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Twentieth Meeting of the Sub-Committee on

Audit and Budgetary Matters

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Lusaka, Zambia

**Absorbed Professional and General Service Category Staff**

**(AGENDA ITEM 2.2)**

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# **Context**

1. For a while, the Secretariat has continued to engage COMESA Policy Organs on additional human resources in line with the expanded changed scope of environment, operations and activities; and requirements to upgrade institutional systems and processes and their sustenance. The most recent Organizational Structure approved in 2014 has not been implemented to date due to –
2. the financial implications of sustaining this structure
3. no perceived value addition and tangible benefits; and
4. the need to identify underlying guiding principles
5. The success of COMESA depends on the effectiveness of its organizational structure in implementing the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) as encapsulated by the mantra “Strategy determines Structure”. The MTSP is a key tool in helping the regional block create an enabling economic environment for trade facilitation, market integration, infrastructure development, industrialization, Institutional and regulatory policies, capacity development as well as resource mobilization. In November 2018, the Council of Ministers requested a fresh review of the Secretariat based on its mandate as specified in the Treaty, Strategic objectives of the MTSP (2016-2020), current needs and gaps and changes in the environment.
6. Whilst 2014 organisational structure and accompanying staff compliment remain frozen, the COMESA Secretariat continue to rely on the following arrangements: -
7. Temporary staff;
8. Project staff; and
9. Consultants to carry out tasks, which ordinarily would be under regular staff.
10. Based on the decisions and guidance given by the Council, the Secretariat has continued to refine and adapt the 2014 structure to reflect changes and a refocus on triple pillars of market integration (pillar 1); industrialisation development (pillar 2); and infrastructure development (pillar 3). At the same time, COMESA-EAC-SADC have established a Tripartite FTA arrangement. With the AU 2063 and AfCTA Agenda, AU reforms have called for clarity of division of labour between AU and RECs, with an expanded role of RECs.

# **Decisions of the Council made in November 2017**

1. Whilst the search for an optimal COMESA Secretariat organisational structure and the accompanying staff compliment continues, the Council **(para 264)** in November 2017 approved: -
2. The absorption of three (3) Professional Staff **(1 - Livestock Expert at P4; 1 - Senior Research Fellow at P4; 1 - Research Fellow at P3),** as a transitional arrangement pending finalization of the review of the Regular Establishment of the COMESA Secretariat. The 2018 Budget of COMESA Secretariat shall include an amount of COM$257,198;

(ii) The absorption of twenty-eight (28) General Staff **(Annex Doc 2.2A)**, as a transitional arrangement pending finalization of the review of the Regular Establishment of the COMESA Secretariat. The 2018 Budget of COMESA Secretariat shall include an amount of COM$532,836.

1. COMESA Secretariat annual budgets for 2017, 2018 and 2019 incorporated budgetary appropriations towards staff emoluments to sustain the above absorbed staff, pending finalisation and approval of a new COMESA Secretariat structure, as well as the accompanying staff compliment.

# **Recommendations**

1. **COMESA Secretariat is currently seized with work regarding review of structure, as well as the accompanying staff compliment. Given this situation, it is recommended that the interim arrangements be retained for a further three (3) year period until the finalisation and approval of a new COMESA Secretariat structure, as well as the accompanying staff compliment, as follows: -**

**(i) Three (3) Professional Staff, as a transitional arrangement pending finalization of the review of the Regular Establishment of the COMESA Secretariat. The 2020 Budget of COMESA Secretariat shall include an amount of COM$257,198;**

**(ii) Twenty-eight (28) General Staff, as a transitional arrangement pending finalization of the review of the Regular Establishment of the COMESA Secretariat. The 2020 Budget of COMESA Secretariat shall include an amount of COM$532,836.**