

## Uganda Takes Lead in Adopting Tripartite Standards on Drivers' Licensing

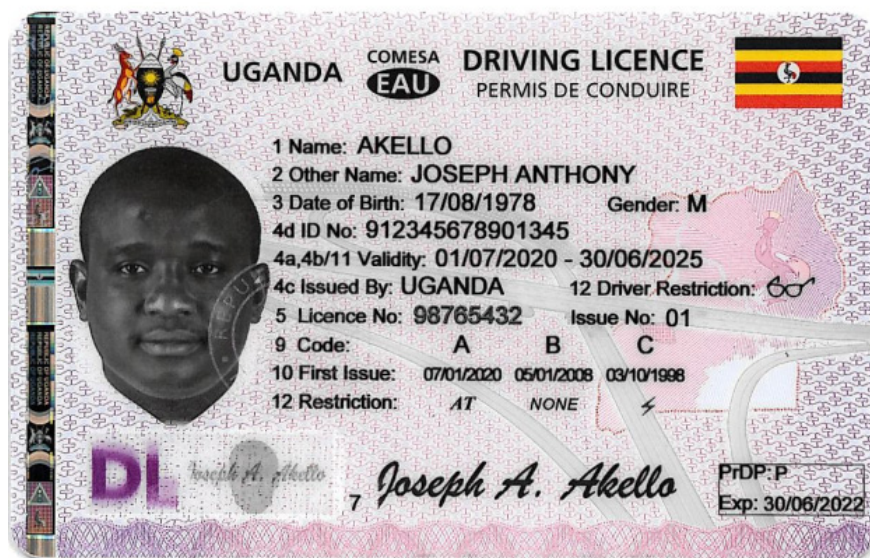
Uganda has become the first country in the eastern and southern African region to convert its driver's licensing categories to conform to the regionally harmonized Tripartite Transit and Transport Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) standards. The country will commence issuance of the new licenses from the 1st March 2021, according to Mr. Winstone Katushabe, Commissioner Transport Regulation and Safety in Uganda.

The TTTFP drivers' license categories and driving license card, are based on International Standards Organization (ISO) and the United Nations road traffic regulations. Uganda has already amended her Traffic and Road Safety Act of 1998, a process that was completed in May 2020.

"This has enabled the harmonization through adoption of the ISO Driver Licence Categories, Driving Licence Card Format and Professional Driving Permit (PrDP). Uganda has also redesigned the Driver Licence Card in accordance with the TTTFP standard specification," Mr Katushabe stated

Further, Uganda has obtained a single Issuer Identification Number (IIN) from the American Bankers Association, for licensing drivers. This was granted on 5 January 2021.

The TTTFP is an undertaking of the three Regional Economic Communities namely COMESA, East Africa Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). It is a flagship programme under the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement funded by the European Union under the 11th European Development



Sample of the harmonized driver's license

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Fund (EDF 11).

The programme addresses cross border transport and trade challenges such as high transport costs and delays through the implementation of harmonised road transport policies, laws, regulations, systems and standards that affect drivers, loads, vehicles and road infrastructure in the countries of the Eastern Africa and Southern Africa (EA-SA) region.

The official further confirmed that Uganda

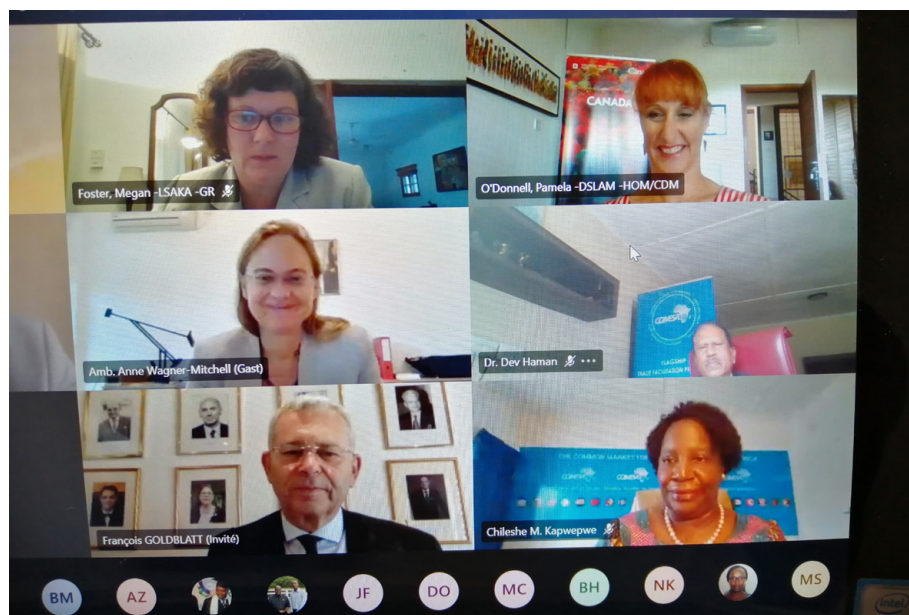
is pursuing other measures towards the implementation of TTTFP Vehicle Load Management Agreement (VLMA) and the Multilateral Cross-Border Road Transport Agreement (MCBRTA). Towards this end, Uganda has begun the process of updating regulations to operationalize the amended Traffic and Road Safety Act, based on the VLMA/MCBRTA Model Laws and Regulations/Principles.

In addition, Uganda has out-sourced the motor vehicle inspection function, by contracting an international inspection agency SGS to ensure compliance with standards, on behalf of the Government. SGS has already constructed a number of Vehicle Inspection Stations on major routes radiating from Kampala, the capital city under a public-private-partnership being promoted by the TTTFP.

According to Mr Katushabe, the standards being applied for the inspections are

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# Deeper Economic Ties Envisaged, as COMESA Accredits top EU and Canadian Diplomats



The virtual presentation of diplomatic credentials

New Heads of Diplomatic Missions of Canada, Germany and France have been accredited as Special Representatives to COMESA. Ambassadors Pamela O'Donnell of Canada, Dr. Anne Wager-Mitchell of Germany and François Goldblatt of France presented their Letters of Credence to Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe in a ceremony held virtually on Tuesday 2nd February 2021.

In her statement, the Canadian Ambassador expressed her country's interest to work with COMESA to advance shared values and increase opportunities for international trade. Specifically, Amb. O'Donnell identified gender and trade as a priority area which her country is keen to collaborate with COMESA.

"I cannot speak today without focusing for a moment on our goal of empowering women and girls to become equal participants in an inclusive, prosperous and safe society which is at the heart of Canada's priorities in Africa," she said.

She stressed the need to create the conditions for women, and for the small- and medium-sized businesses they own and run, to compete and succeed in order to achieve development goals in the region.

She added: "Public officials and business leaders must work together to advance policies and concrete actions to further women's participation and recognize the crucial role that women play in business expansion."

Amb. O'Donnell who is also the High Commissioner of Canada to Tanzania and Zambia emphasized the importance of engagement opportunities with key stakeholders, such as COMESA, in order to advance the ideals of inclusiveness and gender equality.

She said COMESA and Canada can share best practices, connect entrepreneurs and ideas, and

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see the mutual benefits of increased economic integration.

On her part, the German Ambassador, Dr Wager-Mitchell who is also the German Ambassador to Zambia said: "We are ready to support regional integration and to share our own experience to regional organizations around the globe – either bilaterally or through the EU."

Germany and France are members of the European Union, which is the biggest development partner of the regional bloc especially on the implementation of the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme.

This program aims at harmonizing trade procedures within the COMESA region through, amongst others, identification and resolution of non-tariff barriers, supporting the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and improving the implementation of harmonized, science-based sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical standards.

"We highly value COMESA's Small Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative, which is also financially supported by the EU," she said. "One of the border posts the Initiative focuses on is the Kasumbalesa border post between Zambia and DRC."

Amb. Goldblatt who is also the French Ambassador to Zambia noted that 10 member States of COMESA are officially French-speaking.

"This offers my country a natural bridge allowing my headquarters to come forward with unique tools and expertise, particularly adapted to the needs of almost half the members of your organization, especially in the field of language training," he said.

Secretary General Kapwepwe appreciated the partnership with the EU and Canada, which she said was guided by shared values and common interests.





# Burundian Products set to Access Wider Regional Markets

COMESA RISM Programme equips Burundi labs

Burundi export products are set to access the larger regional market following improvement of their quality standards. This has been made possible through the provision of laboratory equipment to the agency responsible for Standardization and Quality Control (BBN) in Burundi.

The equipment, provided under the COMESA Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM), include a UV spectrophotometer, a flame photometer, a pH meter, a fiber analyzer, a distillation unit for protein analysis, a sugar analyzer, an alcohol analyzer, an oxygen and carbon dioxide analyzer.

"The equipment has enabled the institution to carry out analysis of over 20 additional parameters which were previously done out of the country. This will raise the standards of Burundian goods and eventually lead to the certification of more export commodities. In addition, they have provided additional confidence to local consumers on the safety of the local products.

The Report indicated that the equipment has positively impacted on product certification and cut down on costs and the certification process as the laboratory does not need to subcontract part of its analysis as was the case in the past. All the testing parameters are now done in-house.

As a result, a large number of local milk producers are now able to take their products for certification earmarked for export while previously only small quantities of the products were exported. This was due to high certification costs occasioned by the need to analyze antibiotic residues such as tetracycline, chloramphenicol in milk, and aflatoxins in other milk products outside the country.

"Now the whole process is done at BBN's labs as they respond to the export requirements of products at EAC and COMESA level," the Report read in part.

Under the RISM programme, whose funds



File photo/ COMESA team visiting the BBN in Burundi, March 2019

originate from the European Union (EU) through the COMESA Adjustment Fund (CAF), Burundi has received financial support of close to 16 million Euros over the 2010-2020 period. The funds have helped Burundi to address challenges that inhibited its deeper integration into the regional economy thus enabling it to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by such wider markets that COMESA and the East African Community present.

Regional statistics indicate that trade flows between Burundi and members of these regional blocs are among the lowest in the region. In supporting the country, COMESA has leveraged on the Strategic Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction developed by Burundi authorities which emphasizes consumer protection as an important aspect of trade promotion. The strategy also stresses the need for permanent monitoring of the quality of marketed products and conformity to international standards which would allow Burundi to reach the quality of goods required to export to its neighbouring countries.

The Report also identified the challenges faced

by local stakeholders such as the need for a National Quality Plan as well as better training on equipment and standards to improve the quality of goods and facilitate export to regional and international markets.

Through the support from RISM, the National Quality Policy was developed last year and is currently awaiting adoption by the Burundi Council of Ministers. Trainings were also provided to eight BBN technical staff of the physics-chemical analysis laboratory on operation, elementary maintenance, and sample preparation and analysis of the equipment delivered by COMESA to the chemistry laboratory.

The Report adds: The training has helped the staff make proper use of the equipment to make chemical analysis on goods being assessed for their quality. And it is to be noted that with the use of the latest procured lab kits, additional parameters can be added with additional testing parameters planned on local goods."

# Uganda Takes Lead...

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*Delegates from Tripartite Member/Partner States on a study visit as part of TTTFP workshop on validation of standard design specifications for compliant driver, vehicle and vehicle load management facilities. The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Works and Transport, Uganda from 18-20 February 2020 in Munyonyo, Uganda.*

to a great extent aligned to the TTTFP standards. Furthermore, Uganda will initiate implementation of a framework for an Automated Driver Testing System during the course of this year, 2021.

Once this is in place, it is anticipated that driving schools will upgrade their systems to ensure that trainees obtain the required competencies and skills to pass the driver's test. Automated licensing system for passenger service vehicles (PSVs) is already in existence and regulations

are being developed for the implementation of a similar system for licensing goods vehicles. This includes Dangerous Goods Vehicles Regulations, which are largely adapted from the TTTFP instruments.

Among institutional reforms being done is the designation of the department responsible for Transport Regulation and Safety in the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) as the competent authority for registration of motor vehicles.

MOWT's motor vehicle registration and licensing system will form the backbone for the proposed National Transport Information System (NTIS), whose development process will begin in the 2021/2022 fiscal year. Hitherto, motor vehicle registration in the country was undertaken by the Uganda Revenue Authority.

In the short term, Uganda will seek to re-validate all motor vehicle records including issuance of new number plates in accordance with the Tripartite Road Transport Legal Instruments.



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