

The first ever green house project in Zambia sponsored by COMESA has started harvesting tomatoes recording a total of 16 boxes in a single day much to the delight of the women farmers who are located about 20 kilometers north of Lusaka the capital city of Zambia.

The Nkotuchili women group which means, “we are still around” operate from a one hectare plot. A committee comprising of ten women and three men from the area has planted the tomatoes in five green houses covering an area of 25 x 9 meters.

Speaking in an interview with *e-comesa*, the chairperson of the group, Sevedina Zulu said the first harvest of the tomatoes that were planted on 19 October 2012 took place on 07 January 2013.

“We planted in October last year and we have so far harvested seven boxes from the first two green houses, and from the other three we have about nine boxes making it a total of 16, and we expect more harvest per day as we continue the harvesting process,” she said.

Mrs Zulu said the harvesting process is expected to go on for a period not less than six weeks as the technology allows for continuous harvest provided the green houses are given the much needed ingredients and care.

Meanwhile, the Nkotuchili Women’s Group have said they are looking for partners especially from India to help them start value addition to the tomatoes as they are going to waste due to high yields.

“We have so many challenges here like most tomatoes will be eaten up by the rats and so we need to start adding value to the tomatoes we are producing because it’s the only way that we shall create more jobs through processing of these tomatoes”, She said.

The Nkotuchili Women’s group is also scheduled to travel to Kenya where green house farming is practiced on a larger scale.