

Ngwenya has said that COMESA is committed to partnerships with grassroots organizations such as World Vision Kenya (WVK) in a bid to grow the SMEs in the region.

At the official launch of the COMESA-WVK partnership in Nairobi on 28 September 2012, Mr Ngwenya highlighted the challenges COMESA is facing with regional integration in respect to the development model.

“Most of the engagement has been at the governments/bureaucratic levels with little engagement of the small and micro enterprises, which are quite important for the growth of national economies. Our partnership with WVK who are working at the grassroots will help organize the local business clusters,” he said.

He added that the initial pilot phase of the project will be six months upon whose completion the lessons learnt can be used to upscale the project to other areas and to other sectors. He said COMESA will play a key role in bringing the different government ministries on board to ensure that public procurement processes consider products from the micro and small enterprises.

“COMESA is closely working with the ministry responsible for industrialisation in Kenya, which is keen to support the clothing and textile sub-sector. I will also bring on board the African Cotton and Textile Industries Federation who will support in capacity building for the cotton and textile SMEs to get fully operational.”

The Secretary-General appreciated WVK’s value chain analysis of the cassava clusters. He asked them to share the outcome of the analysis with COMESA to see how the work can be supported within the region.

The National Director, WVK, Mr Girma Begashaw assured COMESA of their organization’s good will towards ensuring the success of the project and also re-affirmed the organization’s commitment to collaborations and partnerships in its work.

Giving the example of the resilience building project, Girma affirmed that World Vision is committed both at the country and at the regional level to ensure the business clusters work.

“WVK interacts and works towards complementing government activities. I am excited about the opportunity of the partnership with COMESA.”

The Secretary-General said a grant of US \$50,000 will be given to WVK towards the textile and clothing pilot project for a period of six months, starting October 2012.