

**DRAFT SPEECH BY MR. STEPHEN KARANGIZI, ASG(P) AT THE OPENING
SESSION OF THE WORKSHOP ON
IMTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA,
1 - 5 November 2010, COMESA SECRETARIAT
LUSAKA - ZAMBIA**

The Representatives from UNSD

The Representative from AfDB

The Representative from UNECA

The Representative from SADC

The Representative from ITC

The Representative from SACU Secretariat

My colleagues from the COMESA Secretariat,

Distinguished participants from the COMESA-EAC-SADC region,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, and indeed on my own behalf, I would like to welcome all the delegations from UNSD, AfDB, SADC, UNECA, ITC and SACU and all the participants from COMESA-EAC-SADC region, firstly to the COMESA Secretariat and also to this workshop on **The Updated and New Recommendations for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS2010) and their Implementation in countries of the Sub-Saharan Region.**

Distinguished participants, ladies and Gentlemen,

Among the many pressing challenges currently facing the COMESA-EAC-SADC region is the need to improve the coverage, quality and timeliness of the statistics conventionally used to inform official decision-making. This is particularly important in the areas of economic growth monitoring, evaluating structural change, and in making assessments of how macro level actions impact on the poor and their social conditions. At COMESA we have been engaged over the years in assisting our Member States to develop their statistics. This support was originally in the area of merchandise trade statistics, but now the support has grown to cover other domains of statistics such as National Accounts, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Harmonised Consumer Price Index (HCPI) and Infrastructure statistics.

Distinguished participants,

Something particularly significant and worth mentioning about this workshop is that it is being conducted under the auspices of the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite arrangement and being hosted here at the COMESA Secretariat. This is none other than one of the gestures of the collaboration being promoted and undertaken by the three secretariats to work together on matters of common interest and for the furtherance of regional integration, as agreed upon by the Heads of States and Governments of the three institutions at their first tripartite summit held in Kampala, Uganda, in 2008. You may also wish to note that eight

of the SADC member states are also COMESA member states, four of the EAC member states are also COMESA member states and one EAC member state is also a SADC member state.

Distinguished participants,

The focus of this workshop will be on the updated and new recommendations for IMTS as contained in IMTS2010 and their implementation. During the workshop, participants you are expected to share your experiences in the compilation of IMTS and the implementation of the international recommendations (both old and new) on IMTS in your countries, with a view on identifying issues and best practices for inclusion in the updated IMTS Compilers Manual. I would therefore like to urge you to fully apply yourselves during the workshop and also urge you to continue the pursuit of improving statistics that are vital for policy monitoring and analysis in our Member States.

Finally dear colleagues,

To organise such a workshop requires concerted efforts and selfless sacrifice. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UNSD not only for all the administrative arrangements and costs relating to issuance of airline tickets and payment of DSAs for the participants and general planning of the workshop, but also for being committed to providing technical assistance to our member states especially in the field of statistics. I understand you worked very closely with my colleagues here at the Secretariat and for us as a Secretariat it is has been our

pleasure to work with you and to provide the conference facilities and all the necessary logistical support to ensure that this workshop is a success.

With those few remarks, I wish all of you fruitful deliberations and I am sure the workshop objectives will be met. Once again welcome to COMESA Secretariat and to Lusaka city and take advantage of this opportunity to tour some of the beautiful sights at your disposal.

It is now my singular honour and pleasure to declare this workshop officially open.

I thank you.