



COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe (L) and H.E. President Emmerson Mnangagwa

Support to Zimbabwe in Focus as President Mnangagwa hosts Secretary General

COMESA has with the funding from the European Union (EU) supported Member States in the implementation of their regional integration programmes through the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF).

As at April 2019, over € 98.9 million had been approved as adjustment support to 16 Member States. Zimbabwe is one of the key beneficiaries of the funds with a total of € 5,129,938 million already approved to support economic reform programmes.

The funds have been used to support development of the Industrial Development Policy and the National Trade Policy. This is in addition to building the capacities of the leather and cotton value chains to help the small-scale entrepreneurs maximize the benefits of regional integration.

On Thursday last week, Zimbabwe President H.E Emmerson Mnangagwa hosted a COMESA delegation led by Secretary General Chileshe

Kapwepwe and expressed his appreciation for the support his country has been receiving from the regional body.

"Zimbabwe is committed to regional integration and the efforts COMESA is making to help spur economic integration and industrialization. As a founding member of COMESA, Zimbabwe shall ensure that the country meets all its obligations," the President said.

Further, he said Zimbabwe will ratify the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) as well as the COMESA Social Charter. He urged COMESA Secretariat to conduct sensitization workshops in Member States to raise their awareness on the Social Charter and the ratification process of the TFTA.

The Secretary General assured the President, of COMESA support to the national industrialization process and the creation of diverse investment portfolios in line with the country's theme; 'Zimbabwe is Open for

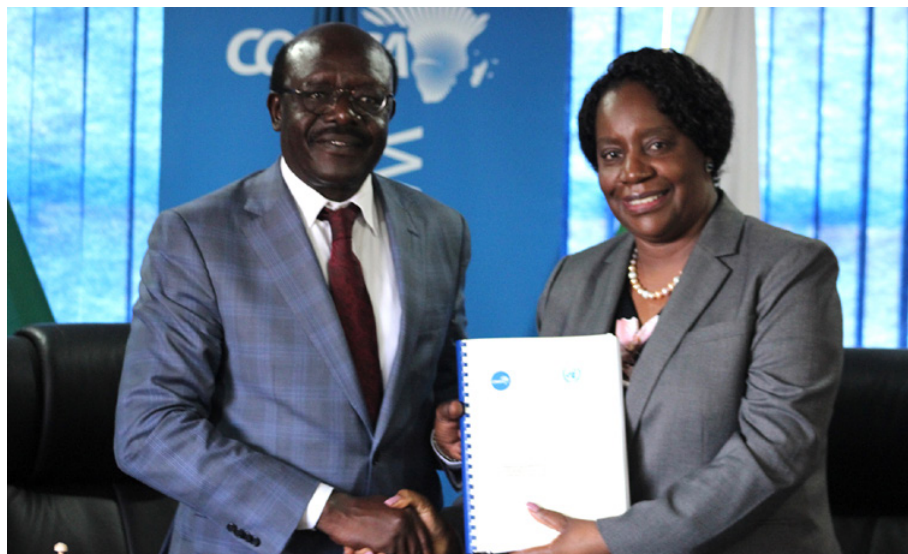
Investments.'

She commended the country for ratifying the African Free Trade Area and expressed confidence that Zimbabwe will soon ratify the TFTA as it stands to benefit from these trade regimes. Equally, she commended the President for initiating the joint industrial corporation between Zimbabwe and Zambia.

President Mnangagwa congratulated Ms. Kapwepwe on her appointment as the first female Secretary General of COMESA and promised his administration's support to ensure that she fulfills her mandate. This was the SG's first visit to Zimbabwe since she took office in August last year.

The COMESA team also held discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Lt. Gen. (Rtd.) Dr. Sibusiso Moyo. The team later toured the Chitungwiza Garment factory which is being implemented with support from the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF).

COMESA, UNCTAD Launch Deal to Establish Regional Trade Information Portals



UNCTAD Secretary General Dr Mukhisa Kituyi (L) and COMESA SG launch Co-delegation Agreement

COMESA and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have launched a Co-delegation Agreement to implement trade facilitation projects in the region.

UNCTAD Secretary General Dr Mukhisa Kituyi and his COMESA counterpart Chileshe Kapwepwe launched the Agreement at the COMESA Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, Friday 24 May 2019.

Under the Agreement, COMESA has delegated to UNCTAD, the design and development of national and regional Trade Information Portals (TIPs) and the Customs Automation Regional Centre (CARC).

The two activities will cost three million Euros. They will be funded from an 85 million Euros kitty provided by the European Union to COMESA under the 11th European Development Fund Trade Facilitation Programme. Out of this amount, 68 million Euros will be used to implement trade facilitation and small-scale cross border trade.

The TIPs will facilitate easy access to essential trade information in one platform. CARC will support technical and functional training on the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World Platform thereby improving skills to develop and use applications. This is in addition to developing the latest ASYCUDA Applications to enhance trade facilitation systems at the national,

regional and continental levels.

COMESA Secretary General said the co-delegation was informed by UNCTAD's experience and expertise in promoting trade facilitation, its capacity in modernizing Customs Administrations, and ASYCUDA being its intellectual property.

"I am confident that UNCTAD will deliver the expected outcomes as enshrined in the Co-delegation Agreement," she said.

In his address Dr. Kituyi said the engine of regional integration and the deepening integration through trade is largely dependent on the success

of COMESA as the regional organization with the largest Member States and a very substantial component of the African economy.

"You are the core and not only of the Tripartite (Tree Trade Area) but at the very base of how to develop the architecture and practicalities of Africa's Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)," he said.

"I am confident that UNCTAD will deliver the expected outcomes as enshrined in the Co-delegation Agreement," she said

"In no way are we going to downplay the centrality facilitated in trade, not only as a way of making Africa competitive but also overcoming the challenges particularly of landlocked countries on the continent which faces the daunting task in competitively trading with the rest of the world."

He said UNCTAD, is a proud partner of COMESA and its Member States, having carried out substantial work together in creation and strengthening of national trade facilitation committees.

"We offer from our expertise and our experience backstopping to the trade facilitation subcommittee of COMESA, and I would like to share with the Secretary General our willingness and availability [as UNCTAD] to build on the co-delegation agreement other shared responsibilities," Dr. Kituyi said.





ECCAS Benchmarks COMESA in Trade Facilitation



ECCAS team at an information resource desk at the COMESA Secretariat

The Economic Commission of Central African States (ECCAS) mounted a mission to COMESA to learn about its trade facilitation programmes which have been benchmarked widely in the African continent.

Fifteen officials comprising of economists, customs, trade, agriculture, legal and programme experts arrived in COMESA, Tuesday May 21 and spent four days with their COMESA counterparts learning and exchanging best practices. The delegation had representatives of selected Member States of ECCAS.

The study visit aimed at strengthening institutional capacities and develop the competencies of ECCAS and its national institutions to promote trade facilitation mechanisms through a sharing of experiences on best practices developed in the COMESA and EAC.

Head of the ECCAS delegation Mr Pascal Mbina said the study visit to COMESA would help his organization in developing their trade facilitation programme and the mechanisms of addressing non-tariff barriers to regional trade.

"This visit will help us to advocate to our Members States the need to carry out

reforms to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers," Mr Mbina said.

Assistant Secretary General of COMESA Dr Kipyego Cheluget, who received the delegation said COMESA's niche was trade and investment and had therefore designed trade facilitation programme that has been benchmarked across the African continent.

"For example, the COMESA Yellow Card, a single insurance cover for motorists traversing across Member States is a runaway success whose contribution to regional trade is big," Dr Cheluget said.

ECCAS hopes that its interaction with COMESA will improve the level of competencies of its experts in promoting a regional mechanism which makes it possible to reduce delays, better management of transit operations and the smooth flow of intra-regional trade in Central Africa.

The delegation later toured the One Stop Border Post at Chirundu on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe to see how it functions. The establishment of the border post is one of the successful COMESA trade facilitation projects. It has reduced the transit time for trucks from nine days to one.

Ethiopian has Embraced COMESA Seed Programme to Transform Agriculture

Ethiopia is finalizing the National Seed Policy and Strategy to transform agriculture in Ethiopia. So far, the government is working on the use of mechanization and biotechnology as part of the transformation of the sector and has engaged the youth and promoted irrigation to increase crop productivity.

This is according to Dr. Eyasu Abrha, Special Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture in Ethiopia, when he received in his office in Addis Ababa, a COMESA delegation led by the Director of Agriculture and Industry Mr. Thierry Mutombo Kalonji.

He said Ethiopia was a centre of origin of 36 plant species and so has rich crop biodiversity and was therefore keen on moving forward the COMESA Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP) funded by USAID.

The USAID's capacity building program, Africa Lead, is providing support at national level interventions that includes identification through key priority areas. Through such interventions, country-visits will be conducted in July and August 2019 in five selected COMESA Member States including Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Zambia.

In his remarks, Mr. Kalonji noted that with a harmonized seed market, the private seed sector can move around in the region where variety release has been done and phytosanitary and quarantine measures for seed import and export are in place.

The COMESA delegation, which comprised of COMSHIP Regional Coordinator, Dr John Mukuka and USAID Programme Coordinator in COMESA, Mr. Walter Talma met Ethiopian Seed Growers' and Processors Association team. The association represents the private sector in Ethiopia which contribute up to 40% of the maize seed in the country.

The association expressed the need for capacity support to the government in seed certification inspections, as currently there is critical shortage of maize seed in the country.

During the visit, the COMESA team was scheduled to meet with State Minister, in the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the parliamentary committee on agriculture to sensitize them on the progress of COMSHIP in Ethiopia.

New Measures in Malawi Elections Win Praise



Voters casting their votes at the Civic Centre Polling station in Lilongwe

The COMESA Election Observer Mission to the just ended Tripartite elections in Malawi has noted several best practices that Member States can learn from, as a way of strengthening democracy in the region.

Among them was the use of External Auditors to verify the results transmitted from various polling centers before they are tallied and endorsed by the Malawi Electoral Commission. This enhanced transparency and accountability on tabulation of results.

Other notables were the adoption of the biometric voter registration which helped enhance the quality of the voter register, the use of Short Messaging Services (SMS) to verify voter registration as well as the identification of the polling centers.

This system helped in voter verification and eased identification of polling centers thus ensuring an easy and smooth voting process.

Mission Leader Ms. Hope Kivengere commended

the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) for implementing these measures as they made the 2019 elections different from the previous ones.

According to the Preliminary Statement issued by the COMESA Observers in Lilongwe, the establishment of the National Elections Consultative Forum promoted consensus among electoral stakeholders. This is critical in the long run in building trust between MEC and the electoral stakeholders. In addition, the introduction of Multi-Party Liaison Committees were also important in conflict resolution.

COMESA had deployed a short-term election observer mission to the Tripartite General Elections in Malawi which were held on 21 May 2019. The observers comprised representatives from Member States and Secretariat staff.

COMESA will issue a comprehensive report of their findings within three months after the official announcement of the results has been done by the MEC.



CMI Director Mr Ibrahim Zeidy

Eight Member States Trained in Credit Risk Management

The COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) has trained representatives from eight Central Banks in Credit Risk Management. The training is expected to help the banks have enhanced skills to deal with Credit Risk which contributes to bank failures in the region.

The Training titled 'On-Site and Off-Site Review of Credit Risk with Special Emphasis on International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS 9)' was motivated by the fact that most bank failures are related to poor credit risk management frameworks and practices.

CMI Director Mr Ibrahim Zeidy said the training helped the banks in understanding the exposure of a financial institution to default risk and emphasized the importance of using the new internationally recognized approaches such as IFRS 9 and the Internal Capital Adequacy Assessment Process (ICAAP).

The training helped equip participants with practical hands on knowledge on evaluation of banks' credit risk management, enhanced the implementation of the COMESA Financial System Development and Stability Plan and enabled the delegates to share knowledge and experience on credit risk management in Member countries.

The participants were drawn from Central Banks in Burundi, Egypt, Eswatini, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.



COMESA Trains country official in Cross-Border Trade Data Collection



Training of Trainers Workshop for Small Scale Cross-Border Trade (SSCBT) Data Collection

COMESA Secretariat through the Statistics Unit and in partnership with the Zambia Central Statistics Office (CSO) has trained officials from five countries that are implementing Small-Scale Cross Border Trade facilitation programme.

This is part of a regional programme supported by the European Development Fund (EDF-11) Cross Border Trade Initiative (CBTI) targeting border points in the five countries.

They include Mwami/Mchinji between Zambia and Malawi; Kasumbalesa between Zambia and DRC; Chirundu between Zambia and

Zimbabwe; Tunduma/Nakonde between Zambia and Tanzania; and Moyale between Kenya and Ethiopia.

The Training of Trainer's Workshop for Small-Scale Cross Border Trade (SSCBT) Data Collection was conducted from 6 – 10 May 2019 in Kafue district, Zambia with delegates from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe participating.

The training which covered data collection and border profiling was also aimed at equipping the officers with the skills to train SSCBT data collection enumerators and supervisors at their

respective border points.

The COMESA CBTI program aims at increasing formal small-scale cross-border trade flows in the COMESA-EAC-SADC region. It has five result areas of which Result Area 4 specifically deals with collection, compilation, harmonization and dissemination of gender disaggregated statistical data on small-scale cross-border trade.

The programme also aims at increasing evidence-based knowledge on the topic and inform better trade policy-making processes at both national and regional levels.

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