

The Secretariat staff on Friday, 08 March 2013 joined the rest of the world in celebrating International Women's Day by making a donation to the Kalingalinga Hospice and cleaning up Kalingalinga Health Centre.

The team leader and Director of Gender, Mrs Emiliana Tembo said this gesture of the Secretariat staff is the first of its kind and will be replicated in the future.

The first point of call was Kalingalinga Hospice where the team of women and men donated foodstuffs and cleaning materials to the health facility.

After the donation at the hospice, the team went ahead to clean the wards at Kalingalinga Health Centre where they also donated cleaning materials to the clinic.

Mrs Tembo said COMESA will in the future adopt the Kalingalinga Hospice as a way of paying back to the community that is hosting the Secretariat.

"I think we are going to adopt this hospice as a way of showing COMESA's visibility to the community where we are hosted," she said.

She said that the small donation came about when COMESA realized that the people at the hospice need help for their survival especially that they are vulnerable to both diseases and poverty.

The Hospice Matron, Venus Shamoya said that the donation has come at a time when the hospice badly needed the food and materials.

"We don't know how we can appreciate COMESA for the gesture because truthfully speaking, you are God sent. We needed these things so much now because we need to clean all these

wards and houses," Shamoya said.

She added that the donated food will help the patients - who obviously cannot take medication without food because it becomes toxic.

The Sister-in-charge of Kalingalinga Health Centre, Phidelina Kunda said even if the clinic was caught unaware about the coming of the COMESA staff, the clinic management greatly appreciated the gesture.

"We are very surprised but also very happy to see you and we know that these materials will go a long way in maintaining the cleanliness of the clinic," Sr Kunda said.

One of the staff members of the Secretariat, Mr Michael Mulenga, took time to pray the patients and assured them that there is no sickness that God cannot cure and urged the patients to believe in God for their healing.