

Programme to boost Labour Migration is Underway



Immigration of people

COMESA is developing a Cross Regional Programme for Southern Africa to address irregular migration and promote regular labour mobility within the region. This is intended to spur regional trade and investment.

A total of 20 million euros has been provided under the 11th European Union Development Fund, (EDF11) for this project. Among the issues to be addressed are matters relating to Mutual Recognition of Qualifications across the region.

Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe said this when she received the credentials of the new International Labour Organization Special Representative to COMESA Mr. George Okutho on Tuesday 30 July 2019. Mr. Okutho is also the ILO the Country Director to Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

The SG said COMESA and ILO will work together on issues of Mutual Recognition of Qualifications among others, to facilitate trade in services in the region. This undertaking was also made by the ILO Director.

"We need to manage migration issues with very sober minds," Mr Okutho said. "The issue of Mutual Recognition of Qualifications is very cardinal for migrant labor as most people are

scared to move to other countries because they think their qualifications won't be recognized in another Member State."

He further indicated that ILO is committed to ensuring that all Member States come up with an agreed standard of qualification that shall be acceptable in the region so that equal opportunities are availed to those that want to work outside their country.

The SG observed that in the last 20 years, trade in services has been the most dynamic segment

of international trade, growing faster than trade in goods. She noted that developing countries and transition economies have played an increasingly important role in this area, raising their share in the exports of world services from a quarter to one-third over this period.

"It would be very prudent to jointly identify additional programmes that we could implement together for the benefit of the entire COMESA through experience sharing," she said. "COMESA is therefore keen on promoting trade in services among its Member States to increase the share of services in intra-COMESA trade."

Mr. Okutho said the collaboration with COMESA will enhance implementation of the programme on free movement of persons and goods as the only way of fulfilling regional integration initiatives which Member States ascribe to.

He stressed the need to address challenges that come up with movement of persons such as international organized crime, human trafficking and smuggling adding that the two organisations should benefit from the demographic dividends of migration for development.



ILO Director Mr. George Okutho and Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe

Engaging Private Sector in Climate Financing



Delegates at the Green/Climate Financing Workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe

COMESA Secretariat is working with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional office to assist Member States develop bankable climate smart projects that will attract financing from the private sector.

According to COMESA Climate Change Advisor Dr Mclay Kanyangarara, Member States have not benefited from the available finances meant to support adaptation, resilience and mitigation of climate change in the COMESA region and on the continent.

Speaking in Harare, Zimbabwe during the training workshop for Member States on Green/Climate Financing, Dr Kanyangarara attributed this to lack of awareness of the huge financial resources that are readily available from the developed world to assist Africa combat effects of and mitigation of climate change.

The training which took place on 1st and 2nd August 2019 attracted experts in disaster management, mitigation, agriculture, planning, finance and representatives from the private sector. They deliberated on ways to strengthen Member States' capacities to access, manage and deliver national and international climate finance more effectively and the benefits of

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Minister Shiri said.

private sector engagement in climate action.

Dr Kanyangarara observed that most countries first need to build their capacities and know-how to tap these resources and effectively implement the programmes.

“We need to develop innovative financing strategies that will help us access the resources to deal with mitigation, resilience and adaptation of climate change...Unlocking this huge potential is the prime purpose of this gathering,” he added

Zimbabwe's Minister of Lands Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement Rtd Hon. Chief Air Marshall Perence Shiri observed that Climate change mainstreaming in National Development

Planning and Budget remains relatively low in most African countries due to other competing needs or limited awareness to the decision makers.

“...there is need to lobby our national governments to integrate climate action in development planning as well as budgeting processes to demonstrate country readiness to tackle climate change as well as attract international finances,” Minister Shiri said.

During the training, COMESA was called upon to conduct an assessment of the status of preparedness for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Member States and assist in the review of the NDCs.

Representatives from different African countries joined by the AUC, UNDP, African Development Bank (AfDB), Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA), the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) and the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe participated in the training. Others were drawn from the National Designated Authorities for the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) focal persons from the AU Member States.



SDG sub-regional Centre launched in Zambia



President Edgar Lungu (3rd right), President Paul Kagame (3rd left), Namibian Vice President Nangolo Mbumba (2nd left) and SDG Centre Director General Dr. Belay Begashaw (2nd right) and other guests at the launch

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGC/A) Sub-Regional Center for Africa has been launched in Zambia. The launch was conducted Wednesday August 7, 2019 by President Edgar Lungu of Zambia and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda.

This follows an agreement was signed in September 2018 between the host country and the SDG Centre for Africa to host a regional Centre. The office will advocate for the implementation of SDGs in the Southern African region, in line with the principles of African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063.

President Paul Kagame, who is also the Chair of the Board of the SDGs Center for Africa said the center will enhance the attainment of SDGs by the continent through the provision of technical advice which will be customized for the countries in the region.

President Edgar Lungu said the new center will help the sub region to come up with home grown solutions to address the challenges that they are facing in meeting the SDGs target by the

countries in the continent. He further called on the Centre to focus on agriculture, health and education.

The SDG Sub-Regional Centre will provide technical support, neutral advice and expertise to national governments, private sector, civil society and academic institutions in order to accelerate the implementation of the SDG agenda.

Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe was among the dignitaries that attended the launch in Lusaka. During the panel discussion, Ms

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“We need to enhance investment in the quality of products in the Small and Medium Enterprises, to meet market standards and food safety requirements including quality packaging for their competitiveness as this is the only way we will remain viable on the market,” Ms Kapwepwe said

Kapwepwe said emphasis should be placed on empowering the private sector through Small and Medium Enterprises programs/workshops such as effective incubator programs, technological training and research and development centers to increase productivity.

“We need to enhance investment in the quality of products in the Small and Medium Enterprises, to meet market standards and food safety requirements including quality packaging for their competitiveness as this is the only way we will remain viable on the market,” she said.

The launch was attended by over 200 government officials, representatives of international organizations, development financing institutions, statistics institutions and experts from southern Africa and beyond.

Among those that addressed the gathering was the Namibian Vice President Nangolo Mbumba and the Centre Director General Dr. Belay Begashaw

Joint Project for Youth Participation in Governance to be Launched

In partnership with COMESA the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat of the African Union Commission (AUC), will soon launch a Joint Project to enhance Youth participation in democratic processes and socio-economic development in Africa.

The project will strengthen the participation of youths in democratic governance and socio-economic development in Africa in line with aspiration six of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

COMESA and the AUC-AGA engaged the Swedish Development Corporation (SDC) to solicit support for funding a Project on Youth Participation in Democratic Processes and Socio-Economic Development in Africa. The SDC agreed to support the initiative and the different phases of the project development processes have already been completed.

Director of Gender and Social Affairs Mrs Beatrice Hamusonde, who represented COMESA in the first planning workshop hosted at the AU in Addis Ababa, last week said the project will greatly help young people get involved in governance issues.

"We are cognizant of the fact that Africa has the youngest population globally with approximately 65% of its population aged below 35 years," she noted.

AGA acting Deputy Director Ms. Rizzan Nassum appealed to COMESA and AUC to actively implement the recommendations made during the planning workshop so that the project could be launched soon.

COMESA was chosen as the first pilot Regional Economic Community (REC) of the project in recognition of the close nexus between democratic governance and socio-economic development in Africa as stipulated in the COMESA Strategic Programme on youth.

In view of this, technical officers from COMESA and AGA Secretariat met at the AUC in December 2018 and developed the detailed project proposal that was submitted to the SDC for approval. So far, COMESA and SDC have signed the contract and funds to implement activities for the first year have already been transferred.

Finance Expert from Regional Central Banks Trained in use of Econometrics



Experts from Central Banks at the CMI offices in Nairobi, Kenya

Finance experts from nine Central Banks from the COMESA region have been trained on the use of robust econometric tools to analyze the financial inclusion landscape in the region.

The training dubbed "Application of Econometric Software to Cross Sectional Data using Financial Inclusion Data and its Implications on Financial Stability" was organized by the COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) from 22nd to 26th July 2019" in Nairobi, Kenya.

Representatives from Burundi, D.R. Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe participated in the training.

The training was motivated by the need to better understand the Financial Access Landscape, regionally and internationally and improve the measurement of financial inclusion by COMESA member countries.

Director of the CMI Mr Ibrahim Zeidy said: "Despite the progress made so far, affordability and consumer protection issues such as unexpected charges remain barriers to formal service access."

During the training, the experts were exposed to econometric skills necessary for the analysis of financial access survey data sets and they were provided insights on the steps and processes

involved in the design of survey instruments to generate the data and how it can be used in research activities.

Key objective of the training was to equip participants with practical exposition of FinAccess Household Survey Data with emphasis on hands-on application using the STATA econometric software.

Other objectives were: to build capacity among Central Bankers and policy analysts on how to successfully roll out FinAccess surveys and carry out analysis using modern statistical software; contribute to the designing of appropriate Financial Inclusion Strategies in member countries; and share knowledge and experience on FinAccess Household Survey Data.

"Despite the progress made so far, affordability and consumer protection issues such as unexpected charges remain barriers to formal service access." Mr Zeidy

Dates	Event	Venue
8 August 2019	7th Meeting of the IT Technical Working Group of the RCTG Carnet	Lubumbashi
12 August 2019	Regional validation Workshop of NTBs Analytical Study and Procedure Manuals	Lusaka
19 August 2019	Regional Workshop on Electronic Single Window	Lusaka
2 – 6 September 2019	The 6th COMESA Research Forum	Nairobi



COMESA Trains CBTAs to Enhance Advocacy



Participants at the Advocacy Workshop for Cross Border Traders' Associations at Cresta Golfview Hotel in Lusaka

An Advocacy Workshop for Cross Border Traders' Associations from Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Congo DR began in Lusaka from 4th to 9th August 2019. The workshop is conducted by COMESA in collaboration with the International Trade Centre with support from the European Union under the 11th EDF.

The objective of the workshop is to enhance the capacities of small-scale cross border traders in promoting and advocating for their best interests.

Among other activities the workshop shall offer a series of hands-on engagements into the identification and analysis of critical issues affecting small scale cross border traders, the development of policy oriented and strategic solutions and recommendations.

Participants will learn from best practices in advocacy for trade facilitation and mobility, as well as into the development of position papers and strategies for facilitating small scale trade.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Zambia, Mrs. Kayula Siame stressed the importance of continuous and regular engagement among members and representatives of the various CBTAs and Trade Information Desk Officers in the

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“IOM looks forward to working with you all to share experiences on how cross border mobility if properly managed can contribute to trade, economic growth and development,” Ms Lane

region.

In a speech presented by the Chief Economist at the same Ministry, Ms. Margaret Chikuba, she said this will ensure the border officials jointly work together to improve the business environment and facilitate trade for small scale cross border traders.

At the same function the COMESA Officer in Charge of Trade Division, Mr. Benedict Musengele said informal trade accounts for 30 to 40 Percent of total trade in the region. In addition, the majority of people involved in this trade are

women (70 to 80%) of those participating in Trade regionally.

IOM Chief of Mission Marianne Lane said the collaboration with COMESA is underpinned by the realization that trade facilitation and free movement of persons are two sides of the same coin and central pillars of regional integration.

“IOM looks forward to working with you all to share experiences on how cross border mobility if properly managed can contribute to trade, economic growth and development,” Ms Lane said.

COMESA and European Union (EU) officially signed the cross-border trade initiative agreement at Mwami-Zambia/Mchinji-Malawi border in May last year to enhance trade flows for small scale cross-border traders.

The project is supported by the EU to the tune of 15 million Euros, to help different sectors such infrastructure, trade, private sector development, agriculture, good governance and fight against climate change. The cross-border trade initiative for small scale traders is being implemented with collaboration from the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).