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**PRESS RELEASE**

**COMESA Holds Regional Climate Resilience Meeting in Zambia**

***Lusaka, Sunday, July 21, 2019:*** More than 48 senior government officials from Ministries responsible for planning, agriculture, environment, health, disaster management and mitigation units from 17 COMESA Member countries will meet in Lusaka on 23-24 July 2019 to discuss the Regional Resilience Initiative on climate change, which was launched in 2017.

The meeting aims at supporting Member States to strengthen their policy and coordination mechanisms and develop national resilience policies and implementation frameworks. These will serve as national guiding documents to resilience building and project implementation at Member State level.

Speaking in Lusaka, ahead of the meeting, the COMESA Climate Change Coordinator, Dr Mclay Kanyangarara, observed that most COMESA Member States have a fragmented and haphazard approach to managing risks, shocks and stresses which has proved to be ineffective as the magnitude of loss and damage continues to escalate in the region.

“Governments find themselves diverting resources allocated to much needed developmental projects and programmes to deal with the effects of the disasters thereby trapping many in a vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment,” he said. “Furthermore, natural and economic systems are interconnected at the national and regional levels, hence impact on one affects the others.”

Most COMESA countries are vulnerable and face similar threats of climate change and droughts, flooding, industrial shocks, extreme rainfall and disease outbreaks, wars and civil unrest among others.

To attain its regional integration goals, many systems in the region (such as shared water courses, energy, transport, communications and financial systems) must be interconnected. This therefore puts COMESA and other Regional Economic Communities in a better position to support resilience building in the region.

**Editor’s Note**

The COMESA region is vulnerable to climate change and other natural and manmade disasters and shocks such as cyclones, flooding, landslides, droughts, disease epidemics, heat waves, wars, civil unrest, among others. Recently, the region experienced devastating cyclones Idai and Kenneth that affected Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe causing more than 1,000 deaths, infrastructure and property damage running into billions of dollars with 90% of the key port city of Beira submerged for weeks. At the same time, the worst drought in many decades, led to a significant reduction in the water level at lake Kariba severely curtailing hydroelectric power generation leading to massive power cuts in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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