

**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**



**COMESA SPS Workshop**

**Opening Statement by Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Kadah  
COMESA Assistant Secretary General for Programmes**

**SPS Workshop**

**2 – 6 September 2024, in Nairobi, Kenya**

**Representative of the Government of the Republic of Kenya**

**Representative of the African Union Commission**

**Senior Government Officials from COMESA Members States**

**Colleagues from the African Union Commission**

**Colleagues from the COMESA Secretariat**

**Distinguished Audience,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of COMESA, once again, I would like to welcome you all to this 2<sup>nd</sup> **workshop which is aimed at finalizing the drafting of the COMESA SPS Regulations, the SPS Strategy and Implementation Plans for the Animal Health, Food Safety and Plant Health Technical Working Groups.**

I would also like to thank the Government and people of the Republic of Kenya for hosting this meeting once again and for their warm welcome and hospitality. I also thank the African Union Commission for funding this important workshop and the one before as well as for its continued support and fruitful collaboration.

**In addition,** I would like to seize this opportunity to thank you all for the progress made in revising the COMESA SPS Regulations, drafting the SPS Strategy and developing the Implementation Plans for Animal Health, Food Safety and Plant Health.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Having come this far, we look forward to a successful conclusion of this 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop and finalising the said documents in readiness for approval by the COMESA Policy Organs. As we venture into our discussions, I urge you all to ensure that these documents are not only aligned with regional, continental and global frameworks, but also address current and emerging SPS needs of Member States and the region at large. I am sure we will agree on the need for robust, clear and precise regulations that reflect international best practices and unleash our intra-REC trade potential.

**Distinguished Audience,**

As you know, the finalization of the SPS regulations, SPS Strategy and Implementation Plans is not an end in itself, but rather the beginning of actual work and implementation. We therefore call upon all the Member States to ensure that these regulations, strategy and implementation plans are implemented at the national level. We also need to align national regulations and measures with the new regional ones to ensure seamless implementation at the regional and national levels.

Our common aim here is to eliminate the differences in SPS measures that exist among Member States and which have continued to constrain regional trade in food and agricultural products. In turn, this will reduce the cost of doing business through the recognition of exporting Member States SPS measures by the importing Member States, thereby eliminating repeated testing and certification.

As such, implementation of these regulations will contribute to creating a conducive environment for businesses and investment. Ultimately, this will help realize the COMESA regional integration and economic development objectives.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As I indicated in the last workshop, our region lacks capacity in risk assessment/analysis, making it difficult for Member States to establish risk-based SPS measures. As such, it is important that as experts you consider the establishment of a risk assessment/analysis centre to support Member States to implement risk-based SPS measures and build their capacity to do so. This will ensure that the region is able to address SPS risks whether they are global in nature or unique to the region.

It is also imperative that Member States allocate adequate resources for the implementation of the SPS Regulations, Strategy and Implementation Plans. As your Secretariat, we always endeavor to mobilize resources to support you as much as possible, but it is a prime responsibility of Member States to implement these regulations. In addition, we need to establish reliable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at regional and national levels to monitor progress, rectify shortcomings and enhance good practices.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As I conclude, I would like to once more thank the African Union Commission (AUC) for supporting this important work. Indeed, COMESA's collaboration with the AU in the SPS field is a testament to our joint commitment to regional integration.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued commitment and support and to wish fruitful discussions,

**Thank you!**