

## COMESA Kicks-off 25th Anniversary Festivities

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa has launched activities to celebrate its 25 anniversary since its transformation from the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in 1994.

In a press conference conducted, Monday 18 November 2018, at the Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia, the Secretary General Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe unveiled the Silver Jubilee programme, which will include COMESA policy organs meetings, panel discussions on the status of regional integration and sports activities.

The main celebrations will take place on Thursday 28th November 2019 with delegations from all Member States, who will be in Lusaka from next week for the policy organs meetings participating. The SG described the 25 milestone as worthy of celebrating given the achievements that regional integration has brought forth to member States.

"Every celebration must have a purpose," the Secretary General said. "For us in COMESA, we are celebrating the positive impacts that our programmes have had in the lives of the people in our region since the organization was established."

She highlighted some of COMESA's main achievements as the deepening of intra-COMESA trade from \$3.1



Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe briefing the media about the preparations to celebrate 25th COMESA anniversary

billion in 2000 when the Free Trade Area was established to USD 10.3 billion by the end of last year. Given the large market, she said membership to the regional bloc has steadily grown to 21 thus bringing together a third of Africa to one common market. Currently, COMESA spans northern Africa from Tunisia through eastern, central and southern Africa and the Indian ocean island States.

With the launch of a Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2000, she said, 16 countries representing 80% of the Member States are participating in duty-free-quota-free system. The elimination of non-tariff barriers that inhibit trade have also recorded a success with about 98% of all NTBs reported in the past ten years having been resolved.

She said: "COMESA with a population of 560 million people has a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of one trillion US dollars and its' economic growth in terms of GDP has steadily averaged 8% annually." Under the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area, most countries have signed the agreement while seven namely Burundi, Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa have ratified the instrument.

Moving forward, the Secretary General pointed out that the bloc will now use new technologies to advance regional integration.

"COMESA has prioritized the creation of digital trade facilitation instruments which are expected to

create new trade worth US\$12.3 billion annually once the tools are in place," he told the journalists. "A digital Certificate of Origin and a regional trade portal will soon be launched."

Other achievements cited is the phenomenal success of COMESA institutions which have grown to become continental such as the Trade and Development Bank (formerly the PTA Bank), the PTA Reinsurance Company (ZEP-Re) and the African Trade Insurance (ATI) among others.



Members of the Press in Lusaka at the Press Briefing

## COMESA Court Launches Revised Rules of Arbitration



Zambia Justice Minister, Hon. Given Lubinda launching the revised COMESA Court Arbitration Rules

The COMESA Court of Justice has launched revised Arbitration Rules aimed at guiding the business of the Court more efficiently in the current dispensation. The launch was conducted Friday, 15 November 2019 in Lusaka during the opening of the 22nd Meeting of COMESA Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General. Delegates attending the meeting commended the Court for its

consistent improvement of its processes and procedures thus making it a dispute resolution institution of choice for citizens of the regional trade bloc. The revised Rules were adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2018.

"The COMESA region looks up to the Court to maintain the Rule of Law thereby guaranteeing the existence of a conducive environment for doing

business," Zambia's Minister of Justice Hon. Given Lubinda said as he officially launched the Rules.

The meeting also noted that majority of the Court's Judges have undergone skills-building in arbitration and most of them are now qualified as Members and Fellows of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Among the key issues in the agenda

of the meeting of the Ministers and Attorney's General were: an Amendment to Article 28 of the Treaty to expand the jurisdiction of the Court to include Investor State Dispute Resolution, amendment of the Treaty to include Arabic as the fourth language of the Court and the renewal of tenure of the judges. In her statement, the COMESA Secretary General Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe commended the Ministers and Legal Officials for the sound legal frameworks that have enabled the organisation to record remarkable achievements.

Some of the major milestones recorded include the successful implementation of the COMESA

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**Ms. Kapwepwe**

Free Trade Area that has seen an increase in intra-regional trade and investment in the form of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). COMESA has also been a trendsetter in the development of Trade facilitation tools which include the Motor Vehicle Insurance known as COMESA Yellow Card and the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime among others.

"I am proud to say that for the past 25 years as COMESA, and 36 years of existence as the PTA, the bloc has made progress towards the achievement of the aims and objective of the Common Market," Ms Kapwepwe added.

The Judge President of the COMESA Court, Justice Lombe Chibesakunda said the Court's commitment to regional integration by upholding the rule of law in the enforcement of the COMESA Treaty will continue.

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## COMESA Exploring Sustainable Financing Mechanism, as Budget Committee Meets



COMESA Committee on administrative and budget affairs meeting in session

The 40th COMESA Meeting of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Matters took place in Lusaka last week, 13 – 15 November 2019. The focus of the meeting was on strengthening the organization's structures responsible for

implementation of regional programmes at the national level. Over 100 senior officials from Ministries that coordinate COMESA programmes in the 21 Member States attended the three days meeting. The committee reviewed the 2020 Budget and expenditure

submissions from COMESA Secretariat, its institutions and Organs that are funded by Member States including detailed work programmes. Its report will be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee scheduled for 25 – 27 November 2019.

Currently, COMESA is exploring sustainable financing mechanism, which will address some of the funding challenges such as low remittance levels of assessed contributions and gradually increase the proportion of Member States funding towards COMESA programmes. The initiative is led by the Ministers of Finance.

Established under Article 15 of the

COMESA Treaty, the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Matters provides technical advisory in internal controls and risk management oversight assurance services, budget policy, budgeting and its linkage with the Medium-Term Strategic Plan and decisions of COMESA Policy Organs.

Secretary General Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe addressed the delegates.

"As we mark 25th anniversary of COMEA later this month, we need to re-focus on strengthening both our internal and external systems in order to be more efficient in delivering on our mandate," she said during the official opening at COMESA Headquarters.

## Somalian Statistical Team Visits Secretariat



*The visiting Somali delegation with the Secretary General and COMESA Staff*

A combined team of the Somalian Directorate of National Statistics and the Central Bank of Somalia recently visited the Secretariat to learn more about the COMESA Statistics Strategy and give an update on the Somalian Statistical System.

The engagement of these key stakeholders of the Somalian statistical system by COMESA Secretariat is an important component of the process of Somalia's integration into the COMESA community.

Mr. Ahmed Hassan Ismail, Director responsible for Statistical Production in the Directorate of National

Statistics and Mr. Mahdi Abdikarim, Director of Economic Research and Statistics at the Central Bank of Somalia represented their respective institutions.

The team had an opportunity to meet the COMESA Secretary General, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, who reiterated COMESA's commitment to developing statistics that are essential to monitoring the COMESA market.

Besides the consultations with the COMESA Statistics Department, the team were also briefed on COMESA programs by the Divisions of Trade, Customs and Monetary Affairs, Legal and Institutional Affairs, Gender

and Social Affairs, Industry and Agriculture as well as the Strategic Planning Unit and the Governance, Peace and Security Unit.

COMESA Secretariat will assist Somalia build its national capacity to respond to regional statistical demands.

Statistics as elaborated in Article 40 of the COMESA Treaty are key to monitoring the developments of the COMESA Market. As a new Member state, the COMESA Treaty provisions expect Somalia to cooperate in the provision of statistics that are aggregated to provide a comprehensive regional picture.

# COMESA Media Awards 2020 - Call for Entries



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*File photo: Former chair of the COMESA Authority, President Hery Rajaonarimampianina of Madagascar (L) presenting a trophy to one of the winners of the 2016 COMESA Media Award Francis Lungu.*

**C**OMESA has announced the launch of its annual media awards for 2020. The Awards are open for published and broadcast works in the fields of Print, Radio, Television, and online media that focus on programmes and activities relating to regional economic integration in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The objective of the Awards is to promote reporting of COMESA regional integration activities and recognize journalists whose works contribute to this agenda. They are open to journalists from the 21 COMESA Member States, and eligible entries are

for works published/broadcast between January and December 2019.

Selection of the best works will be decided upon by an adjudication panel identified by COMESA Secretariat from Member States. Winners shall be announced, and prizes awarded during the COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit expected to take place in the first half of 2020 in Egypt. The first prize in each category carries a monetary award, a trophy and a certificate.

Since 2009, COMESA invites media practitioners from the region to submit published articles and audio/visual

productions relevant to the regional integration agenda for consideration for awards.

Details for entry are published in the COMESA website [www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int) and on the following links:

English: [https://www.comesa.int/media\\_awards2020/index.php/en/](https://www.comesa.int/media_awards2020/index.php/en/)

French: [https://www.comesa.int/media\\_awards2020/index.php/fr/](https://www.comesa.int/media_awards2020/index.php/fr/)

Arabic: [https://www.comesa.int/media\\_awards2020/index.php/ar/](https://www.comesa.int/media_awards2020/index.php/ar/)

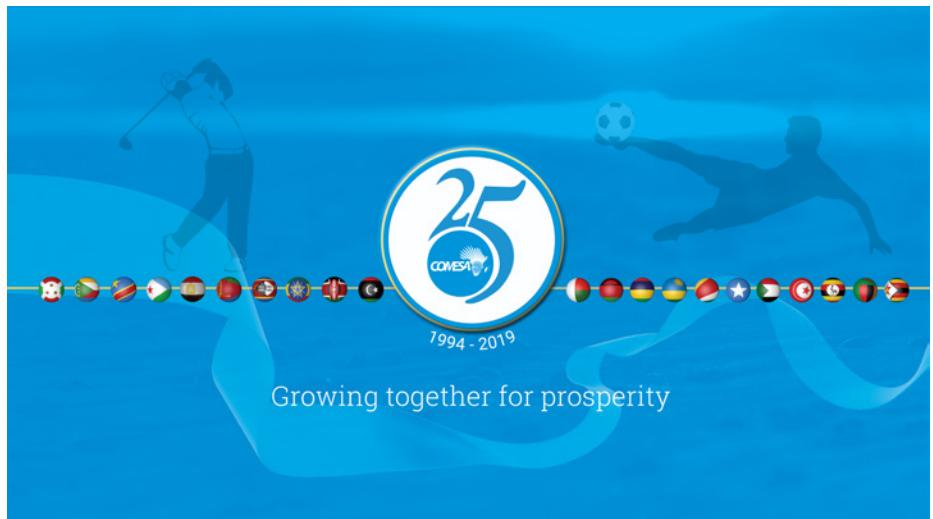
# Sports Activities to Set Pace for COMESA@25 Anniversary Festivities

At least two sports activities have been lined up during the COMESA Week leading to the commemoration of COMESA's 25 years of existence. These include the COMESA@25 Golf and football tournaments.

The golf tournament kicks off Friday, 22nd November 2019 at the Bonanza Golf course with football following the next day at the Olympic Youth Development Centre (OYDC) on Saturday, 23rd November 2019. Both venues are in Lusaka, Zambia, the permanent Seat of COMESA Secretariat.

For the golf tournament, 120 participants have confirmed participation. Zambia Minister of Justice Hon. Given Lubinda, representing the President, H.E. Edgar Lungu will officially start off the tournament.

The football tournament has also attracted participation of 13 Lusaka



based teams. The confirmed teams include staff teams from the following diplomatic missions: the European Union, France, DR Congo, Egypt and host COMESA. Others are from the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Energy Regulation Board. The Rural electrification Agency, Barclays Bank, Hilton Garden Hotel, the Lusaka Barca Academy coaches and the African International Stars will also participate.

Among key guests expected at the football kick-off are: the Zambian Minister of Sport, Youth and Child Development Hon. Emmanuel Mulenga, Barclays Banks Managing Director Mizinga Melu, Football Association of Zambia President, Andrew Kamanga and COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe.

COMESA DIARY			
	Meeting/Activity	Dates	Venue
1	40th Meeting of the Bureau of the COMESA Committee of Governors of Central Banks	21 Nov 2019	Lusaka, Zambia
2	COMESA Silver Jubilee Golf Tournament	22 Nov 2019	Lusaka
3	COMESA Silver Jubilee Football Tournament	23 Nov 2019	Lusaka
4	Retreat for COMESA Institutions	24 Nov 2019	Lusaka
5	50 Million African Women Speak Platform launch	25 Nov 2019	Kigali, Rwanda
6	40th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee-Secretariat	26 – 27 Nov 2019	Lusaka
7	COMESA 25 Years (Silver Jubilee) Celebrations	28 Nov 2019	Lusaka
8	40th Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers	29 Nov 2019	Lusaka