



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PRESS STATEMENT ON KHAT

Our attention is drawn to an article that appeared in the media on Sunday 16 July 2017 indicating there is a contradiction between the National Protocol for Treatment of Substance Use Disorders and the KEMRI study findings on the use of *Khat*.

We therefore wish to clarify as follows:

- i. There is no contradiction between the treatment protocol and the KEMRI study or any other government technical findings, as the protocol only outlines management of health effects of active ingredient, *Cathinone*, found in the fresh leaves/ twigs of *Khat* shrub, just as other active ingredients found in other cash crops like coffee, tobacco, which contain caffeine and nicotine respectively.
- ii. The KEMRI study conclusion did not contradict biological and pharmacological composition of *Khat*, and the effect there of.
- iii. The aforementioned guidelines are for use by health workers on treatment of the effect of substance abuse and therefore not a legal document to control and regulate *Khat* farming, trade and use.
- iv. The World Health Organization give member states discretion to provide for laws and policies guiding the farming, trade and use of the *Khat* shrub. In Kenya, it is legal to farm, sell and use *Khat* shrub famously referred to as "*Miraa*".

Therefore, having protocols and guidelines to guide health workers in the clinical management of possible untoward health effects if any, resulting from use of any substance with psychoactive ingredients, in this case *Khat*, should not be construed to imply contradiction to the policy on farming, trade and use of the product. Further, these guidelines have no effect on the farming and economic gains of *Khat* farmers in Kenya and they shall be revised from time to time as more research-based evidence becomes available.

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