

COMESA, UNV Revives Partnership on Youth Employment



COMESA SG Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe and UNV Regional Manager for Eastern and Southern African Region Mr. Njoya Tikum

The United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV) and COMESA Secretariat have revived the partnership to operationalize the Youth Internship and Volunteer Project. This follows a meeting between the UNV Regional Manager for East and Southern African Region Mr. Njoya Tikum and COMESA Secretary General Ms. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe. The meeting took place on 10 March 2020 at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka.

The Project will be piloted in Comoros, Egypt, Ethiopia and Zambia. Its objectives is to increasing employment opportunities for young graduates, their employability and raising the number of young women in employment. It is also intended to improve responsive training to match industry needs and increase productivity and regional trade.

The project was approved by the COMESA Council of Ministers in 2018. It is expected to

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institutionalize the volunteer programme in the participating Member States, establish a national internship programme mechanism that will determine recruitment processes, contract management, codes of conduct and other policy and regulatory issues.

It will also support partnership building with relevant organizations, particularly the private sector and small and medium enterprises for the placement of volunteers and interns in places of work. This is in addition to awareness creation and mobilization of the youth on the volunteer and internship programme.

Under the partnership, COMESA Secretariat will manage and coordinate the implementation of the project while the UNV Programme will provide technical support including the design of methodologies and tools needed of the programme at both regional and country level.

"As COMESA we are very much ready to start the process to ensure operationalization of the project because youth and women in the Member States are important to our agenda," the SG assured the UNV team. "We are willing to learn from you on what has been achieved in other RECs where similar projects are already running."

On its part, the UNV will provide support during the start-up phase. This will include partnership identification and building, joint resource mobilization efforts and development of standard operating procedures. After three years of implementation, the project is expected to be scaled up to other

The UNV delegation included Policy Advisor Mr. Tapiwa Kamuruko and Ms Fridah Daka the UN Volunteers Country Coordinator in Zambia.

Rebooting Zimbabwe's Textile Industry

Chitungwiza Cluster Targets \$500,000 Turn-over by end of 2020



COMAid Coordinator Hope Situmbeko engages with Chitungwiza Textile Cluster workers in Harare during a tour of clusters in Zimbabwe

Between 2000 and 2010, Zimbabwe's textile and garment production went through a rough stretch the led to closure of companies and subsequent job losses. Cheap imports flooded the market crippling the once flourishing sector as it could no longer compete.

The scenario has started changing. The sector is awakening and becoming one of the most promising in the country, if what is happening at Chitungwiza south of Harare is anything to go by. Here, a garment and textile cluster is in full steam churning out clothing that finds their way to

shelves of upmarket fashion houses in the region and learning institutions.

In 2018, the Chitungwiza Textiles Cluster only produced clothing for Edgars Fashion outlet in Zimbabwe, where it got a minimal amount of \$4000 per production order. The Cluster has since expanded to schools in the manufacture of uniforms, jerseys and track suits. In January 2020, the cluster got a lucky break with numerous orders for productions. Among them, over 3,000 track suits for various high schools in and outside Harare and these were delivered in late February 2020.

The Cluster also produced and supplied finished clothes to various clothing outlets in the country worth over USD 25,000. It is now projecting to increase the supply to over USD 500,000. Presently, the Cluster is producing over 200 garments in a day with a cash flow sufficient to manage its expenses without support from the project finance.

The revival of the facility came though the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF), Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) which is funded by the European Union. In the first phase



of the funds disbursement, Zimbabwe got €4.2 million through a Grant Agreement signed in September 2014 between the Government and COMESA.

To ensure sustainability and quality products, COMESA plans to introduce exchange programmes for clusters in Zimbabwe and the region to share experiences and good practices. This will encompass all the production value chains.

During a visit to the Cluster on 28th February 2020, a COMESA team led by Ms. Hope Situmbeko, the RISM Coordinator, it was noted that governance structures at the Cluster required strengthening to support this rapidly growing business.

"The Cluster should develop a management and governance system that ensure that audits are



clean, for example, by use of a corporate audit system," Ms Situmbeko said. "This includes the establishment of structures that allow for a cross section of people to be part of the management team including the youth, women and men with various management and technical skills."

To showcase some of the outcomes of the project implementation in Zimbabwe, the Project Implementation Unit based at the COMESA Clearing House in Harare, is planning to host an Indaba (expo) which shall bring together all the stakeholders that have been supported under the COMESA Adjustment Facility CAF/RISM funding.

Burundi gets €2.5m Equipment to Raise Quality Standards



Burundi Bureau of Standards (BBN) officials inspect the new equipment at their offices in Bujumbura

The Burundi National Bureau of Standards (BBN) has received equipment worth €2.5 million to support its operations and improve regional market access for Burundi products.

The equipment, which arrived in Bujumbura on 1st March 2020, includes laboratory equipment for building materials, metrology, electrical and plastic, chemistry, microbiology and field vehicles. Under the same package, staff that will use the equipment have been trained.

The equipment was provided through financial support of the European Union under the COMESA Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM). The objective is to support the regional integration process in Burundi by strengthening the operational capacities of the BBN.

Strengthening the capacities of the BBN is motivated by the country's concern to reduce the deficit in its trade balance by improving its foreign trade.

Once installed the equipment will enable the country to certify the standards of goods and services produced in the country. This will result in improved products which meets regional standards as well as other markets which acknowledge the COMESA standards. They will also help to improve market surveillance through verification of legal metrology and calibration of industrial metrology as well as on-site inspection. A Global Positioning System (GPS) for evaluating and verifying the global positioning of the capacities of processing units is also part of the package.

Strengthening the capacities of the BBN is motivated by the country's concern to reduce the deficit in its trade balance by improving its foreign trade. Already, products from niche markets to be traded in regional markets are being identified. Going forward, the BBN will be well placed to grant certificates of conformity and allow Burundi products to easily cross borders and become competitive in the regional market and beyond.

Youth Leadership Summit Launched in Zambia



Zambia Youth in Governance advocate, Mr. Emmanuel Chisalu addressing the Youth Summit

COMESA launched the first youth leadership summit dubbed "Be Relevant Leadership Youth Summit", in Lusaka, on 12 March 2020 as part of the youth day celebrations. The Summit focused on enhancing youth participation in the attainment of peace, unity and security with an eye on the 2021 General Elections in Zambia.

The Youth Summit is one of the activities under the COMESA – African Union- African Governance Architecture (AU-AGA) joint project on youth engagement in democratic governance and socio-economic development in Africa. The project is supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency.

Zambia Vice President, Mrs. Inonge Wina who was represented by Home Affairs Minister Steven

Kapyongo officially launched the Summit. She welcomed the initiative of bringing together young men and women to participate in leadership and especially in Zambia's electoral processes.

"We all need to ensure that peace, security and stability are maintained before, during and after elections. And the youth have a big role to play, especially you, young men and women who are leading other youth associations and networks," she said.

One of the key objectives of this initiative is to provide young people with a platform through which they can contribute their creative and innovative ideas to improve national and continental democratic governance and socio-economic development.

It is expected that the Summit will expand from being a national youth event to a regional gathering under the auspices of COMESA, where young people from across the 21 Member States will come together to contribute in shaping the region's destiny.

Speaking at the same event, COMESA Assistant Secretary General in Charge of Programmes Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget underscored the need for better strategies to engage and empower the young people.

He said: "Empowering the youth is not a choice but a must as they represent a demographic asset which can also become a demographic bomb if governments and the private sector do not invest more in them."

In 2015, COMESA Council of Ministers endorsed the COMESA Youth Program whose implementation is ongoing. It includes engaging the private sector, civil society organizations and other organizations on possible partnership for the implementation of the Program.

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-Amb. Dr Kipyego Cheluget



Delegates during the launch of the Be Relevant Leadership Summit in Lusaka



Madagascar Law Enforcement Agencies Equipped to Fight Money Laundering



Madagascar Law Enforcement Agencies in training

COMESA Maritime Security (MASE) programme has trained 54 law enforcement personnel to strengthen the country's and the regional capacity to fight money laundering and terrorism financing. They include magistrates, prosecutors, police/gendarmerie, officials from financial intelligence unit, anti-corruption commission, central intelligence services, among others.

The latest capacity building event was a two-day workshop that took place on 4th and 5th March 2020 in Antananarivo, in response to a request from Madagascar authorities. The Director General of Madagascar Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU- SAMIFIN), Mr Boto Tsara Dia Lamina opened the workshop.

At the same time, a Numeric Platform that was developed by the COMESA MASE programme was handed over to Mr Lamina for use by stakeholders in the country.

Mr. Lamina thanked COMESA for the support, which he said will facilitate information sharing thus reinforcing the efforts to crack down on transnational organized crimes such as money laundering and other related illicit financial flows crime.

COMESA has also supported Madagascar to attain full membership of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG).

During the workshop, participants were taken through various investigative techniques including surveillance, undercover operations, wiretapping and accessing computer systems.

The COMESA Component of the MASE programme, has the overall objectives of strengthening the capacity against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. It is customised to fit the specific needs of the respective countries in view that the countries are at different stages of the development of their Anti-Money Laundering (AML) regimes.

COMESA is one of four regional bodies implementing the EU funded Regional Maritime Security Programme, each of which is implementing a component based on its comparative advantage.

MASE Coordinator for COMESA, Ms. Dalitso Bonongwe encouraged the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to work together and put in place formal means of cooperation, such as Memoranda of Understanding over and above the informal settings, with Financial Intelligence Units. "In the fight against money laundering, the

interventions of LEAs need to be effective in order to deter criminals from perpetrating such crimes," she said adding that ineffective interventions can provide a conducive environment for prospective criminals.

"As LEAs, think beyond the traditional offences of money laundering and illicit financial flows and start to follow the dirty money and recover all the associated "dirty" assets," Ms Bonongwe said. Respective countries are expected to work with COMESA to identify the specific AML capacity building needs that can be supported by the Programme.

The task of law enforcement agencies in the fight against money laundering includes investigations, prosecutions and asset recovery. LEAs are tasked to use the intelligence from FIUs to bring criminals to book. Hence, if LEAs lack the expertise to investigate and prosecute the criminals, then all invested efforts by other stakeholders will be in vain.

COMESA is one of four regional bodies implementing the EU funded Regional Maritime Security Programme, each of which is implementing a component based on its comparative advantage. The others are the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); the Indian Ocean Community (IOC) and the East African Community (EAC).

FEMCOM Advocates for Women Empowerment



FEMCOM CEO Ruth Negash (middle) with organizers of the Malawi 2020 International Women's Day Celebrations in Machinga area of Malawi

The Federation of National Association of Women in Business (FEMCOM) used this year's International Women's Day to advocate for women empowerment and equal opportunity in the job market through skills upgrading for girls.

Speaking at the commemoration of the Day at Machinga, south of Malawi Capital, Lilongwe, Ms. Ruth Negash, FEMCOM Chief Executive officer called on all stakeholders to intensify efforts towards the education of the girl child.

"Education will create a pool from which engineers, scientists, medical doctors, entrepreneurs will be drawn," she said. "Given the

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-Ms. Ruth Negash
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opportunity, this world requires well-educated women and girls to overcome modern challenges by bringing innovations and creativity to the market."

The event was anchored under the theme: "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" and was attended by representatives of development partners including UN Women, UNICEF, UNDP, Christian Aid, GIZ, Norwegian Embassy and FEMCOM.

Ms. Negash urged families and cultural leaders to respect the rights of the girl child and deplored early marriages that deny girls the opportunities to become big players in the economic development of their nation and the region at large.

Malawi FEMCOM Chapter Chairperson Mrs. Barbra Banda said major disparities still exist in women's participation in the various fields including formal and informal economy, politics and decision-making positions.

"While we are celebrating, for instance, that we have the first female speaker (in Malawi), only

45 Members of Parliament are women out of a total 193. That means we are still far away from achieving the 50:50," Ms. Banda said.

She added that despite breaking ground in having women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors, the pace at which this transformation was going would take many years to achieve gender parity.

In her address, Malawi Minister of Gender, Hon. Mary Navicha encouraged women to work harder to become economically independent and educate their daughters on equal basis as boys and protect them from marrying at a young age.

"Underage marriage to girls as young as 10 years old is happening due to lack of resources to send them to school. Also, young girls need to be taught skills so they can become employable in the job market," she said.

During the event, FEMCOM Malawi chapter sensitized the public on gender-based violence and how women and girls can advocate and empower each other to fight harmful traditional practices.



The COMESA Diary

19 Mar 2020	Technical Working Group Meeting for the EDF Trade Facilitation Programme Organised by: EDF Programme Venue: COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka
23 - 24 Mar 2020	48th Meeting of the Management Committee of the Yellow Card scheme Organised by: Yellow Card/ RCTG Venue: Lusaka, Zambia
25 - 26 Mar 2020	National Launch of the 50 Million African Women-Speak Platform – Zimbabwe Organised by: COMESA/ Govt of Zimbabwe Venue: Harare, Zimbabwe
30-31 Mar 2020	Meeting of Project Implementation Units, Ministries and Communication experts to harmonize programme for 2020 Organised by: Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project -GLTFP Venue: Chisamba, Zambia
6-8 April 2020	COMESA Business Council (CBC) Annual Meetings Organised by: CBC Venue: Lusaka
7-8 April 2020	National Launch of the 50 Million African Women-Speak Platform – Ethiopia Organised by: COMESA/ Govt of Ethiopia Venue: Addis Ababa
23-24 April 2020	7th Meeting of the Technical Working Group of the RCTG Carnet Organised by: Yellow Card/ RCTG Venue: Lusaka
29-30 April 2020	5th Meeting of the IT Committee on the Digital Yellow Card Organised by: Yellow Card/ RCTG Venue: Lusaka

NB: Changes to the events likely owing to COVID 19 mitigation measures

