

**AN ADDRESS FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN FARM  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (AFMA), MRS. GRACE O. EVBUOMWAN, IN THE  
ABSENCE OF THE PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR FIRMINO G. MUCAVALE,  
FOR THE 7<sup>TH</sup> AFRICAN FARM MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION'S CONGRESS,  
HELD IN THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA, ABUJA, CORPORATE HEAD  
QUARTERS' MAIN AUDITORIUM, FROM 19<sup>TH</sup> TO 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2004.**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to present this address on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the 7<sup>th</sup> African Farm Management Association's Congress here in Abuja, the seat of the Federal Government of Nigeria and in this magnificent building, the Corporate Headquarters of the Apex Financial Institution in the country. I thank God for this reunion.

Since the last time we met in Maputo, Mozambique in November, 2002, a lot of things have gone by; most of them are for the benefit of our Association. One of which is the elaborate preparations for this Biennial Congress, AFMA 2004, with the Theme, 'Agri-Business in the African Century'. For the benefit of our colleagues who were not in Maputo for the 6<sup>th</sup> AFMA Congress, I wish to give you an insight into what transpired two years ago for your records.

The 6<sup>th</sup> AFMA congress titled "Realities of Improving Farm Management and Commercialising the Subsistence Sector in African Agriculture" focused on modalities for increasing agricultural productivity in Africa.

The major issues discussed included; alternative farming systems, theories and approaches to commercializing small scale farmers, agricultural commercialization for food security improvement, impact of forest management regimes on agricultural productivity and shareholders incomes, constraints to the commercialization process of semi-subsistence agriculture, how the business or entrepreneurial spirit can be developed, government agricultural policy and its impact on commercialization and finally, using the concept of comparative advantage in targeting agricultural production for local and global markets.

The congress recommended amongst others that African countries should engage in inter-African trade, seek a review of the World Trade Organisation agreements in their favour, develop infrastructure and give preference to policies that would encourage the development of commercial farming which is the panacea for food security and poverty eradication in Africa.

During the Annual General Meeting of the Association, it was agreed that the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress should be held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2004 with the title "Agri-business in the African Century", in line with the concept of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) currently being chaired by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

It was agreed that the theme for the congress be titled “Agri-Business in the African Century” with the following sub-themes:

(i) Basic Skills Development

Food processing and Agri-industry  
Institutional and Agricultural Organisations  
Appropriate Technologies.

It was unanimously agreed that the congress would be held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2004 between October/November.

In line with the constitution of AFMA, my humble self, Prof. Firmino Mucavale of Mozambique, who coordinated the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of the association was elected President, while Mrs. G. O. Evbuomwan and Mr. B. O. Odufote both from Nigeria, the next host country, were elected Vice-President and Secretary respectively for the period 2002-2004; and were thus saddled with the responsibility of coordinating the preparations for the 7<sup>th</sup> AFMA congress.

I have been reliably informed by the Vice President of our esteemed Association, Mrs. Grace Evbuomwan and the Organising Secretary, Mr. Bade Odufote, that the Local Organising Committee added two other sub- themes to the four we chose in Mozambique in order to accommodate more papers and enrich this congress. For this very wise decision taken on our behalf and for all the wonderful preparations that you have made to see to it that the 7<sup>th</sup> AFMA Congress held as planned, I want to thank all members of the Local Organizing Committee particularly the President of the Farm Management Association of Nigeria(FAMAN) Prof. Bola Okuneye who is our Host.

I have no doubt in my mind that this Congress will be a very fruitful one considering the calibre of people that constituted the local organising committee drawn from all relevant institutions, among which were; the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Company, the Development Finance and Research Departments of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Universities of Agriculture and Agricultural Research Institutes, etc. In addition, the gamut of highly technical and informative papers received from our enthusiastic colleagues will surely enable us meet the objectives of AFMA.

At this juncture permit me to highlight the objectives of the African Farm Management Association (AFMA). The African Farm Management Association (AFMA) was formed in November 1992 in Harare, Zimbabwe and it is a non-political, non-sectarian voluntary organization. It is a regional association under the International Farm Management Association (IFMA). AFMA is funded entirely from receipts of royalties on publications and donations. Consequently, I want to thank very sincerely all the organisations that has donated generously for the organisation of the 7th AFMA Congress, particularly the Central Bank of Nigeria, that put this very conducive venue for our interaction at our disposal in addition to the huge financial and technical assistance rendered to the Association.

The purposes for which AFMA was established are:

- To further the knowledge and practices of farm business management on the African continent;

- To provide a forum where farmers, farm managers, agro-processors, agro-financiers, agro-marketers, officers, persons and organizations interested in African Agriculture can meet, discuss and exchange ideas;
- To further regional cooperation in all fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries on the African continent;
- To promote sustainable agricultural development in Africa and,
- To collect and disseminate ideas and information on farm management theory and practice in Africa.

AFMA undertakes activities as it deem fit to attain the above stated objectives, which include but are not limited to:

- Organizing congresses, seminars and workshops, for members and non-members alike, this is what we are doing right now. Other activities of AFMA are;
- Generating, collating and providing information on all aspects of the theory and practice of farming and farm business management.
- Participating and making contributions in regional agricultural meetings, conferences, workshop etc.
- Liaising periodically with continental and other regional agencies on agricultural policies and trade.
- Liaison and Communication with international agencies of agricultural development through communiqués, resolutions and publications.

## MEMBERSHIP

- (1) All National Farm Management Associations (NFMA), which are affiliate members of IFMA are automatically members of AFMA.  
AFMA membership is open to all farmers' associations and related organizations in Africa.  
AFMA membership is open to organisations interested in the development and/or the application of farm management techniques and agro-allied activities.  
Membership shall be on corporate, association or group basis only;
- (2) Corporate bodies which are members of the respective NFMAs need only notify AFMA Secretariat about their membership, for inclusion on the circulation list.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I urge you all who have not registered as members of your national farm management association to do so without further delay in view of the benefits there from.

Let me also use this opportunity to avail you of the up coming events at the International Farm Management Association (IFMA) of which we (AFMA) as a body is a member of. The Fifteenth International Farm Management Congress will be held in Campinas, Sao Paulo Region, Brazil from 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2005. The Sixteenth Congress is due to be held in Cork, Ireland from 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2007. Each congress lasts one week and normally attracts between 350 and 450 participants from all continents. One of the main features of each congress is that on two days of the congress field trips are made to a choice of sites including a variety of livestock farms, to arable and horticultural crop farms, and to research and educational facilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I will not complete this address without alluding to the fact that Africa is the world's poorest continent. The economic and social situation in sub-Saharan Africa remains fragile and vulnerable to domestic and external shocks. Poverty is still widespread and in many parts of the continent extremely acute. There is thus an urgent need to raise per capita real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates substantially and on a sustained basis. In this respect, the contributions of the agricultural sector is very vital as agriculture accounts for about one-third of GDP for the continent as a whole, two thirds of employment and 40 percent of export value.

It is in this vein that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is an initiative conceived and developed by African leaders as a road map for accelerated economic growth and sustainable development with a view to eradicating widespread poverty and halting the marginalization of Africa in the globalisation process, must be implemented with vigour in all the member countries of the African Union (AU).

We (AFMA), sincerely implore the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, our Chief Host, who is the current Chairman of the African Union to give NEPAD its proper place in the scheme of events at the AU since one of the key priorities of NEPAD is Agricultural Development in the bid to achieve the set target of 7 percent GDP growth rate per annum in the next 15 years, so as to reduce poverty in the continent by half between 1990 and 2015. This is in line with the Millennium Development Goals adopted by 189 member states of the United Nations in September, 2000.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to which about 49 African countries have signed into should be used to advantage. As we all know the APRM is one of NEPAD's key themes under which African countries are to submit themselves to scrutiny of peers with respect to the levels of their performances in accountability and transparency in their corporate, democratic and economic governance based on objectively established indicators and standards. NEPAD will obviously help lift Africa out of poverty if implemented judiciously.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I urge you all to participate actively and be involved in the discussion of the various issues that would emerge during this conference so as to enrich our continent and the world at large.

Once again I sincerely thank the local organizing committee of the 7<sup>th</sup> AFMA and our kind donors. God Bless You all.

I thank you all for listening.

Grace O. Evbuomwan (Vice-President, AFMA)