

**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND  
SOUTHERN AFRICA**



**STATEMENT BY  
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**AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE FINANCING  
AGREEMENT FOR THE REGIONAL ENTERPRISES  
COMPETITIVENESS AND ACCESS TO MARKET  
PROGRAMME (RECAMP)**

**18 FEBRUARY 2019  
COMESA SECRETARIAT, ZAMBIA**

**His Excellency, Ambassador Alessandro Mariani, Head of the EU Delegation to Zambia and Special Representative to COMESA**

**Invited Guests**

**Members of the Press**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my pleasure to address you this morning at the signing ceremony of the Financing Agreement for the Regional Enterprises Competitiveness and Access to Market Programme (RECAMP). This agreement is made between COMESA and the European Union under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF 11).

Allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to the European Union, represented here by His Excellency Alessandro Mariani, Head of European Delegation to Zambia, for the resources that have been made available to COMESA for its integration programmes over the years.

Indeed, the European Union has been, and continues to be, the biggest development partner to COMESA and for that we are truly grateful.

COMESA remains committed to efficiently manage these resources to ensure that the objectives of all programmes supported by the EU are realised.

Today's signing of the Regional Enterprises Competitiveness and Access to Market Programme between COMESA and the European Union marks

yet another important milestone in the cooperation that our organizations have enjoyed over the years.

The amount allocated for the programme is Ten million Euros to cover a period of Five years. The programme aims at contributing to increased private sector participation in regional and global value chains, through improved investment and business climate.

The programme will focus on three priority value chains, namely; Agro-processing, Horticulture and Leather and Leather Products.

It is worth noting that the programme is consistent with the objectives of COMESA's integration agenda as spelt out in the 2016-2020 Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) and the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Region.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Regional Enterprises Competitiveness and Access to Market Programme recognises the need to address supply side constraints. Such constraints contribute to low competitiveness and productivity of industries, as well as inability of MSMEs especially women and youth owned enterprises to participate in regional production networks.

According to the findings of the profiling exercise of SMEs in the footwear, garments and cassava processing that was undertaken by the COMESA Secretariat, it was noted that at least 65% of SMEs operating in the region are facing most of these constraints.

The RECAMP will therefore provide appropriate interventions that will support the improvement of the business environment, facilitate access to regional markets, provide market information and skills development in regional and global trade requirements to mention a few. Specifically, the programme will target SMEs participation in regional value chains by enhancing their capacity and thereby facilitate the creation of business linkages at the national and regional level.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to recognise the complementarity between the RECAMP and the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs launched in September 2018 which constitutes part of the European Union-African Union Partnership. The development represents a radical shift expected to unlock the economic potential and the mobilization of the private sector. Through this cooperation, it is expected that 10 million jobs will be generated in Africa in the next five years.

As I conclude, I would like to restate our commitment as COMESA Secretariat, to work closely with relevant authorities, complement and coordinate with various cooperating partners. By doing so, we will ensure that we develop a clear Description of the Action for the programme owned by the targeted stakeholders. That way, we shall achieve the main objectives of supporting economic and socio transformation in the COMESA region.

**Ladies and gentlemen**

I wish, once again to express my gratitude to the European Union providing us the much-needed resources to facilitate the implementation of our integration programmes.

I thank you.