

## Kenya, Japan and Sweden Ambassadors accredited to COMESA



(L-R) Swedish Ambassador H.E Hultgard, Kenya's New High Commissioner H.E Karugu, Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe, Japan's Ambassador H.E Mizuuchi and Assistant Secretary General Dr Dev Haman.

New heads of diplomatic missions of Kenya, Japan and Sweden in Zambia have been accredited as Permanent and Special Representatives to COMESA.

Ms Flora Karugu, Kenya's New High Commissioner to Zambia, was accredited as Permanent Representative to COMESA as Kenya is a member state of the regional

body. Ambassadors Ryuta Mizuuchi of Japan and Anna-Maj Hultgard of Sweden were accredited as special representatives of their countries to COMESA respectively. The joint presentation took place at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka on Wednesday 29 January 2020.

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Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe received their letters of accreditation. She briefed them on the status of the regional integration programmes and progress which has seen COMESA establish the largest number of trade facilitation institutions and agencies in Africa.

These have specialized in trade finance, trade insurance, engagement with the private sector, competition policy, investment promotion, women in business, seed

In addition to the trade facilitation program, she said COMESA is also implementing the Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Programme, the 50 Million African Women Speak Programme, which is a digital networking and information platform for women and youth, climate change mitigation and resilience and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) among others.

Ambassador Karugu commended COMESA for the integration programmes which have

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provided Member States with opportunities for rapid development, expanded market for trade, free movement of people and offer solutions to challenges faced most countries.

“Kenya’s exports within COMESA is estimated at USD\$1.6million in 2018 while imports stood at USD\$1.1 million in the same year,” she said.

Japan’s Ambassador Mr Mizuuchi stressed the importance of establishing One Stop Border Posts in the region. He said such infrastructure brings about efficiency and timely processing of cross-border procedures. He urged for frequent interaction and exchange of information between COMESA and Japan Embassy in Lusaka office, too ensure that Japan investors are constantly informed on the opportunities

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and developments in the region.

He added that his government through the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on Africa’s Development (TICAD7) meeting agreed to focus on promoting business projects between COMESA and Japan. Sweden’s Ambassador Ms Anna-Maj Hultgard called for the involvement of more women into business and trade adding that gender equality contributes to growth in all countries, regardless of the level of development.

“Sweden has a feminist government, a feminist foreign policy and a feminist trade policy and we welcome the increased level of ambition for the African and COMESA integration agenda in recent year,”

Below: Secretary General Kapwepwe receiving the letters of Credence from the Ambassadors of Kenya, Japan and Sweden



Swedish Embassy officials



## Malawi and Zimbabwe Review Common List Products

The Governments of Malawi and Zimbabwe have reviewed and added products to their Common List which will be traded between the two countries using the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR). Each country is now expected to have the List gazetted by 28 February 2020.

This was agreed during a bilateral meeting between the two countries held in Mponela, Malawi in November 2019. COMESA Secretariat through the Cross-Border Trade Initiative (CBTI) was part of the meeting.

According to COMESA CBTI Team Leader Mr Tasara Muzorori, the countries will compile its import and export regulations applicable to products on the Common List and share this with the Cross-Border Traders Associations and the Secretariat as soon as possible.

The Secretariat is expected to publish the amended STR and conduct awareness events for both traders and border officials in the two countries.

“The STR is meant to empower the small-scale traders so this exercise was important, and the

meeting agreed to regularly review the Common List to keep it up to date as guided by the CBTAs,” Mr Muzorori added.

Director of Trade in Malawi’s Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism Mrs Christina Chatima who officially opened the meeting, commended both governments for bringing the parties together adding that the last review of the Common List was conducted in 2013.

“Small scale traders play an important role in supplying essential products across borders and providing incomes to the traders who in turn support their families. So, this review is crucial for the benefit of both traders and consumers,” Mrs Chatima said.

Head of the Zimbabwe Delegation Mr Mamvura Mabika, who is also Deputy Director in the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, commended the two governments for their commitment to facilitate trade by small-scale cross border traders. He said this will help in providing incomes and livelihoods to a sizeable section of populations of the two countries.

During the workshop, COMESA Secretariat staff



Tomato Traders at Kasumbalesa

made a presentation on the Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative, a 15 Million Euro project financed by the European Union under the European Union Development Fund (EDF 11). The programme is being implemented by COMESA in collaboration with the International Trade centre and the International organization for Migration.

The two-day meeting was attended by government officers, customs officials and representatives from the CBTAs from both countries.

## Construction of Eswatini Trade Hub reaches 70%



(L-R) Permanent Secretary Mr Siboniso Nkambule, the contractor Mr Magagula, the site manager Mr Nigel Dlamini with Assistant SG Programmes Amb Chelugut touring of the Hub

Construction of the Inlanganisela Yabomake Trade Hub in Manzini, of the Kingdom of Eswatini has reached an advanced stage with over 70% of works being completed. The Trade Hub and Private Sector Support Project will cost 1.2 million euros. The Trade Hub is expected to provide market space for over 500 Small and Medium

Entrepreneurs with a large focus on women in business. It will have sleeping quarters which will accommodate more than 200 traders, a trading floor as well as storage facilities. Part of the building has already been roofed and plastered while the ablution block is at roof level. Assistant Secretary General in Charge of programmes Ambassador Kipyego Chelugut

accompanied by the Coordinator of the COMESA Aid for Trade (COMAid) Hope Situmbeko and Mwape Kaunda, a senior finance officer toured the facility early this week. Prior to the tour, the Project Steering Committee meeting was held in Mbabane, on 29th January 2020.

The support provided to the Kingdom of Eswatini is part of over Three million Euros allocated through the COMESA Adjustment Facility with funding from the European Union.

Speaking during the official opening of the steering committee meeting, Ambassador Chelugut said effective implementation of economic programmes happens at national level or through joint actions of countries that link their production and trade processes for mutual benefits. This he said is done through an active private sector, supported by public institutions.

“I am pleased to note that, the support being provided through the Trade Hub and Private Sector Project, allows the COMESA to

## Botswana deposits Tripartite FTA Ratification instruments



H.E. High Commissioner Mathaku handing over the Ratification Instrument to SG Kapwepwe

Botswana has deposited the instruments of Ratification for the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA Agreement) bringing the number of countries that have done so to eight. The other countries that have ratified and deposited their instruments are Burundi, Kenya, Egypt, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, and Namibia.

The ceremony took place in Lusaka, at the COMESA Secretariat on 30th January 2020. Botswana High Commissioner to Zambia, Mr Alpheus Mathaku handed over the ratification instrument to the Chairperson of the Tripartite Taskforce (TTF) Ms Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, who is the Secretary General (SG) of COMESA. With the ratification of the tripartite agreement by the required number of States, Ambassador Mathaku said Botswana looks forward to tapping into the wider market of the EAC-COMESA-SADC region.

Commending Botswana, the SG said the TFTA offers a bigger market and it will enable countries to trade more duty free, a move that will increase the levels of intra-Africa trade.

"All Annexes to the Agreement have been finalized, 93.4 percent of the rules of origin have been agreed on, and the exchange of tariff offers is near complete," she said. "More critically, negotiations between SACU and EAC have now been concluded and this will pave way for the commencement of trade between the two bloc to which Botswana belongs."

She noted that the implementation of selected priority tripartite instruments and programmes, which do not require ratification is on-going. These include online mechanism for reporting, monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers, the SMS based NTBs reporting system and the transport facilitation and infrastructure programmes.

She reiterated the importance of the TFTA adding that its implementation will result into positive real income gains for partner states, an increase in net exports, an increase cross border flow of investments and creation of decent jobs for women, youth and men. She called on other countries to ratify the instruments to ease movement of goods, services and people in the region. For the TFTA to enter into force, fourteen ratifications are needed.

"We now remain with six countries for the Agreement to enter into force," Madam Kapwepwe stated.

The TFTA was launched in June 2015 with the aim of bringing together, in one common market, countries in the three regional economic blocs namely the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Tripartite FTA brings together a population of 700 million people with an estimated Gross Domestic product of well over US\$1.4 trillion.

## ... Eswatini Trade Hub reaches 70%

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support both private and public sector for the achievement of tangible results that have a direct impact on the economy," Cheluget added.

Under Secretary and chair of the project steering committee in the Kingdom of Eswatini Mr Siboniso Nkambule said the project will enhance performance of the leather value chain, improve quality infrastructure services and capacities for investment promotion and provide support to the Project Implementation Unit.

Activities to be undertaken will address capacity and other constraints to make the country's exports competitive in regional and international markets. They also aim at improving the business and investment climate to enable Eswatini achieve its strategic policy objectives.

The project has a large focus on supporting women in business in line with the COMESA programme in gender that aim at promoting the role of women and youth. It also compliments the 50 Women Speak programme that has been rolled out in the country.

It is also in line with COMESA's Industrialization Strategy and Policy on attainment of sustainable growth and development of the member States by promoting balanced and harmonious production and marketing structures.

The support has been structured with a vision to realize the benefits of a larger Market at the COMESA level as well as in the context of the Tripartite Agreement and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

**"I am pleased to note that, the support being provided through the Trade Hub and Private Sector Project, allows the COMESA to support both private and public sector for the achievement of tangible results that have a direct impact on the economy," Cheluget added.**

COMESA Diary		
Meeting/Activity	Dates	Venue
AU/ COMESA Climate Change Week	9-13 March	Uganda