



**Speech by Amb. Dr Mohamed Kadah
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**Dissemination Event for Statistical Data requirements for
Horticulture Value Chains 30 July 2024**

Dear participants from Member states,
Development partners and COMESA Agencies.

Let me welcome you to this important dissemination event for the work we have undertaken regarding data needs of the horticultural value chain.

The COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan (2021-2025) was designed to guide the work of actualization of COMESA's regional integration aspirations. Among the four critical policy pillars of the MTSP is the productive integration pillar that seeks to enhance competitiveness and build regional productive capacity.

Catalysing inclusive agricultural growth and sustainable transformation is a strategic focus of this pillar. One of the key initiatives under this pillar is the promotion of sustainable production and productivity including post harvest management and agro-processing of strategic value chains.

Among the value chains identified under COMESA interventions in this pillar is the horticulture value chain. This sector has a significant contribution to agriculture value added but is usually not part of the reported agriculture value added, mainly because there is a scarcity of data to measure its contribution.

While data on several agricultural products is relatively available, data on horticultural production remains scanty, and difficult to collect with no standardized data collection tools across member states, thereby making it difficult to determine its contribution to

the welfare of horticulture farmers, employment, manufacturing sector and more broadly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

To address this challenge, COMESA conducted two key studies on the horticulture value chain. The first study focused on comprehensively defining statistical data requirements in horticulture value chains. Its purpose was to develop a data framework to guide data producers on the value chain's data needs and enhance the mechanisms necessary to fill the data gaps. Ultimately, this will further guide investment in requisite surveys and interventions to fill these identified data gaps.

The second study focused on the development of a framework for surveys of horticulture production statistics. This study was driven by the fact that agricultural surveys in Member states are focused on major cereals and vegetables. As such no data exists on the extent of the production of horticultural products. From a conceptual perspective, the surveys in Member states would have to be augmented with a specific methodology for capturing horticultural production.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This virtual event aims at disseminating the results of the above two studies. We expect the two frameworks to be adopted by our Policy Organs Meetings later in the year. An important expectation from this dissemination is also to catalyse interest among partners in attendance to take this work further and invest in the development of data surveys and systems in member states in order for the sector to be data driven in its policies.

By responding to the data needs of the horticulture value chain, the COMESA Statistics Unit is promoting a pragmatic approach that is needed for policymaking in our region.

Let me extend our gratitude to the European Union for supporting the development of the frameworks that we are disseminating. In fact, we count on our partnership with the European Union and other development partners to move this work forward.

Finally, as I open this dissemination event, let me also thank all of you for taking time to attend it.

I thank you.