

Sportsfest in the Countdown to COMESA @25 Anniversary



COMESA Football team with the Zambia Minister of Sports Hon. Emmanuel Mulenga (green jersey) and Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe (white polo shirt) after winning the Silver Jubilee Anniversary cup

Last weekend in Lusaka, Zambia was a sports festival as 120 golfers and 16 football teams participated in the COMESA @25 sports activities in the countdown to the regional bloc's Silver Jubilee Anniversary scheduled on Thursday, November 28, 2019.

On Friday, 120 golfers participated in the COMESA 25th Anniversary Golf tournament at the Bonanza Golf Course, an event that attracted a high turnout of players from the international and business community, diplomatic corps, government, academia and individual golfers. The Trade and Development Bank (TDB), a COMESA institution was the event's key sponsor.

16 teams to lift the trophy in a daylong contest where it overcame Zambia Revenue Authority 4 – 2 in the final. The football competition was organized by COMESA and Barclays Bank of Zambia.

Zambia Minister of Sports Hon. Emmanuel Mulenga was the chief guest. He urged COMESA to make the football competition an annual event going by the interest the commemorative event had attracted. He said COMESA's choice of football to celebrate its anniversary was spot-on given the uniting power of the sport.



Former COMESA Secretary General, Erastus Mwencha tees-off at the COMESA @25 anniversary Golf tournament

The golf tournament was the first event of the COMESA Week constituting build-up activities leading to the main celebration of the COMESA Day on Thursday.

On Saturday, a nascent COMESA team conquered

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“We are celebrating an organization and its stable of institutions that have outgrown the vision of the founding fathers; that of integrating the eastern and southern African region,” the Minister said.

“The power of football is not only in its entertainment value, but its ability to unite everyone. When it comes to football, everybody speaks the same language. There is no language, class, social or cultural barriers in football,” the minister said.

Zambia's Minister of Justice Hon. Given Lubinda was the chief guest at the golf event. He said COMESA sets the pace for the entire continent

COMESA Institutions, Secretariat in Fresh Move to Deepen Collaboration



Chief executives and staff of COMESA institutions and the Secretariat retreat in Lusaka, Zambia

COMESA Institutions and the Secretariat have developed a draft framework of cooperation. The tool is intended to deepen collaboration and synergy in the delivery of their different mandate towards their common goal of promoting regional integration.

In a one-day retreat conducted in Lusaka, Zambia on Sunday, November 24, 2019, the heads of the institutions and Secretariat agreed on the need to adopt a more coordinated approach in joint planning, procedures for reporting to the COMESA Policy Organs and resource mobilization.

The initiative is in line with Article 175 of the COMESA Treaty, which provides for the relationship between the Institutions considering the objectives, policies, programmes and activities of the Common Market in the implementation of the Charter of each Institution.

Speaking at the opening of the retreat, Secretary General of COMESA, Chileshe Kapwepwe noted that a lot of work on implementation of the COMESA Treaty was being undertaken by COMESA institutions.

“In terms of reporting the achievements of the Common Market, the contributions made by the institutions are not reported properly,” the SG noted. “It is therefore important that we chart the way on how we shall be working together to ensure that COMESA Member States are aware of and realize the benefits of regional integration.”

The forum considered the structure and modalities for reporting to COMESA Policy

Organs and agreed on the need to specify the roles and targets for institutions and harmonize them to promote complementarity.

In this regard, a joint task team will be constituted to come up with a draft framework of reporting by institutions to demonstrate their achievements especially on value addition at the national level. The forum also acknowledged that all COMESA Member States invested resources in the establishment of each institution, hence the need to uphold the aims and objectives of the Common Market while respecting their specific mandates and governance structures.

In coming up with a cooperation framework, the forum noted that some institutions of the Common Market have membership that goes beyond COMESA. Hence there was need to ensure balance between their responsibilities as COMESA institutions, and the interests of the other stakeholders.

As part of joint planning, information sharing between the institutions on one hand and with the Secretariat on the other, will be enhanced through harmonized communication strategy. The Secretariat will share the calendar of major events where institutions could leverage such as the Secretary General’s missions to Member States, in which they have special interests.

To formalize the working relationships, the parties will develop memoranda of understanding to provide the framework of collaboration and synergy.

Egypt Domesticates COMESA Seed Regulations

Egypt is the eighth COMESA Member State to domesticate the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations. This follows the signing of a Gazette notice by Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation Prof. Dr. Ezaldin Abusteit.

Egypt now joins Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which have completely aligned their national seed regulations or laws with the regional Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations.

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) COMESA Seed Development Expert Dr John Mukuka told eComesa that this was expected after the validation of the draft COMESA aligned national Seeds Laws of Egypt by stakeholders earlier this year. The validation meeting was supported by the USAID.

Subsequently, Hytech-seed Company of Egypt has registered six varieties on the COMESA Variety catalogue. These are: two medium maturing maize varieties of Hytec 203, 2055, late maturing maize varieties of 1100 and 2031 and late sorghum varieties of Horus and Mabrouk.



Sportsfest countdown to COMESA Anniversary...



and now provides the strongest building block for the integration of the African continent.

"We are celebrating an organization and its stable of institutions that have outgrown the vision of the founding fathers; that of integrating the eastern and southern African region," the Minister said.

The immediate former Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Mr. Erastus Mwencha, who is also former Secretary General of COMESA, was part of the first coterie to tee off the tournament. Mr. Mwencha stated that the growth path of COMESA from PTA was motivating given that the organization started with very few members but is now the leading regional bloc in Africa with 21 Member States.

Other corporate sponsors of the golf tournament were the Yellow Card (a COMESA motor vehicle insurance scheme), Zamtel, Black Dot, Atlas Mara, Liquid Telecoms and Ethiopian Airlines among others.

Secretary General of COMESA Chileshe Kapwepwe led the staff in the events.



Assistant Secretary General Dr Kipyego Cheluget scores during the football curtain raiser



Egypt Domesticates Seed Regulations...

from page 3

Five other Member States namely Djibouti, Eritrea, DR Congo, Ethiopia, and Eswatini are advancing steadily in domesticating the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations as they have draft COMESA aligned national seed laws / regulations awaiting official gazetting at national level.

The remaining eight countries Comoros, Madagascar, Libya, Mauritius, Tunisia, Somalia, Seychelles and Sudan are yet to align and domesticate the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations.

The development of the COMESA Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP) was aimed at expediting the implementation of the harmonized regional seed regulations to enhance seed production, reliability, seed trade including increasing the competitiveness of the seed industry in the Southern and East African Region.

40th Intergovernmental Committee Meeting Opens in Lusaka

Close to three hundred delegates have converged in Lusaka to attend the 40th COMESA Intergovernmental Committee Meeting which opened on Monday 25th November. This is an annual forum for delegates from Member States to review the implementation of COMESA's regional integration programmes and the state of development in the region.

The three days meeting is attended by Permanent/Principal Secretaries, ambassadors and technical experts from the 21 COMESA Member States. The meeting will review the COMESA budget for 2020 and work programme and human resources matters. Its recommendations will be presented to the Council of Ministers meeting on Friday this week for decision-making.

The meeting comes ahead of the celebrations to mark the 25th COMESA Anniversary on Thursday, 28 November 2019 in Lusaka.

To open the meeting was the Zambia Minister of Trade, Commerce and Industry Hon Honourable Christopher Yaluma. He described the regional bloc a leader in continental integration through policy development, harmonization and coordination in specific areas of customs management, technical cooperation, institutional development and capacity building.

"The success of COMESA can be witnessed in the expansion of its membership bringing together 21 Member States with a total population of 560 million people," the Minister said in a statement presented by the Permanent Secretary Mr. Mushuma Mulenga.

In the recent past, COMESA has focused on promoting digital technology by introducing ICT systems to support implementation of the digital Free Trade Area. Work has been undertaken to finalize policy guidelines and regulations to guide the operationalization of customs and trade facilitation instruments including the electronic Certificate of Origin.

Over the years, the organisation has recorded successes in different sectors of regional integration. This includes having a Free Trade Area which now consists of 16 out of the 21 Member States. These countries trade on a duty-free-quota-free basis. About 98 percent of all Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) reported in the past ten years have been eliminated. In her remarks, Secretary General Chileshe



A section of the Heads of delegations and delegates attending the Intergovernmental Committee meeting.



Kapwepwe called for enhanced implementation of agreed decisions and domestication of COMESA instruments. She said, the operationalization of the 50 Million Woman-Speak Project and the monumental progress in the infrastructure sector are some of the positive strides being recorded in COMESA's regional integration programme.

The Head of the European Union Delegation to Zambia and Special Representative to COMESA, Ambassador Jacek Jankowski and heads of cooperating and development partners of COMESA addressed meeting.



CMI Scales-Up Capacity Building Initiatives



Delegates attending CMI validation workshop

In recent weeks, the COMESA Monetary Institute has scaled up capacity building initiatives targeted mainly at staff of Central banks in Member States. The main objective of these initiatives is to improve macroeconomic management and financial stability in the region with the aim of enhancing the COMESA Monetary Integration Programme.

Two of the forums involved validation of 'Users Guides'. The first to be validated was on "Analyzing Banking System Interconnectedness and Systemic Risk". This workshop was conducted from 7 to 11 October 2019 in Kenya.

The guide will be an important tool for analyzing banking system interconnectedness which is important in understanding direct exposures between banks that can lead to contagion through domino effect and cause instability in the entire financial system.

"The user's guide will supplement the existing off-site supervisory monitoring systems and on-site examinations with new statistical models to predict banks with an early stage of capital distress and banks' rating downgrade or upgrade," he said.

In November 4 – 8, 2019, the User's Guide on "Early Warning Models for Banks' in Financial Distress: An Application of Multinomial Panel Data Analysis using STATA" was equally validated.

According to Mr. Ibrahim Zeidy, the Director of COMESA Monetary Institute, the workshops provided important feedback on the quality of the

user's guide as an important step of peer review.

"The user's guide will supplement the existing off-site supervisory monitoring systems and on-site examinations with new statistical models to predict banks with an early stage of capital distress and banks' rating downgrade or upgrade," he said.

Meanwhile, studies conducted by Member Central Banks on "Empirical Analysis of the Effects of Key External Shocks on Selected Macroeconomic Indicators", have been validated. This was done early last month.

The studies were commissioned by Governors of Central Banks on realization that external shocks external to an individual economy and beyond its control tended to have serious effects on most macroeconomic indicators of an individual country.

"Economies in the COMESA region has recently been vulnerable to external shocks, key among them being recession/slowdown in advanced/emerging economies, unfavourable terms of trade, decline in international commodity prices, and rise in international oil prices, among others," Mr. Zeidy said.

He expressed confidence that the studies will significantly contribute to inform policy discussions on appropriate policies to mitigate external shocks.

Among the countries represented in the workshops were: Burundi, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

	Meeting/Activity	Date	Venue
1.	Intergovernmental Committee-Secretariat	26 – 27 Nov 2019	Lusaka
2.	COMESA @25 Anniversary Celebrations	28 Nov 2019	Lusaka
3.	COMESA Council of Ministers	29 Nov 2019	Lusaka

