

## Fresh Impetus to Implement COMESA Protocols on Free Movement

1



The COMESA Protocols on free movement have over the years faced slow pace of implementation, with many decisions of the Council of the Ministers calling on Member States to speed up ratification.

The protocols are on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visa Requirements (commonly known as the visa protocol) and on the Free Movement of Persons, Services, Labour and the Right of Establishment and Residence.

The Visa Protocol has existed since 1984 but has not yet achieved full implementation in the region while the Free Movement Protocol was adopted in 2001 with only four countries; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Zimbabwe having implemented its fundamental principles.

Concerned at the slow pace of implementation, the COMESA Council of Ministers have made several decisions to spur action on this front. This led to the creation of two COMESA Task Forces on the implementation of the legal instruments, the COMESA Council of Ministers

Decisions and capacity building on the COMESA programme on free movement protocol.

The teams had their latest meeting in Lusaka, Zambia from 30 May - 01 June 2022 funded by the European Union under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), through the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP).

Its objective was to discuss, a revised draft strategy, a roadmap/action plan and the draft capacity building programme for implementing the COMESA legal instruments and the decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to the free movement of persons in the region.

Implementation of the protocols is critical in

**“Restricting regular and orderly migration have negative economic consequences particularly in the areas of tourism, trade and general economic growth,” Mr Jason Theede**

deepening COMESA's regional integration for economic development under the Free Trade Area. This is in respect to trade in goods and services, in the context of the COMESA Trade in Services Protocol which requires movement of labour, among others, as a factor of production and service providers.

Once validated, the draft strategy and roadmap/ action plan will be presented to the COMESA Ministers responsible for immigration for adoption and subsequent implementation.

Addressing the delegates, the COMESA Assistant Secretary General - Administration and Finance, Dr Dev Haman, urged Member States to put in place policies to domesticate the principles of free movement.

He noted: “It is detrimental to the regional bloc to continuously develop new policies at the expense of existing and unimplemented ones hence the need for Member States to speed up the ratification process for the Visa Protocol to enter into force.”

to page 5

# Trade Policy Analysis Training Targeting Non-Free Trade Area States

Five COMESA Member States; D R Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia and Somalia are at various levels of fully joining the COMESA FTA



Delegates participating in the TRIST training in Lusaka

A weeklong trade policy analysis training for five COMESA Member States that are not fully participating in the Free Trade Area (FTA) was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia 30 May – 3 June 2022.

The training also known as the Tariff Reform Impact Simulation Tool (TRIST) was intended to build the capacity of the participants to undertake partial equilibrium analyses of trade and revenue implications of joining the COMESA FTA.

Through the training, participants will be able to apply TRIST skills to analyse trade and revenue implications of other trade policies and reforms including understanding of the implication of joining the Tripartite Free Trade Area and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

They were also trained to produce draft country reports on revenue and economic impacts of tariff liberalisation in selected non-full FTA participating Member States for which data would be available. Overall, it provided a platform for engagement with Member States while exploring strategies for addressing challenges towards joining the

COMESA FTA.

COMESA launched the FTA in 2000 and so far, it has recorded an increase in intra-regional trade from US\$1.5 billion to US\$9.7 billion in 2020. This accounts for 10.7% of the region's total exports. These trade statistics do not include small-scale cross-border trade.

As a way of encouraging the non-FTA countries to join, the 42nd Council of Ministers Meeting held in November 2021 directed the Secretariat to engage them with a view of establishing and resolving what could be hindering their participation. Hence, the TRIST training was one way to help these Member States to join the FTA.

Currently, 16 out of 21 COMESA Member States are participating. These are Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tunisia, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Other COMESA Member States; Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia and Somalia are at various levels of joining the COMESA FTA.

Speaking during the official opening of the

training, Director of Infrastructure Mr Jean Baptiste Mutabazi said, COMESA Secretariat will continue organising capacity building activities in trade and regional integration to address the existing knowledge gaps. This is expected to allay fears in some Member States regarding the issue of revenue and economic implications of the FTA.

"We hope that such trainings will translate into deeper regional integration policy decisions," said Mr Mutabazi who was representing the Assistant Secretary General for Programmes.

The training was supported by the European Union under the TradeCom II Capacity Building Project.





COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe (L) and the AfDB President Dr Akinwumi Adesina at the AfDB Annual meetings in Ghana

## Two COMESA Institutions Feted at the AfDB Annual Convention

### As COMESA SG hold roundtable with heads of AfDB, ACFTA, and RECs

The Trade and Development Bank and the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATIA) have been recognized for excellence in development financing and insurance services. The two received the awards on the side-lines of the 57th Annual meeting of the African Development Bank and the 48th Annual meeting of the African Development Fund.

The TDB received two awards, namely Sustainable Bank of the year and Development Finance Institution of the Year, while ATIA through the Luanda Bita Water Supply Project won the Infrastructure Deal of the Year. The was during the 16th edition of the African Banker Awards Gala Accra, Ghana on 23 – 27 May 2022 side event.

The AfDB is one of COMESA's development partners and currently provides funding to the regional bloc under Phase V of the Statistics Capacity Building Programme, Phase II of the Tripartite Capacity Building Programme, the pharmaceuticals programme and most recently support for the Market Analysis (Pre-Investment Study) on a Regional Cloud Ecosystem – Phase I.

COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe participated as special guest to the 2022 AfDB Annual Meetings. She also took part in a roundtable meeting with the President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the African Union Commission, Heads of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat and Development Finance Institutions. The discussions centred on mobilizing resources for regional integration and development in Africa.

The leaders reviewed and discussed the Bank's latest resource mobilisation initiatives aimed at promoting investment in Africa. Ms Kapwepwe stressed the importance of capacity building, harmonization as well as the digitalization of trade such as e-commerce, e-logistics and e-legislation.

The meetings also brought together Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Finance, Central Bank Governors, regional and continental leaders. Further, the Meetings served as a precursor to the UN Climate Change Conference, COP 27 scheduled in November 2022 in Egypt. Anchored under the theme "Achieving Climate Resilience and a Just

Energy Transition for Africa," the meeting focused on the impact of climate change on Africa and the need for a just energy transition on the continent.

Meanwhile, the Secretary General paid a courtesy call on the AfCFTA Secretary General Mr Wamkele Mene at the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra on 26th May 2022. This was the Secretary General's first visit to the AfCFTA Secretariat (Africa Trade House). The two leaders discussed among other items, the need for continuous collaboration in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.

The SG commended the AfCFTA on the progress made so far in the negotiations under Trade in Services.

Mr Wamkele appreciated COMESA's support to the AfCFTA indicating that the AfCFTA continues to rely on the already existing instruments as well as institutions under COMESA.

# Framework for Strengthening Conflict Prevention Developed

The framework will enable the parties to analyse data and information for conflict prevention, peace building and conflict management in the region and beyond



Delegates attending the COMESA-AU-CSO Symposium in Malawi

COMESA Secretariat working with the African Union Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (COMESA-AU) has developed a framework for sharing early warning tools on conflict prevention and management with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from Southern Africa.

The framework will enable the parties to analyse data and information for conflict prevention, peace building and conflict management in the region and beyond.

This was agreed upon during a symposium on the thematic areas of conflict prevention and conflict management held in Lilongwe, Malawi on 24 - 26 May 2022. Among the key objectives of the Symposium was to identify areas of partnership and develop an action plan for deeper engagement where COMESA can leverage on the CSOs networks and expertise in enhancing implementation and wider programme impact.

The current and emerging gaps in governance, peace and security were identified at the symposium and a road map formulated to provide necessary interventions. Key on the solutions was the need to conduct a regional conflict security mapping which will focus on climate change-induced conflicts in East Africa,

Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, Northern Africa and the Islands.

This was prompted by the consensus that climate change increases the risks of conflict and instability. It further intensifies resource competition, exacerbates conflicts and contributes to forced displacement.

Furthermore, research and capacity building of CSOs and Member States in conflict prevention, conflict management, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), maritime security, transnational crimes and crosscutting issues on gender and youth were also recommended. In addition, the bloc should develop standardized models for Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and other stakeholders building on regional and universally accepted principles and guidelines on the independence of EMBs.

Given that COMESA has been supporting Member States in the consolidation of democracy in the region through election observation, the delegates recommended that an inventory of standards that will provide criteria for best practices on the electoral environment in the region be developed.

On countering violent extremism, the

meeting proposed among others, that there is need to strengthen COMESA linkages with the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (CAERT) and the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) and facilitate cooperation among national counter-terrorism centers. This could be done through joint study tours and peer learning of the national counter-terrorism centers.

Thirty-two CSO representatives from the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the Institute of Security Studies (ISS), the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Center, Save The Children, Pan African Lawyers Union, Dag Hammarskjöld participated in the symposium.

Representatives from the governments of Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated.

The newly developed framework will guide the development of the 2022 APSA Workplan, including joint programming with CSOs to address gaps identified in the agreed thematic areas.





# Joint AU-COMESA-EAC High-Level Pre-election Assessment Mission to Kenya



The AU, COMESA and EAC Team with Commissioners of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission in Kenya

A joint pre-election assessment mission of the African Union and COMESA has been conducted in Kenya, ahead of the country's General Elections on 9 August 2022. The high-level mission on 14 – 21 May 2022 was headed by H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former President of Burundi and the current Chairperson of the African Union Panel of the Wise.

During the Mission, the delegation assessed the state of preparedness for elections and engaged in consultations with key stakeholders to ensure fair and credible elections that will strengthen Kenya's democratic process.

Among the stakeholders met, were the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, the Registrar of Political Parties, political party coalitions, and representatives of CSOs and the private sector, among others.

The delegation encouraged all stakeholders to continue with the efforts to create a

conducive environment for peaceful, credible and inclusive elections. It further encouraged political tolerance and promotion of peace among citizens before, during and after the elections. It assured the Government and people of Kenya of their commitment to supporting the country's efforts to entrench a culture of democracy and peace, which is a critical prerequisite for sustainable socio-economic development. The government has already invited the AU, COMESA and East African Community to observe the elections.

Other members of the mission team included Hon. Amre Mahmoud Moussa, former Foreign Minister of Egypt and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise, Hon. Mike Kennedy Sebalu, Member of the EAC Eminent Persons, Amb. Ashraf Rashed, Chairperson of COMESA Committee of Elders, Amb. Marie Pierre Llyod and Hon. Monique Andreas Esoavelomandroso, both Member of COMESA Committee of Elders, independent electoral experts and technical support staff from AU Commission, COMESA and EAC Secretariats.

## Fresh Impetus to Implement...

from page 1

International Labour Organisation Acting Regional Director, Mr. Jason Theede, emphasised the importance of improving labour migration in the COMESA region.

He urged the Member States to address restrictions to the mobility of various groups including migrants, professional service providers, seasonal workers and cross-border traders.

"Restricting regular and orderly migration have negative economic consequences particularly in the areas of tourism, trade and general economic growth," Mr Theede said.

The Chief Technical Advisor at the International Labour Organisation, Dr Gloria Moreno-Fontes observed that labour migration was a foundation of the economic development of the African continent, and a key feature of movements in the continent and particularly in the region.

Delegates from 10 Member States, namely: Burundi, Congo DR, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended.

Technical support for the meeting was provided by the International Labour Migration (ILO), under the Southern Africa Migration Management (SMMM) Project and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a co-delegate under the COMESA Small Scale Cross Border Traders (SSCBT) initiative.

## COMESA Diary

Date	Event	Venue/Format
6 – 8 June 2022	Meeting of the African Union Commission - Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030	Lusaka, Zambia
6 – 10 June 2022	National Training of Trainers on Youth Participation in the Electoral Processes in Zimbabwe	Harare

# Silencing the Guns

AU and Regional Economic Communities converge to finalize implementation plan and road map



Zambia Airforce Chief of Operations, Brig General Arthur Kalaluka (in red tie) with participants to the AU-REC consultative meeting on Silencing the guns

The African Union Commission is conducting a meeting for Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030.

The three-day meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, 6 - 8 June 2022 brought together participants from the relevant department of the AU Commission, Divisions within the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, representatives from RECs/RMs, representatives of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and representatives of AUC partners supporting silencing the guns project such as the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

The meeting will finalise an implementation plan that will guide the operationalization of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework of the AU Master Roadmap

on Practical Steps to silence the guns in Africa. This is addition to adopting the terms of reference of an AU-RECs/RMs Steering Committee on Silencing the Guns.

The meeting shall also agree on the establishment of the Steering Committee including the relevant departments of the AUC and focal points/officers in each REC/RM to follow up and coordinate activities related to the STG Initiative. The committee will contribute to enhancing collaboration and synergy with the RECs/RMs on the implementation of the AU master Roadmap, in particular in increasing its domestication and popularization at the regional level.

It will also serve as a collaborative platform to facilitate regular exchanges between the AU, RECs/RMs, Civil Society Organizations, academia, private sector and other stakeholders that have a role to play in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns Master Roadmap.

Zambia Airforce Chief of Operations, Brig General Arthur Kalaluka opened the meeting Monday, 6 June 2022. It was co-hosted by COMESA through the Governance,

Peace and Security Unit.

Coordinator of Silencing the Guns under the Political Affairs, Peace and Security at the African Union Commission, Mr. Advelkader Araoua, stated:

"The extension of the life span of the AU master roadmap on practical steps to silence the guns in Africa to the year 2030, is a test of our ability to deliver on our commitments to free the African continent from wars, civil conflicts, humanitarian crises, human rights violations, gender-based violence, and genocide."

Head of Governance, Peace and Security at the COMESA Secretariat, Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga stressed the need to continuously assess the external environment in developing an implementation plan for the monitoring and evaluation.

"Emerging and unpredictable factors, that have not necessarily originated from our region are having a very big impact on the peace, conflict and security dynamics of our region," she noted.





# AUDA-NEPAD to Establish Centres of Excellence in the Region



AUDA-NEPAD Acting Director for Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation Dr Martin Bwalya (3rd Right), Assistant Secretary General in charge of Administration and Finance, Dr Dev Haman (3rd left) with NEPAD and COMESA staff members.

The African Union Development Agency AUDA-NEPAD plans to establish Centres of Excellence in COMESA Member States. This was disclosed during a visit to the COMESA Secretariat by an AU delegation led by Acting Director for Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation, Dr Martin Bwalya, on 22 May 2022.

During the ensuing consultations, the AU and COMESA officials agreed to complement each other, given COMESA's work in knowledge capitalization of the planned Centers of excellence.

Dr Bwalya said the visit was conducted in the spirit of the AU institutional reform process, that demands the establishment of standardized working and coordination modalities with all of Africa's Regional Economic Communities.

"We would like to ensure that we come

up with well-informed decisions on the matters, hence, the need for continuous consultations and coordination towards a shared approach for the effective achievement of regional integration and Agenda 2063," Dr Bwalya stated.

In July 2018, the AU Assembly mandated AUDA to coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards accelerated realisation of the AU Agenda 2063. The Assembly also agreed to, among others strengthen capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies, advance knowledge-based advisory support, undertake the full range of resource mobilisation, and serve as the continent's technical interface with all of Africa's development stakeholders and development partners.

COMESA has been involved in the establishment of regional collaboration

mechanisms between the AUDA-NEPAD and African Regional Economic Communities Technical Coordination Committee. It also participated in the 1st Africa Regional Technical Reference Group Meeting on Development Effectiveness in preparation for the 3rd High Level Meeting to be held later this year as well as the Technical Consultative Meeting with RECs on Joint Resource Mobilisation, held in April 2022.

Acting Secretary General Dr Dev Haman welcomed the team and pledged COMESA's commitment and ensure the programme is implemented smoothly.



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