



## 7<sup>th</sup> Multi-stakeholder partnership meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock

### Press release

### Concrete solutions underline centrality of livestock to sustainable development

8 May 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Immediate release

*Hundreds of global livestock stakeholders gather to strengthen the role of livestock in supporting livelihoods, producing safe food and protecting the environment*

Today, the 7<sup>th</sup> multi-stakeholder partnership meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock (GASL) brings together more than 250 livestock specialists from over 50 countries to demonstrate the positive contribution of livestock to the lives and wellbeing of hundreds of millions of people on the planet, and foster the sustainable development of this rapidly-growing sector.

Driven by population and economic growth, particularly in low–middle income economies, the demand for livestock products is expected to increase by about 70% in the coming 30 years. Whilst the livestock sector contributes to society in so many ways—including to food and nutrition security—it can also pose challenges to the environment and human health. This astronomical demand presents opportunities for the livestock sector to contribute to global development challenges by promoting sustained economic growth, inclusive social and human development, and the efficient use of natural resources.

The week-long event—from 8 to 12 May 2017—will kick off at the Hilton Hotel on Monday morning at 9:45am with an inaugural address by **HE Professor Fekadu Beyene, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Ethiopia**, followed by a press conference at 11am. The meeting brings together key actors in the livestock sector worldwide—donor, government and public sector representatives, UN agencies, multilateral and non-government organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector—to discuss and propose how to best foster the sustainable development of this rapidly growing livestock sector.

**The press conference will be addressed** by: Gebregziabher Gebreyohannes, State Minister, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ethiopia; Fritz Schneider, Chair, Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock; Ren Wang, Assistant Director General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and Jimmy Smith, Director General, International Livestock Research Institute.

Explaining the importance of livestock in the context of Ethiopia, the host country of this meeting, Professor Fekadu said: ‘Beyond its impact on rural people, the anticipated transformation of the livestock sector holds huge potential to impact positively on urban populations through reductions in food prices and increases in the supply, as well as growing availability of employment opportunities in livestock-related sectors. The success of the livestock sector is critical to the achievement of food and nutrition security, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability at household, sectorial and national levels.’

**Fritz Schneider, Chair of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock**, emphasized the role of this meeting in focusing minds on the availability of tools and lessons which can be adopted and applied elsewhere where most needed. ‘We recognize that for livestock to be sustainable, the sector worldwide needs to respond to the growing demand, enhance its contribution to food and nutrition security and address its potential impacts on human, animal, and environmental health and welfare. This meeting will provide livestock specialists with the tools and knowledge to make inroads in realizing the potential of livestock.’

**Ren Wang, Assistant Director General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**, spoke of the widespread benefits livestock generate for people and the planet. ‘Livestock play an important role in Ethiopia and in countries across the world. The benefits to people are many. Livestock help in our fight to end hunger and poverty, as well as to improve food security, nutrition and health. Farmed and herded animals can support peace and gender equity. Livestock can also help address environmental

issues—from land degradation and biodiversity loss to climate change mitigation. At FAO we promote better recognition of the economic, social and environmental benefits of livestock.’

**ILRI Director General, Jimmy Smith** emphasized the multiple benefits of livestock. ‘Animals feed us and help ensure food security; they also provide essential nutrients and thus diversify diets. Beyond these, the income, manure and ploughing they provide contribute directly to crop production and form part of the essential livelihood strategies and new opportunities for hundreds of millions globally.’