

A team from the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) led by Col Nkurunziza, Head of Political Affairs visited the COMESA Secretariat on 26-27 September to discuss deepening collaboration with COMESA.

EASF is one of the regional mechanisms that participate in the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The team visited the Secretariat with the aim of seeking greater collaboration and identifying specific areas of interest such as organisation of COMWARN, the services it provides, the technical support tools used, as well as specific areas of co-operation and legal practices.

During the meeting, COMESA made presentations on the COMWARN model, its focus, the data collection process and expected process. Other programmes including Trading for Peace, the programme on democracy and governance and the upcoming programme on piracy also made presentations.

The two teams also discussed possibilities of specific areas of collaboration apart from collaboration on early warning like partnership in the training of electoral observers and on the maritime safety programme, both of which were of interest to EASF. The meeting also discussed issues of connectivity with COMESA IT division.

EASF is expected to become operational in 2015 while COMWARN is expected to be operational by 2014 and it is therefore important to start establishing the modalities for deeper interaction. COMESA has been involving EASF in the process of the development of COMWARN.

The meeting drafted a memorandum of understanding for the collaboration, and agreed to finalize it in time for signing during the policy organs' meetings.

The EASF team comprised Col Nkurunziza, the head of Political Affairs and head of delegation; Lt Col Boi, Chief Military Planning Element; Irene Ogaja, Conflict Analyst; Getahun Seifu, Legal Officer and Vincent Kamau, IT officer.