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I would like to welcome everyone to the workshop on Agroindustry in Africa and Asia, which is a great opportunity to have a discussion today on such an important topic. We have prepared this workshop with a team of friends from the OCP Policy Centre, a Moroccan think tank. We are fortunate to have a distinguished group of speakers with us today from North Africa, India, France and the United States, whom I will briefly introduce.

Firstly, we have Dr Suresh Kumar, who is a former Head of the African Studies Department of the University of New Delhi in India and has also been Director of the Centre of African Studies at the University Grants Commission in India. Suresh is also the Chief Editor of Africanindia.org, a specialised website on Africa and India relations and has been speaking at conferences and lectures in all parts of the world during his long career.

We then have Krishan Jindal, who currently works as Chief General Manager at the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and is Chief Executive Officer at NABARD Consultancy Services (Nabcons) in India, which is a fully owned subsidiary of NABARD. Krishan has worked at the bank for 30 years and his key areas of expertise are micro finance, livelihood promotion and rural development banking. He will explain NABARD's very interesting experience in cooperating with various African countries.

Next, we have Professor Rod Wing from the University of Arizona in the United States. Rod is a geneticist and was recently appointed the AXA Chair of Genome Biology and Evolutionary Genomics at the International Rice Research Instituted in Los Banos in the Philippines. His lab has played a significant role in more than 30 plant and animal genome sequencing projects, including both Asian and Africa rice, maize, barley, oil plum and tomato. We will learn a lot from Rod about the potential for cooperation in the scientific field between African and Asian countries.

Philippe Chalmin is a graduate of Haute Etudes Commerciales (HEC), which is a famous business school in France, and is also the holder of an Aggregation in History and is a Doctor of Literature. He is Professor of Economic History at Paris Dauphine University in Paris, where he directs the Masters of International Affairs. He is also a member of the Council of Economic Analysis, appointed by the Prime Minister of France, and is the Founding Chairman of Cyclope, the main European research institute of commodity markets, which publishes the annual Cyclope Report on the economy of global commodity markets. In 2010, he was appointed Chairman of the Observatory of Agricultural and Food Prices Margins by the Minister of Agriculture of France.

Khalid Meksem is a genome biotechnologist and a geneticist and has been a professor and researcher at the College of Agricultural Sciences at the Southern Illinois University in the United States for many years. He is now the Project Chief "President" of the University Mohammed VI in Morocco, where he is originally from, and has a large and rich experience of agricultural development in several African countries. Khalid will provide his comments at different points of the workshop.

The workshop has been divided into three parts and its objectives are to increase our knowledge and understanding of what has already been done in the field of cooperation between African and Asian countries in the agricultural sector and to present some fruitful experiences in different sectors, such as financing, scientific research, agricultural development and so on. I have asked speakers to adapt their presentations for a non specialist audience.

In the first part of the workshop, we will introduce the context in which Asian and African partnerships are built and implemented and in the second and third parts we will focus on two major topics. The first topic is an introduction and discussion of the experiences of initiatives that have been implemented in recent years by Asian players and their African partners to increase agricultural production and support local farmers. The second topic will be a discussion on how Asian and African agribusiness stakeholders can improve their actions to get better results in the near future. In



this part, we will discuss important issues, such as farm policies, the kind of support that farmers need to increase production and the lessons that can be learned from the Asian countries' experiences in the sector, as well as questions related to scientific cooperation between the two continents. At the end, we will have a broad discussion on all the issues that we have addressed in the workshop.

I will now give the floor to Dr Suresh Kumar.