



PRESS RELEASE

COMESA – EU Sign €8.8m Contribution Agreement for Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme

Lusaka, Friday, 29 November 2019: The European Union and COMESA have today signed an 8.8m Euro Contribution Agreement to increase private sector participation in sustainable regional and global value chains through improved investment/business climate and enhanced competitiveness in the COMESA region.

Under the Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme (RECAMP) programme, focus will be on agro-processing, horticulture and leather products, value chains pre-selected based on the potential to generate value addition, to create jobs, and to attract investments in the region.

The EU Ambassador to Zambia and Representative to COMESA, H.E Jacek Jankowski and Secretary General of COMESA Chileshe Kapwepwe signed the Agreement in the margins of the 40th COMESA Council of Ministers' meeting that took place in Lusaka, Zambia.

RECAMP will address critical issues, such as provision of business information, facilitating market linkages, harmonizing regional industrial policies and creating a conducive business environment to attract investments.

The programme will ensure collaboration with activities of national trade support institutions and business development and service organisations in member states as they provide services to value chains as part of their mandate.

This includes product development; facilitate technology transfer, provision of business intelligence and connection to buyers. The programme will identify champions or lead firms within the selected value chains that have both backward and forward linkages with SMEs and other intermediary firms in order to enhance effect coordination reduce coordination failures and improve competitiveness.

In her remarks, Ms Kapwepwe said the programme will make efforts to enhance the capacities and skills of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to make them capable players in the value-chain development.



“A significant number of MSMEs, especially women and youth owned enterprises, are vulnerable when it comes to participating in value-chains networks at the national, regional and global level because of their competitiveness.”

It is estimated that between 3.5 to 5 million SMEs in the region, but their growth and competitiveness are constrained by various bottlenecks such as lack of access to finance and related services, restrictive business environment, lack of affordable technology among others. A significant number of them are active women entrepreneurs.

In particular Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the region play a pivotal role in their contribution to employment and Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of member states which is estimated at between 20 – 25%.

Ambassador Jankowski assured the EU’s commitment to continue the partnership with COMESA to ensure that regional integration remains as inclusive as possible in view of the challenges posed by climate change.

“Increasing exploitation of natural resources and the environment, and in view of demographic trends makes prioritizing investments in value chains that are environmentally sensitive, socially sound and economically viable,” he said.

RECAMP is supported under the 11th European Development Fund COMESA sub envelope. The Programme is in line with the EU and COMESA policies in support of the private sector, with a budget of EUR 8.8 million and a duration of 48 months.

Contact: Ms. Mshuka Kamwela – EDF Programme Manager, mkamwela@comesa.int

Corporate Communications

COMESA Secretariat

Ben Bella Road, P.O. Box 30051, Lusaka, Zambia

Phone: +260 211 229725/32 - Ext: 7652

Fax: +260 211 225107

Mobile: +260 971 873343