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A. Introduction

The ReSAKSS node for Eastern and Central Africa, is providing support to the Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA) in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). The agricultural and other development indicators presented here will allow countries to access their performance against the CAADP and MDG targets, and could be used for peer review by others.

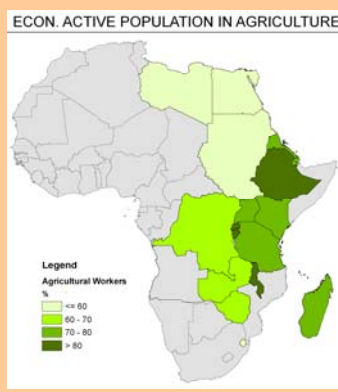
COMESA is the largest regional economic community in Africa with a total population of about 400 million in 2005, making up 45 percent of Africa's population. COMESA had a total GDP of over USD 260 billion in 2005.



C. Agriculture is important in COMESA

COMESA's agricultural GDP was about US \$50 billion in 2003, a little over 40 percent of Africa's agricultural GDP. Three countries – Sudan, Egypt and Libya, account for over 60 percent of the value of agricultural production in COMESA

Agriculture is the most important sector in COMESA. Over 60 percent of the population depend on the sector for their livelihoods and employment. The sector's contribution to employment ranges from a low of 5 percent of the economically active in Libya to a high of over 90 percent in Rwanda.



B: Socio-economic development in COMESA - Most COMESA countries, have poor development indicators.

① **Human development is low in COMESA**

② **... and poverty levels are very high**

③ **Hunger is still a threat in COMESA**

Most countries' intake is less than the recommended Amount of 2300 calories/day

④ **A lot of undernourished children**

⑤ **Per capita food production has declined**

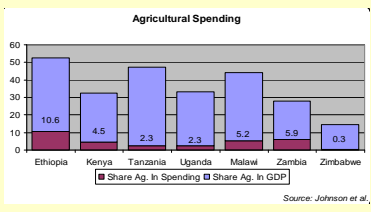
⑥ **Population is growing fast in COMESA**

D: Agriculture has performed poorly in COMESA

- Agricultural productivity remains low in COMESA countries. Yields of most crops in the member countries are below world averages
- The crops on which the majority of the population in COMESA depend for food and incomes have very low yields e.g. maize was only 35% of the world average in 2005
- Per capita production has declined in COMESA over the last 30 years for most crops, except soybeans, potatoes, tea and wheat, yet these are not the most important crops in terms of providing food or cash income for most people in the region
- Per capita production of key staples such as cassava, banana, and yams declined between 1975 and 2005, same for key cash crops including tobacco and coffee.

E. Why has agriculture under-performed in COMESA?

➢ Public spending in agriculture is low and has been declining in most countries



➢ Crop and livestock diseases are rampant in the region, e.g. crop disease such as banana wilt, coffee wilt and cassava mosaic and livestock diseases such as trypanosomiasis and East Coast Fever



➢ Climate change is affecting production systems

Most of agriculture in COMESA has to be carried out in rather harsh conditions. Half of the total land area in COMESA is Arid/Semi Arid

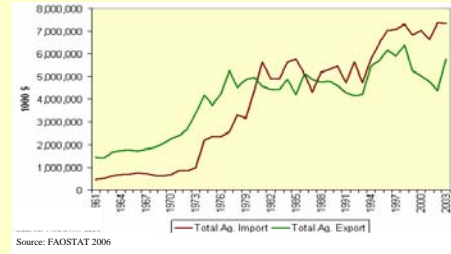
Reliance on rain fed agriculture, with very low use of irrigation is persistent in COMESA. Incidences of crop failures due to poor rains are very common

F. Trade is important in COMESA

The volume of COMESA global trade was about US \$70 billion in 2003, with imports accounting for 55 percent, a similar proportion for intra-COMESA trade. COMESA's global trade has been growing at an annual average rate of about 6.5 percent, compared to intra-COMESA trade at 10%. Despite the growth in intra-regional trade in recent years it accounts for only 5 percent of total COMESA trade, with similar proportion for both imports and exports. Therefore, COMESA is still very reliant on markets outside the region for most of its imports and exports. However, while the value of imports is higher than the value of exports, the latter has been growing faster than the former, implying that COMESA has been narrowing its trade deficit with the rest of the world.

The share of agricultural imports in total imports is higher than the share of agricultural exports in total exports. This shows an increasing reliance on food imports in COMESA, especially imports of cereals since the mid-1980s.

Agricultural Imports rising faster than Exports



Source: FAOSTAT 2006

Agricultural Imports dominated by cereals



Source: FAOSTAT 2006



G. Conclusion

Trends analysis such as this one, helps COMESA countries to assess their performance against other member states. It is a useful tool for tracking progress towards CAADP, MDG as well as country development targets. It will also be useful for peer review by member states during COMESA's meetings, and act as a benchmark for further analysis and performance monitoring