

**59TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TALKING NOTES FOR SUSAN NJOROGE (MRS),
CHAIRPERSON OF AGROCHEMICALS ASSOCIATION OF KENYA, ON 28TH MARCH
2018**

Good Evening ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Committee members 2017 - 2018 of Agrochemicals Association of Kenya, I would like to welcome you to the 59th Annual General Meeting. It is great to see you here today.

Just over a year ago at the 2017 AGM, members of industry elected EC members to serve for the year 2017/2018 with me as the chair. The Executive Committee members for 2017 have had major milestone and achievements within this one year that we have served. I would like to highlight some of the gains we have made for the industry for the year 2017 and cumulatively during my tenure as chair.

Launch of AAK's Strategic Plan for 2016–2020

To have a clear and unified direction for our Association, we reviewed our previous strategic plan for 2010 to 2019 to conform to changes in the industry, both locally and globally. The new 5 year plan for 2016 to 2020 was developed to be in line with changes in the constitution of Kenya which devolved several functions such as agriculture and formed county governments with specific roles that had an impact on our industry. The new strategic plan was also aligned to the national development plan-Vision 2030 as well as the sustainable development goals of which Kenya is party to.

The AAK Strategic Plan presents a major milestone for the Association and will guide its programs and operations over the five-year period between 2016 and 2020. I believe that the new strategic plan shall improve the efficiency and service delivery by the Association as well as improving participation by members at the top level, as is witnessed in the leaner board that is elected today. The direction to be taken by our association under this strategic Plan in the next 5 years shall revolve around product stewardship for responsible management of pesticides, partnership building for stronger collaborations, and enhanced self-regulation through development of robust policies and standards as well as institutional development for a sustainable future for our association.

Constitution

Our association achieved a major milestone by reviewing and ratifying our Constitution, which we have had for some now. The new constitution among other aspects, mirrors the current business environment and adopts globally acceptable best practice in term of governance of our association. I would like to thank the technical team that led the review process for delivering a substantive document and you the members for participating in this historic activity.

Streamlining AAK levy and other payments

As you are aware, activities of AAK are largely funded by the import levy. The streamlining of levy payments owed to AAK was a key achievement in 2017. All levy payments to AAK are now being made through a UCR number generated by the government KENTRADE system. This is has gone a long way in easing the process of levy payment as well as curbing potential loss of income meant for the Association. To serve our members with ease and timeliness. To ease other payments to the association, AAK also acquired an MPESA Pay Bill number 300 704, through which members can make secure and convenient payments. .

Partnership, Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations

Taxation

Through our concerted efforts and after intense lobbying, industry finally got reprieve on the taxation issue after the Cabinet Secretary for Finance announced in the 2017 Finance bill that inputs used in the manufacture of pesticides were henceforth zero rated. The measure was backdated to April 2017 and this was a major win for industry since members can now claim refunds for taxes paid on inputs used during the manufacturing process. The focus now shifts to engagement with our regulator and the customs department so that the official Customs schedules capture all inputs used by members accurately.

Fighting Counterfeit pesticides

The presence of counterfeit pest control products in the markets remains a thorn in the flesh for members of AAK. In an attempt to fight this vice, AAK held several meetings with the Anti-counterfeiting Agency of Kenya (ACA), PCPB and Chief Executive Officers of member companies to strategize on how to fight counterfeits. This was necessitated after it was revealed that the level of counterfeiting in the Agrochem Industry was at 18%. AAK launched an accreditation scheme where actors in the pesticide value chain are sensitized on the code of conduct on pesticide management and consequently accredited to deal in pest control products. So far 240 staff of AAK Member companies have been sensitized and it is hoped that by the end of 2018 all the sales representative of the member companies will have been accredited.

Product Stewardship

Product stewardship remains a key focal area in our association. One of the key accomplishments was the training of 480 Spray service providers which is a step in the right direction towards reinventing the way pesticides are applied at the farm level. Our association reached out to tens of thousands of farmers, extension officers and agrodealers through trainings, farmer field days and exhibitions held in diverse parts of the country.

In 2017, Kenya reported the presence of the Fall Army Worm (FAW) which has since been a threat to crop production and mainly maize. AAK has been in the forefront by providing turnkey solutions to the menace through availing quality products for FAW control. AAK has also been actively involved through its stewardship programmes in the education of farmers and extension officers on management of this serious pest. I take this opportunity to thank all our strategic partners such as SNV, KMT, FPEAK, KEFE, PPSD among others in the role they played in enabling us achieve this important objective.

Regulatory, policy and standards

AAK members pride themselves in the maintenance of high product standards through self-regulation. In conjunction with PCPB and other stakeholders, we have been able to make great strides in this segment. Industry is anticipating a new Pest Control Products

Bill, which AAK was actively involved in the drafting stage. Several meetings to fine tune the various regulations that shall operationalize the bill have also been held and are awaiting the presentation and enactment of the bill by parliament. In the interest of members during the registration of products, several forums have been held to finalize the crop grouping process which shall ease the registration of products for crops in a specific group. Crop grouping shall also avail products for growers of minor crops such as herbs and spices and thus open up new international markets for them. Food safety remains a concern globally and AAK had the honor of hosting an international workshop on risk assessment and impact on trade. During the 2 day workshop, important recommendations on empowering Africa to have a say in the setting of MRLs were arrived at. AAK thanks CropLife Africa Middle East for partnering in this major activity.

Tree planting – rehabilitating the Mau

The Association has organized an industry tree planting day on 12th and 13th April 2018. The initiative dubbed “Adopt an Acre” is a collaboration between AAK, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Community Forest Association (CFA) and Forest Action Network (FAN). We humbly requests AAK member companies and their staff to join and support the Association in planting trees on 13th April 2018 at Likia – Mau Forest. Kindly do not be left behind on this important endeavor.

I would like to thank the CEO, Ms. Evelyn Lusenaka and her team at the Secretariat. They have done a great job in bringing us to where we are today. I also thank the outgoing Board Members of Agrochemicals Association of Kenya for their dedication and input in last year. I urge the incoming Board members to build on these tremendous achievements for the benefit of our association.

Last but not least, you will find full details of milestones achieved in the Association’s Annual Report 2017. I hope all of you have received a copy of the report and will enjoy the read.

Thank you.