

The Secretary-General has appointed Mr Argent Chuula, a Zambian national, as the Chief Executive Officer for the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA).

Mr Chuula joined COMESA on 13 March 2013 from the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP) Inc. Johannesburg, South Africa where he recently served as AGRA-AFAP Partnership Coordinator. Prior to that, he was AGRA's Programme Officer for Fertilizer Business Development (Eastern and Southern Africa) and AGRA's Country Representative-Mozambique. He was also AGRA's lead person to the team that designed, developed and operationalized AFAP.

The other positions previously held by Mr Chuula include: General Manager and Chief Executive Officer, Bain New Holland (Zambia) Limited, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Zambia Cooperatives Federation Limited. He also worked with Germany Technical Cooperation (GTZ) as Agribusiness Development Researcher and Advisor (GTZ Zimbabwe) and Senior National Advisor-Agricultural Marketing and Entrepreneurship development (GTZ Zambia), Agribusiness Development Advisor (NIRAS International Consulting Company). Additionally, he worked with the Africa University (Zimbabwe) as Lecturer; and Zambia Sugar Plc (Zambia) as Farm Officer and Agricultural Training Coordinator.

Secretary-General, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya has said that Mr Chuula brings to COMESA more than 23 years of technical, administrative and management experience overseeing technical, financial and administrative aspects of development projects around sub-Sahara Africa, particularly in Eastern and southern in Africa where he has extensively operated.

"He has a proven track record of leading and training staff in project management, business management, strategic management and administrative systems in public and private sector organizations, including more recently in donor funded projects," Mr Ngwenya said.

He added that the appointed CEO's experience and expertise cover the following broad areas: Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), Agriculture/Agribusiness and Rural Development, Business and Private Sector Development, Investment Promotion, Staff Development, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Project Management, Organizational Development, Change and General/Strategic Management.

“Mr Chuula is an accomplished manager, communicator and technical specialist with experience working with program and technical staff at both home and field offices. He speaks fluent English and Chinese (mandarin), reading and understanding Japanese, with working knowledge of Cantonese, French and more recently Portuguese, and holds a Master’s degree in Business Management from Africa University, Mutare Zimbabwe and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy from Zhejiang Agricultural University, China,” Mr Ngwenya said.

Mr Chuula will oversee and drive ACTESA’s technical, financial and management delivery of ACTESA. Further, having been appointed under secondment from AFAP this means that Mr Chuula will draw technical and financial support from AFAP and other development partners to transform ACTESA into a veritable organization that will promote smallholder farmers and enterprises in COMESA region.

“Please join me in welcoming Mr Argent Chuula to the COMESA family and in wishing him all success in his new career with us,” Mr Ngwenya concluded.