

## One million Euros climate change project set for launching in Uganda



Climate smart agriculture model farm at Bugiri Primary School

A 1.07 million euros climate change project aimed at building resilience of agriculture landscapes in Eastern Uganda, is set to be launched in June this year following the completion of preparatory activities. The project titled: "Enhancing resilience of agricultural landscapes and value chains in eastern Uganda – scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices" will support the adoption of CSA practices and technologies in farmer cooperatives and primary schools.

Seven districts in eastern Uganda are the beneficiaries of the project which also seeks to develop enterprise platforms to enhance productivity, value addition, marketing and integration of CSA principles.

The three- year pilot project (2019 – 2021) is part of the COMESA's overall European Union supported Global Climate Change Action (GCCA+) programme. Its focus is on mainstreaming climate change in national policies, strategies and development plans of member States; and promoting, supporting, and piloting appropriate adaptation and mitigation projects. Other beneficiary

countries are Madagascar, Eswatini, Seychelles and Zimbabwe.

A total of € 1,076,271 has been provided to implement the pilot project in seven districts in Eastern Uganda with the European Union providing the bulk of the funds through COMESA amounting to one million euros. The funds will be managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under a delegation agreement signed with COMESA in July 2018.

In addition, the UNDP will provide €76,271 while the Government of Uganda will contribute in kind through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. The Project Coordinator Mr Stephen Muwaya told stakeholders attending a two -project inception meeting on 16 – 17 April 2019 at Iganga town, Uganda, that procurement and installation of equipment that will be unveiled during the high-level launching ceremony was on course.

The meeting brought together technical officers from the local authorities in the seven target districts of Budaka,

Namutumba, Bugiri, Busia, Kaliro, Kamuli, and Buyende. Representatives from community-based organizations and farmers who will be involved in the implementation of the project participated in the meeting which also finalized the projects work plan.

Speaking at the inception meeting, Uganda's Commissioner of Crop Production and Marketing Mr. Alex Lwakuba, observed that the eastern Uganda sub region was prone to hazards of climate change which aggravated food insecurity.

He urged the delegates: "You should supervise and monitor to ensure that the rural farmers realize the intended impacts of the project at household and farm level." The new project will build on the successes of the first phase of the project that was implemented in 2014-2016 under the theme: "Enhancing adoption of climate smart agriculture practices in Uganda's farming systems".

Among them is the Bugiri Primary school where over 700 pupils are involved in the school's CSA model farm. The farm also contributes to the school's feeding programmes and was part of the site visit conducted by the stakeholders.

The UNDP was represented at the meeting and site visit by Mr. Onesimus Muhwezi, Team Leader, Environment, Climate and Disaster Resilience, and COMESA by the Head of Corporate Communications Mr. Mwangi Gakunga.



## COMESA Court Showcases its new digital system at the Commonwealth Lawyers Conference

**Livingstone, Zambia, Tuesday, April 9, 2019:** The Commonwealth Law Conference was held in Livingstone Zambia from 8 – 12 April with the COMESA Court of Justice showcasing its new digital court system. The Conference brings together over 500 lawyers from more than 40 Commonwealth countries out of which nine are COMESA Member States.

The one-week conference was opened by His Excellency President Edgar Lungu of Zambia.

Anchored under the theme “The Rule of Law in Retreat? Challenges for the Modern Commonwealth”, the forum provided the COMESA Court of Justice a platform to market its services to the legal professionals in attendance and to showcase its new digital evidence management system – CaseLines Evidence Management System.

The Court introduced the Caselines System early this year thus eliminating the need for paper in court by introducing an entirely digital platform with tools which allow the creation and presentation of a fully digital bundle including multi-media evidence.

Registrar of the Court Ms. Nyambura Mbatia, who led the COMESA team, said one of the challenges facing the CCJ is awareness and visibility

“Unlike national courts, the jurisdiction of regional courts is not well known even among legal practitioners,” she noted. “Our presence at this conference of lawyers is an invaluable opportunity for the Court to reach hundreds of our target audiences in one sitting.”

She said the Court was keen to raise awareness about the Caselines System to the legal practitioners owing to its immense potential to increase the number of cases filed in the regional court.

“CaseLines will allow lawyers to file cases, applications and evidence in a secure environment from their own offices, saving costs of copying and transporting paper files and personnel, and at the same time cutting the risk of losing or misplacing files,” the Registrar said.

The system also supports efficient pre-trial preparation, especially for lawyers supporting clients in different countries. Besides, it enables Judges to work efficiently from their home offices, thereby improving preparation, cutting unnecessary travel and speeding the process of preparing judgments after a hearing.

Out of this forum, the Registrar predicted an increase in cases filed at the COMESA Court and more so as a result of the introduction of Caselines System.

She observed: “The number of enquiries received at our expo booth so far demonstrates the critical need for the Court to reach out and directly engage our stakeholders.”

Lawyers from COMESA Member States including Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in the conference. The COMESA Court of Justice was a co-sponsor.

## Directors of Civil Aviation call for Seamless Upper Space



Directors of Civil Aviation Authorities from the COMESA region have urged Member States to push for the implementation of the Seamless Upper Airspace to improve safety and efficiency of air traffic management.

Meeting during their 17th meeting in Cairo, Egypt on 23 – 25 March 2019, the Directors of Civil Aviation Authorities called on COMESA Secretariat to establish a coordinating mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the Seamless Upper Airspace.

The annual meeting is used to discuss key priority areas of cooperation and monitor progress of their previous decisions in line with the provisions of Article 87 of the COMESA Treaty.

They reiterated that having a Seamless upper airspace is important for safety and efficiency of air traffic management and therefore measures to coordinate seamless upper airspace activities are required.

The COMESA Airspace programme aims at achieving a seamless upper airspace which will lead to enhanced competition in air travel and efficiency.

## COMESA still facing Seed Deficit



*Dr Mukuka addressing a meeting*

The COMESA Region is still facing a huge seed deficit of 500,000 metric tonnes. This is despite significant investments in processes to improve seed trade in line with the COMESA Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP).

According to experts, COMESA Member States have a potential to produce at least two million metric tonnes of quality and improved seed for export and ensuring household food security.

Dr John Mukuka, Seed Expert at the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) however notes that the region still suffers from the effects of low seed production and trade.

“The total COMESA seed trade value is estimated at USD\$ 1.8 billion with global seed market value at USD\$67 billion. This is despite Africa having more than 60% of global arable land and young population,” he says.

COMSHIP is one of the solutions developed to address the above and given the prevailing scenario in the seed sector and taking into account interventions taken to date and the persistent challenges encountered.

In this regard, Africa Lead in close collaboration with ACTESA, a Specialised Agency of COMESA, have proposed regional activities that focus on improving seed trade by unblocking the most pressing bottlenecks that still constrain seed trade in the COMESA region.

In January this year, an inception meeting was organized in Kenya to concretise the COMSHIP interventions for Africa Lead from March to June 2019.

It also provided an opportunity to kick off the activities towards strengthening seed trade systems for increased seed trade in COMESA region. The aim was to engage key stakeholders to collaborate in addressing the most pressing bottlenecks to regional seed trade in the COMESA region.

The meeting was organized by Africa Lead II and facilitated by ECI- and attended by representatives from USAID, KEPHIS, Market Matters Inc and other partners. The role of ACTESA /COMESA was overall leadership and participation in national consultations, learning visit and use of seed committee to execute action plans.

# Zambia Gets Cassava Cluster Support from FEMCOM



The Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM) has pledged to provide cassava processing equipment for a womens' group based in Kanakantapa area of Chongwe district East of Zambia's capital Lusaka. The group is part of FEMCOM's regional programme to support women working in cassava clusters.

FEMCOM Executive Director Katherine Ichoya joined by the Zambia Federation of Associations for Women in Business (ZAFAWIB) were in Chongwe on 4 April 2019 to sign and hand over the tenancy agreement with the Cassava cluster women of Kanakantapa.

The five-year tenancy agreement will allow the ZAFAWIB to employ the women farmers at the cassava processing plant.

Mrs Ichoya indicated that the support that her organization is providing to the cassava sector through the Kanakantapa Women cassava cluster shall yield the intended results as women have proven to be good at management of finances.

"We are here to provide support to our fellow women in this area to ensure that this project continues to bare the fruits it was initially intended for. I know that with this

new initiative where you shall work with the ministry of Community development, you shall utilize the skills you have gained to develop the Agro- business sector," Ichoya said.

ZAFAWIB Chief Executive Officer, Maureen Sumbwe indicated that her organization has a mandate to uplift the living standards of the women in Zambia by ensuring they get involved in business ventures that will support their livelihoods.

Ms Sumbwe said with support from FEMCOM, ZAFAWIB is tagged to achieve a lot of progress in the Agri-business sector such as the Kanakantapa cassava cluster because the women have shown their resolve to progress.

Chongwe District community development officer, Ngambo Hamukale said the women of Kanakantapa will be able to sustain their cassava fields with the support coming from FEMCOM and ZAFAWIB.

She said the benefits of growing Cassava are vast and that the women will be able to make a variety of farm produce from the crop which will be a great source of income for them.

"The initiative to revitalize this place for the women would not only be beneficial to the

women themselves, but also to the younger generation as it is an ongoing project that will be appreciated by many," Mrs Hamukale said.

Mrs Ichoya also led her team as they paid a courtesy call on acting District Commissioner for Chongwe, Laura Gondwe who said that her office was working closely with various stakeholders to ensure that a market is readily available for the women once their produce is ready.

She however called on FEMCOM through ZAFAWIB to ensure that more women be trained in planting cassava.

"We as Government are happy to have FEMCOM and ZAFAWIB working with our office here in Chongwe to empower our women in Kanakantapa. You have come at a time when there is dire need to help our women make ends meet," she added. Women empowerment is a key thing in any community because when you educate a woman, you educate a nation and I am positive that our people will no longer go hungry, and for this we are very grateful to you all," she said.

FEMCOM is a COMESA institution formed in July 1993 in Zimbabwe.



COMESA booth at the Ndofa Trade fair.

## COMESA International Trade Fair to be held in July

Leaders in business, Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) and Policy Makers from the COMESA region and beyond will gather in Nairobi Kenya for the SOURCE21COMESA International Expo and Business Summit in July this year.

The Expo is being organized by the COMESA Business Council working with the Kenya Manufacturers Association, the Government of Kenya and the COMESA Secretariat.

The Expo known as the SOURCE21 whose theme is 'The Hallmark of Quality' will also have a High-Level Business Summit which is expected to address some of the major challenges faced by the business community in the 21 Member Country bloc.

In terms of customer base, the COMESA region provides for over 550 million consumers with a GDP of US\$722 bn. However, the region's total global trade stands at US\$240 bn as at 2017, with intra-regional trade at a meagre 6.7%.

CBC Chief Executive Officer Sandra Uwera states that the most common

products purchased within the COMESA region are still minerals, traditional commodities such as Fresh flowers, tea and live animals among others.

"We are yet to exploit one of the largest market shares in the world; for the business person, consumer and SME, the paramount issues are how can we translate regional integration into actual partnerships,"

She added that development of the private sector and economic growth remains crucial for the region to reduce poverty, create jobs and bring about development.

The first of its kind Expo and Business

Summit will also discuss the need for African enterprises to demonstrate their ability to produce quality products that can compete effectively in regional and global markets.

Ms Uwera added that Kenya was picked to host the SOURCE 21 Expo because of its strategic position in the COMESA region, being vast in natural and human resources with a great potential for agricultural, industrial and economic development.

The SOURCECOMESA21 will be held alongside the Kenya Trade Week from 15 – 19 July 2019.

### COMESA Secretariat on Easter Break

COMESA Secretariat will be closed starting tomorrow Friday 19th April 2019 until Monday, 22nd April 2019, for Easter Holidays.

The offices will reopen on Tuesday 23rd April 2019.

Be blessed and enjoy the Easter Holidays