as a means to address food insecurity and youth unemployment, and to increase incomes and economic growth.

The AAP is a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) facilitated by the African Union-Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), which is mandated to provide leadership in the development of Africa’s animal resources. The AAP draws on the convening power of the African Union to bring key public sector actors i.e., AU Member States (MS) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on to the same forum with the private sector, beekeeper associations, non-governmental organizations, and academia and research institutions and consumer bodies. This gives the Platform legitimacy, unprecedented leverage, and a strong mandate for substantive agenda setting, information and knowledge exchange, policy reform, and advocacy. Key objectives of the AAP are facilitating collaboration of stakeholders, advocating for an enabling policy framework for the sector and for increased public and private investment, and promoting knowledge sharing, capacity development and partnership development.

The General Assembly, which is the main forum of the AAP, brings all members and caucuses of the Platform together and is the main forum of the AAP at which issues are discussed/ debated on, and where the key decisions are made and coordinated actions for implementation of the decisions agreed among all sector actors.

The 3rd General Assembly of the AAP was held as a joint event with ApiExpo Africa 2016, a private sector led initiative under ApiTrade Africa which was meeting under the theme “Driving Socio-Economic Transformation in Africa: the Role of Commercial Beekeeping”.

The Government of the Republic of Rwanda hosted both events at the same venue providing an opportunity for cross-interaction and resulting in greater dialogue between state and non-state actors.

The General Assembly was attended by ninety-six (96) delegates from forty (40) African Union Member States: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Cote D’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia (The), Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Four Regional Economic Communities attended: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Arab Maghreb Union (UMA).

The Aim and Objectives of the Meeting

The 3rd General Assembly of the African Apiculture Platform was convened to provide Platform Members with an opportunity to engage on the Platform business with a focus on deliberating on how to promote greater intra and inter regional trade of honey and other hive products in Africa. The specific objectives of the Meeting were:

- Identification of opportunities, challenges and constraints for intra and inter African regional trade of honey and other beehive products;
- Identification of options to promote intra and inter African regional trade of honey and other beehive products
- Agreement on priority actions as way forward for intra and inter regional trade of honey and other beehive products

- Agreement on priorities for the formulation of an African standard and certification process for African honey, other beehive products and pollination services
- Validation of the draft Guidelines to Minimize the Potential Impacts of Pesticides on Pollinator Health
- Validation of the draft Guidelines for Establishment of National Apiculture Platforms
- Deliberation on the Report of the Executive Committee on implementation of the AAP decisions

II. THE MEETING

The Opening Session

Welcome remarks and good will messages were made by the Chief Animal Production Officer AU-IBAR, the Chairperson AAP, the Chairman ApiTrade, a representative of the European Union (EU), the Director of African Union Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU-IAPSC), and the Secretary General African Standardization Organization (ARSO). A Welcome Speech was made by the Director AU-IBAR, and the Meeting officially opened by the Director General Animal Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), Rwanda who represented the Minister of Agriculture.

All speakers echoed opportunity that the joint event offers for greater collaboration between a private sector led initiative ApiExpo Africa, and the AAP which convenes African Union Member States and all other stakeholders to one table. The representative of the EU Rwanda underscored the importance of the Bee Health Project objectives that seek to facilitate the greater collaboration and partnership, sharing of lessons learnt and best practices, creation of an enabling policy framework and capacity enhancement, and promotion of partnerships necessary for advocating for greater investment in the apiculture sector. EU has granted a no-cost extension for the Bee Health Project to complete outstanding activities.

The key note address on the Status, Challenges and Opportunities for Marketing and Trade of Honey in the context of the Malabo Declaration highlighted the fact that although there is great potential, Africa is a net importer of honey. , the need to adopt a value chain approach that allows different actors to specialize including input supplies, collective processing, marketing, branding and distribution of products, improved facilitation i.e., extension, access to information and training was recommended. Key opportunities were highlighted as unmet demand due to rapid growth of urban and middle class

populations, increased demand for food, and health products, diverse agro-ecological zones, Africa's capacity to produce organic and other niche honeys.

Plenary Remarks/ Issues Raised:

- Intra African trade has potential to address both economic and social transformation issues including food security, malnutrition, livelihood improvement and alternative livelihoods, youth unemployment, and increased incomes
- Promotion of intra-Africa trade should be premised on knowledge of the value of our products and the opportunities of regional integration that create larger markets and not reactions to insecurity and global uncertainties
- Africa should learn from the 'Maturity Model' implemented in Asia and South America where intra-regional trade drives development of competitiveness that creates capacity for entry into global markets
- The achievements in laying down the 'hardware' of intra-regional trade such as infrastructure and removal of non-tariff barriers must be matched with addressing the 'software' equally central to operationalization of free-trade zones i.e., capacities, understanding formal and informal sectors, financial facilitation, greater private sector involvement in policy and regulatory reforms
- The benefit that any Member State will derive from the AAP is dependent on the will to implement AAP decisions and recommendations at the country level
- The sustainability of the AAP is an issue that needs to be addressed urgently.

Session 2: Regional Policy & Regulatory Frameworks for Enhancing Intra- African Trade in Honey and Other Hive Products

Three Regional Economic Communities made presentations:

UMA was participating at the AAP for the first time: He presented "l'Union du Maghreb Arabe d'Apiculture" who was launch in October 18th, 2012 at Ifrane, Marocco with mission to defend the interest of his member internationally and to rehabilitate and protect beekeeping sector at national and regional level.

Nonetheless, the beekeeping sector is predominantly regarded as an under banked, low investment sector characterized by aging farmers with a low level of education. Capacity of the sector is constrained by inadequacies in research, extension, and institutional framework.

ECCAS underscored the fact that although the Member States had ascended to the decision to establish a Free Trade Zone, only Gabon was implementing it. The Member States have all developed requisite text but are not facilitating implementation with little trade between Member States. There are deficits in infrastructure and customs procedures are not tailored to ease movement of persons and goods. Recommendations include the need to accelerate the harmonization of ECCAS and CEMAC trade policy instruments an agreement reached in October 2015. A mechanism is needed for community financing.

COMESA highlighted the importance of honey which is ranked among the top ten commodities traded intra regionally. Production and trade of honey is expected to grow and therefore the need to lobby stakeholders to promote its trade. Currently it has the leading producers of honey in Africa but only exports 2.74% globally. There is low emphasis on other beehive products i.e., very high waste and underdeveloped industry despite the rising investments in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and other industries that require beehive products. COMESA aims to be a single trade and investment area by 2025 and has made progress in achieving this. It has developed a simplified customs procedure that facilitates and tracks informal trade by allowing informal traders passage at border points with goods valued below \$ 1000. Also in place are mechanisms for issuing certificates of origin and for handling disputes. Key challenges for promotion of intra-regional trade are low technical capacity, a constraining policy and financial environment and of significant import, the lack of standardization and quality management systems.

Plenary Remarks/ Issues Raised:

- A more substantive framework is needed for the apiculture sector, moving it away from ‘a poor mans’ sector, to articulating a framework that underscores its substantive potential and contribution to Africa’s development objectives
- Apiculture should be taken seriously and supported to provide alternative livelihoods, especially in the face of climate change and variability. The approach to addressing climate change should be holistic

- More credible data is needed to support policy processes and decision making: ARIS should be harnessed fully for the apiculture sector, a process that needs collaboration between Member States and AU-IBAR. Informal trade is predominant and yet most available data pertains to the formal sector: how can this anomaly in data be rectified? Pollination services also need to be quantified.
- There have been tremendous efforts to eliminate trade tariffs that were significant constraints towards intra-African trade. However, without similar investments to boost production and productivity capacity, this remains as a unexploited opportunity
- The efforts to increase intra-African trade have been predominantly public sector driven, and yet the implementation of agreed protocols requires private sector initiative. Greater inclusion and development of the private sector is needed to boost intra-African trade
- Centralized/ collective efforts is an approach that could increase benefits from intra-regional trade for beekeepers, however there are also serious health risks related to spread of diseases and pests therefore good agricultural practices need to be packaged and disseminated.
- There is need for national apex apiculture platforms that implement the decisions and recommendations of the AAP was emphasized
- Documents should be in both English and French so that they are accessible to all the AAP stakeholders
- A greater focus on advocacy and lobbying is needed to put the sector on the public agenda and to elevate the issues of the sector

Session 3 Member States Achievements and Challenges in Implementing Regional and National Frameworks for Boosting Intra African Trade

Reflections from a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) paper showed that honey, along with sugar and molasses are the top intra-regionally trade agricultural import. Intra-regional trade of honey is expected to grow with the significant health concerns related to non-communicable diseases.

Nine countries made presentations:

Rwanda: Although key achievements have been realized notably in development of infrastructure, development of enabling policies, a lab for quality assurance, establishment of a residual monitoring plan that gives access to EU markets, enhancement of training, research on bee diseases, only half of

the beekeepers are active, and export to the EU is minimal. Business gaps include constraints in input supply, processing, packaging, understanding the market, and lack of data and information.

Ethiopia: has a large apiculture sector with 1.8 smallholder beekeepers and over 10 million hives. There is a huge potential standing at 500,000 metric tons (MT) of honey and 50,000 MT of wax. Current production stands at about 50000MTs and 5000MT respectively. Only 32% exported globally, indicating a large informal trade especially to Sudan and Somalia. There is a conducive policy environment, and youth are targeted. However there is low product development, popularization or advocacy on standards, and lack of understanding of the benefits of intra-African trade.

Tanzania: Has beekeeping policies to support the sector, has enhanced the role of the private sector, increased awareness of the public about the benefits of the sector, and facilitated the formation of groups and collection centers. The country has also promoted the adoption of new technologies and training and research at diploma, graduate and postgraduate levels. Challenges remain including the non-quantification of informal trade, a greater orientation towards global markets, and low development of market skills.

Cameroon: Central Africa is a region with high potential in honey production and with many similarities among countries. Cameroon has a production of more than 5000MT of honey per year with an annually exports 400 MT, but is largely globally oriented, with much less export into the regional markets. Guiding Hope is a major stakeholder in the central African region. The flow of the honey trade displays a movement of products from ECCAS to ECOWAS and the major challenges faced are insecurity, tax and customs harassments, and lack of reliable standards to define the products. Promoting intra-regional trade is a priority in the sub regional integration policy but in reality the country remains poorly integrated in terms of intra-community trade flows. The apiculture sector has potential but faces infrastructural, policy harmonization, currency conversion, customs and tax limitations, insecurity and market information. This can be overcome through harmonization, adoption and implementation of a common policy on the management of beekeeping, establishment of tax incentives and customs facilitation on bee products and inputs and enhancing local capacities in apiculture through education and awareness creation.

Egypt: has a long history in beekeeping, and has had a standard for honey since 1958 which was amended in 1987, and has a number of facilities including laboratories. The country is looking to develop a new law to regulate the industry, establish a database of actors, improve research, raise

attention on products and bee health and transform itself into a terminal market to supply both Arab and African markets and create employment.

Zimbabwe: has recorded many benefits from the Bee Health Project and being on the AAP that pertain to improving intra-regional trade including capacity building/ training on bee health and improved techniques for honey processing, and establishment of the National Apiculture Platform. Zimbabwe held a Bee Health and Pollination Conference. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ guidelines for the sector are being developed, and a surveillance program is being established. There are a number of constraints including the subsistence mindset, constrictive pricing, the high cost of residual testing, gaps in disease notification and control, and poor coordination within the SADC region. There are recommendations to establish a code of practice, to enhance enforcement, develop a database of actors, improve extension and access to information and knowledge and for harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks with neighbors in the region

Nigeria has ratified various regional trade agreements, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty but not invested substantive effort in promoting intraregional trade. Challenges are related to supply constraints, limited private sector involvement in integration, unclear policies, infrastructure and currency constraints, weak dispute regulation, and narrow export base among others. A key recommendation was take a private sector driven approach.

Tunisia has developed beekeeping policies, and has ratified regional agreements to promote the sector including quality infrastructure. The role of private sector has been enhanced, there is modest technical capacity owed to education in bee keeping, adoption of new technologies and innovations and existence of associations and collection centers. However, there are no exports to the region in the recent years as there is an existing ban on imports and exports except with Egypt. There is need to create awareness on the benefits of intra-African trade, and to institute mechanisms to implement quality control at the borders.

Session 4: Experiences and Lessons from ApiTrade Africa, a Continental Trade Promotion Initiative

Apitrade Africa made a presentation highlighting its mandate as a continental private sector led, nonprofit initiative for market development, investment promotion, lobbying and advocacy, policy influencing, facilitation of ApiExpo Exhibits and national shows for apiculture products.

ApiTrade underscored the importance of deepening the relationship between it and the AU-IBAR Bee Health Project and the AAP including the need for dedicated support from AU-IBAR and the RECs and AAP endorsement of ApiExpo Africa for investment and trade promotion. ApiTrade also recommended that AAP expand its remit beyond the continent to influence global agendas related to apiculture development.

Plenary Remarks/ Issues Raised

- ApiTrade to be more inclusive of francophone Africa in its member recruitment
- Diversification of ApiExpo exhibitions to include all aspects of apiculture, and to include more defined categories and levels of exhibition. Exhibitions should go beyond production/ honey and wax processing to all aspects for the value chains from such as insurance products, education/academics, research,
- Better facilitation and logistic support to ensure that exhibitors from other countries are able to bring in wares (products and services) to display at ApiExpo
- Better and more accessible siting of ApiExpo to attract the general population and promote their participation
- Capacitation of exhibitors so that what is presented is in alignment with best practise

SWOT Analysis on Africa's Capacity to Expand Expansion of intra and inter regional trade in honey and other hive products: Priorities

The analysis was under taken by four groups: Eastern and Southern Africa combining COMESA, East African Community (EAC) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); Northern Africa UMA plus Egypt, Western Africa (Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) and Central Africa (Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS)). The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats are captured in the main report. Other than UMA, most of the input proffered by the different group focused only one out of the seven clusters of the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade i.e., Productive capacity. Other clusters identified under the African Union 2012 Decision to Establish a Pan African Continental Free Trade Area include trade policy, trade facilitation, trade related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information and factor market integration. This highlighted the need for enhanced capacity and awareness building on the prospects of intra-African trade across the regions.

COMESA, EAC and SADC Group priorities: priority actions were highlighted as the need for increased government support including policies, surveillance of pesticides & diseases, investment in quality standardization, info gathering, capacity building and regulation on indiscriminate use of pesticides

UMA Group Work priority actions: were identified as the need for more strategic research and extension, enhancement of private sector involvement, improvement in quality infrastructure, harmonization of regulations, and the need for establishment of a reference laboratory for product analysis and diseases management.

ECOWAS Group priority actions are the need for harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks for enhancing intra-African trade; and interventions to enhance competitiveness

ECCAS Group focused on the need to establish a regionally harmonized regulatory framework as the major priority.

Plenary Remarks/ Issues Raised

- The issue for UMA is not just a lack of quality standards, but rather the infrastructure to ensure implementation of standards
- Lack of critical quality infrastructure is a challenge for most of the continent
- There is a need to explore options for establishment of multi-risk insurance schemes to protect stakeholder investments in the apiculture sector
- Central Africa is making progress towards developing a harmonized protocol for pesticide management, however individual countries are still lagging in this respect
- While Sahelian countries have SPS agreements in place, they are under great threat from increasing pesticide dumping

Session 5: Standards for Quality and Safe Honey and Beehive products

The African Standardization Organization led a session on the process to develop an African harmonized and implementable standards for honey, other hive products and pollination services. A background presentation underscored the importance of standardization and its contribution to GDP in terms of job creation and generation of economic value. Owing to the challenge of poor capacity to implement standards at the production level: 68% of rejections of agricultural products by importing countries arise from bad agricultural practice. While an implementable standard is key, of equal

importance is a conformity system that allows for cross-border/ intra and inter-regional assessment and mutual recognition. Because of the overlap between some REC's the lack of harmonization and inadequate conformity systems present a complex situation. Currently only 16 out of 54 Member States are members of ARSO, all countries should be members of ARSO by 2017. The year is declared African Year of Quality Infrastructure.

ARSO described the standardization process, proposed roadmap and the countries and nominees to participate in the standardization technical team which would be chaired by Tanzania. This was followed by a working group session where the participants identified priority standards to be developed in a 13-14 month process, capacity requirements and expected technical services.

Plenary Remarks/ Issues Raised

- Other Member States that would like to be part of the process to develop an apiculture standard can submit a request to join the technical team: but this is best done at the beginning of the process
- Private sector and beekeepers need to be involved in the country level process to develop the standard to ensure that it is relevant and implementable
- The 'Maturity Model' should be promoted that starts with conformity to a few indicators and progression to the next level in a process of improvement
- An African web portal to facilitate intra-African trade exists, however only Swaziland has information on honey uploaded: there is a need to challenge countries to upload the relevant information and to keep it updated
- Outreach materials, in local languages are necessary to simplify understanding of standards

Session 6: Validation of Guidelines

Two draft guidelines were presented for validation by the General Assembly participants:

- The draft guidelines to minimize the potential impacts of pesticides on pollinator health
- The Guidelines for the Establishment or Strengthening of National Apiculture Platforms.

Participants are to provide feedback and input on the two guidelines which will then be submitted to the Ministerial Meeting in December 2016.

An update was provided on the ongoing establishment of National Apiculture Platforms, with 12 countries covered, and 13 planned for the remainder of 2016. The remaining Member States would be covered in 2017.

Session 7: Business of the African Apiculture Platform

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the African Apiculture Platform Prof. Serge Bakou made a report on EC implementation of the AAP decisions. The 3rd Executive Committee and Working Groups Meeting was held in Dar es Salaam Tanzania in July 2016 attended by forty delegates from 21 countries. The key outputs of the meeting included the validation of the EC and WGs action plans, validation of the guidelines to minimize the potential impact of pesticides on pollinator health, identification and agreement on the key elements of a sustainability plan, and strengthening of the TORs of the EC and WGs. Key decisions were also reached on promoting the activities of the platform, and a number of actions have been initiated including finalization of the annual action plans of the WGs, establishment of a task force to expound on and fully develop the Sustainability Plan, a draft of which has been circulated.

The priorities for the AAP for 2016/2017 will be development of the sustainability plan, development of the communication and visibility plan for the Platform, production of policy briefs on specific advocacy issues and development of a monitoring and evaluation plan to track the progress of the implementation of the Platform activities.

The Technologies for Agriculture (TECA) Beekeeping Exchange Group

The Project Manager and Moderator of the French Beekeeping Exchange Group of the TECA Platform introduced TECA as a free web-based platform for exchange of information, technologies and practices for small agricultural producers. TECA consists of knowledge based exchange groups and has multiple partners including FAO. Enrollment onto TECA is free, and it can be used as a source of information and for group exchanges.

III. KEY OUTPUTS FROM THE MEETING

1. A greater understanding of the status, constraints, strengths, opportunities and threats of intra and inter regional trade in Africa in the Member States and at Regional level
2. The opportunities for collaboration and synergy between AU-IBAR and RECS and ApiTrade Africa and ApiExpo Africa were identified

3. Priority Action for expanding intra and inter regional trade in honey and other hive products were identified at regional level
4. Participants were familiarized with the work of ARSO and the process of development of an African Standard
 - A process was undertaken to identify the apiculture standards that should be given priority attention in the ARSO led process of developing a harmonized African standard for the apiculture sector
 - The draft Guidelines to Minimize the Potential Impacts of Pesticides on Pollinator Health were presented for validation
 - The draft Guidelines for the Establishment or Strengthening of National Apiculture Platforms was presented for validation
 - The Report of the Executive Committee on implementation of the AAP decisions was presented and discussed, and a way forward agreed

IV. KEY DECISIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS

1. **Greater collaboration and synergy between government and private sector led initiatives at the regional and continental level:** drawing on the different mandates of African Union institutions (AU-IBAR, IAPSC and ARSO) and private sector led initiatives such as ApiTrade/ ApiExpo
2. **AAP endorsed ApiExpo Africa as the premium investment and trade promotion event for the continent** and therefore AAP will work with ApiTrade to ensure relevant and engaging expos.
3. **AU-IBAR to provide support to ApiTrade as a continental private sector initiative** to promote trade and investment and in particular to enhance private sector involvement in promoting intra-Africa trade, within the precincts of Bee Health Project
4. **Promotion of Intra-African trade should be based on knowledge of the value of African products and the opportunities and benefits** therefore data and information for decision making and to support policy process should be archived under the Animal Resources Information System based at AU-IBAR, and a trade portal to make the information accessible should be a priority investment

5. **Advocacy for a more development oriented approach to promotion of intra-African trade:** that links initiatives to food security, malnutrition, livelihood improvement, alternative livelihoods, youth employment and increased incomes
6. **Standardization should take the Maturity Model** that allows for development of competitiveness at domestic and regional level and growth for capacity to compete globally
7. **There is a need to establish regional reference labs** in the Southern and Northern Africa regions to facilitate intra-African trade
8. **African Member States to commit to greater involvement and participation in standard setting processes and agenda setting** to ensure that the issues of Africa are taken on board at regional, continental and global fora
9. **A strategic lobbying and advocacy strategy** to enhance awareness of the opportunities for intra African trade and for investment and support of the sector
10. **Significant opportunity for exchange of ideas, experience, information and knowledge between RECS and regions** due to the inherent differences in the development of the apiculture sector and in particular in relation to initiatives related to intra-African trade
11. **AU-IBAR to fast track the process of establishment and or strengthening of National Apiculture Platforms** with continued support from Member States that have already undertaken the process
12. **AAP to develop a sustainability plan and a communication and visibility plan**
13. **The Guidelines to Minimize the Potential Impact of Pesticides on Honeybees and other Pollinators in Africa** was validated and will be presented to the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in December 2016.
14. **The Guidelines for Establishment or Strengthening of National Apiculture Platforms were validated** and will be presented to the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in December 2016.
15. **The AAP will promote an African Apiculture Day** to celebrate and promote apiculture on the continent
16. **The 4th General Assembly of the African Apiculture Platform to take place in 2017 will be in Tunisia** pending formal acceptance by the government to host it. Details including the theme and date to be finalized by the EC in collaboration with the secretariat.

17. **The first call for abstracts for the 2nd Symposium on Honey Production, Bee Health and Pollination Services will soon be released.** All participants were urged to submit suitable abstracts.

V. AGREED NEXT STEPS

1. The Communique refined and circulated by 28th September 2016, with feedback from participants at the Meeting by close of business on 30th September 2016.
2. The Meeting Report circulated by 14th October 2016.

VI. CLOSING SESSION

Dr. Theogene Rutagwenda, the Director General of Animal Resources, MINAGRI on behalf of the Hon. Minister and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda which had hosted the General Assembly, thanked AU-IBAR for facilitating the General Assembly, and all the participants for their enthusiastic participation and their contributions.

Dr. Simplicie Nouala, Chief of Animal Production made closing remarks emphasizing the fact that AAP should strongly support ApiTrade Africa, and therefore make a strong appearance during ApiMondia. He thanked the Government of Rwanda, and in particular the Minister for hosting the AAP and providing the meeting venue, and the Director Veterinary Services for chairing the meeting.

The meeting was officially closed by The Director AU-IBAR Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy who underscored the fact that sustainability of the AAP was an important issue that has to be addressed by the AAP members, African Union Member States and RECs. He thanked participants for active engagement, and the people and government of Rwanda for hosting the meeting, availing the Meeting facility and transport. He expressed particular appreciation to the Hon. Minister, for supporting both the AAP and ApiExpo Africa 2016, and appreciated the Director Veterinary Services who availed himself for over the three days of the meeting. He also expressed deep appreciation to the donor, European Union, for funding the project, and for their consistent support to AU-IBAR.