

## The African Development Bank Supports COMESA to develop the pharmaceutical industry in the region

Over \$6 million grant approved to develop the pharmaceutical sector

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“The aim is to empower them to support the pharmaceutical sector so that they can produce safe essential medicines locally for the needs of the population, especially women and children,” Leila Mokaddem

The Board of Directors of the African Development Fund, the concessional lending arm of the African Development Bank Group, on 2 November 2022 in Abidjan, approved a \$6.63 million grant to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to develop the pharmaceutical sector in the sub-region.

The project, which will be implemented over three years (2023-2025), is institutional support to develop the region's pharmaceutical industry. In particular, it will build the capacity of pharmaceutical regulatory bodies, product quality control and management systems, and research and development institutions. The aim is to achieve the manufacture and marketing of safe, quality pharmaceutical products, for Covid-19 and other diseases.

The project will support the sub-regional body in implementing continental strategies on pharmaceutical manufacturing and assist it in streamlining and harmonizing drug registration

processes, as well as ensuring access to essential medical products and technologies. An information platform for pharmaceutical manufacturers, importers and exporters will also be created.

The project will directly benefit public institutions responsible for the pharmaceutical industry's development, such as national drug regulatory authorities, quality control laboratories, regional pharmacy training providers, universities, and research centres.

“The aim is to empower them to support the pharmaceutical sector so that they can produce safe essential medicines locally for the needs of the population, especially women and children,” said Leila Mokaddem, the African Development Bank's Director General for Southern Africa.

“Most countries within the region have a weak and underdeveloped pharmaceutical industry. The region is heavily dependent on imports for most of its

medical supplies. Furthermore, due to the low local pharmaceutical production, there is a high prevalence of counterfeit pharmaceutical products in circulation, which has serious consequences for the welfare of the region's people,” she added.

While the project is intended to directly benefit the ADF eligible countries of COMESA, other Bank Group member countries will be allowed to participate in project activities and events, but at a cost.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa is a regional economic community comprising 21 countries: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. (Source: AfDB)



## Ministers Undertake to Promote Initiatives on Food Security and Environmental Management

Ministers responsible for agriculture, natural resources and environment from COMESA Member States have undertaken to support the development and implementation of the COMESA digital Regional Food Balance Sheet (RFBS) initiative.

This undertaking covers similar efforts that aim to strengthen agri-food data and information system in the region which will enable informed policy, investment, and trade decisions, and for emergency food and livelihood response in a rapidly changing environment.

COMESA is implementing the Regional Food Balance Sheet initiative which is designed to provide data, messaging and information that governments, the private sector and development organizations need to make informed investments, create and implement policies.

It was developed in collaboration with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, supported by the UK Foreign Office, the Commonwealth and Development Office, the USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. In a virtual meeting conducted Thursday, 24 November 2022, the Ministers pledged to promote and implement initiatives that contribute to reducing post-harvest losses, improve agriculture commodity aggregation and storage, and enhance competitive access to markets and trade in the region and internationally.

"We commit ourselves to enhancing access to production inputs, services and improved technologies including leveraging digital technologies to drive agriculture and livestock production and productivity," the Ministers stated in a joint declaration at the end of the meeting.

This was the eighth meeting of the Ministers and was chaired by the Egyptian Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation H.E. Elsayed Elkosayar. The Ministers undertook to promote and implement initiatives that contribute to reducing post-harvest losses, improve agriculture commodity aggregation and storage, and enhance competitive access to markets and trade in the region and internationally.

They urged Member States and COMESA Secretariat to further develop and implement policies, regulations, programmes, and support quality infrastructure development to enhance plant and animal health, improve the quality and safety standards and competitiveness of agricultural commodities and food products in the region. In her address to the Ministers, Secretary General of

COMESA, Chileshe Kapwepwe said the organization will continue to deploy skills and efforts in designing policies and instruments to hasten agricultural growth, facilitate trade and investment among its Member States and with the rest of the world.

"Driving vibrant, equitable and sustainable agricultural and rural development in our region requires strategic and coordinated investments in social and economic infrastructure," Ms Kapwepwe added "This is what will enable our rural communities to engage in dynamic and rewarding economic activities."

Other key initiatives to support Member States include policy and strategy development on climate change, review of Nationally Determined Contributions and upscaling Climate Smart Agriculture, development of a regional Blue Economy Strategy and the development of the COMESA Regional Guidelines for the Establishment, Operation/Management of Warehouse Receipt System for Agricultural Commodities.

The meeting was also addressed by representatives of cooperating partners of COMESA including Dr Appollos Nwafor, (AGRA) Mr Joseph Silavwe (European Union Delegation to Zambia and COMESA) Mr Patrice Talla (Food and Agriculture Organization).

This meeting was preceded by the 8th joint technical meeting on agriculture, environment and natural resources on 22 -23 November 2022. The 9th joint meeting of the ministers will be hosted in Egypt.

“.....  
Driving vibrant, equitable and sustainable agricultural and rural development in our region requires strategic and coordinated investments in social and economic infrastructure,” Chileshe Kapwepwe





# Regional Countries Review Bilateral Air Services Agreements

*Review intended to ensure conformity with the Yamoussoukro Decision*



Participants at the aviation meeting in Eswatini

Experts in Civil Aviation from seven Member States of the Eastern Africa- Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) convened in Eswatini on 16 - 18 November 2022, to review their Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASA).

The review was intended to ensure conformity with the Yamoussoukro Decision which among others, calls for the removal of all restrictions on air traffic rights under the 3rd, 4th and 5th Freedoms, frequencies, fares and capacity.

While many air transport markets outside Africa have been liberalized to a significant extent, most intra-African air transport markets remain largely closed due to restrictive BASA's which affect air connectivity within Africa and has limited the potential economic growth and development. It is out of this that African States adopted the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) in 1999 and Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in 2018 so as to liberalize air transport in Africa.

Eswatini is one of the 35 countries in Africa that have signed the solemn commitment to establish SAATM which constitutes 64% of the total membership of the African Union. It is also one of the 20 AU Member States that have signed the memorandum of implementation for the operationalization of SAATM.

Speaking at the opening of the three -day workshop the Eswatini Minister of Public Works and Transport Hon. Chief Ndlatuhlaza Ndwandwe appreciated the choice of his

country as the launchpad for the first validation workshop on BASA. He said it will go a long way in facilitating operationalization of the SAATM and strengthen intra-regional connectivity between the capital cities of African countries.

"Eswatini is currently in a robust process of signing and concluding BASA's with various States," said the Minister. "I urge the few Member States who are yet to sign the Solemn Commitment to do so to enable us move forward as one united continent."

COMESA Senior Transport Economist, Mr Bernard Dzawanda, who represented the Secretary General, observed that significant benefits will be realized in tourism if all challenges associated with air transport infrastructure and costs are addressed.

As a follow up, the five Regional Economic Communities under the Support to the Air Transport Sector Development (SATSD) programme engaged a consultant to develop a Model Bilateral Air Services Agreement that conforms with the provisions of the Yamoussoukro Decision. The RECs are the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa the East African Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Indian Ocean Commission and the Southern Africa Development Community.

The workshop in Eswatini is the first of six that the SATSD programme will hold to review the draft Model BASA in the ES-SA-IO region.

Participants were drawn from Eswatini, DR Congo, Malawi, Madagascar, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia and SADC.

The SATSD programme is funded by the European Union under the 11th European Development Fund.



**"I urge the few Member States who are yet to sign the Solemn Commitment to do so to enable us move forward as one united continent."**

Chief Ndlatuhlaza Ndwandwe





L-R: Amb. Saana Halinen, COMESA SG Chileshe Kapwepwe and Amb. Johan Hallenborg

## Finnish and Swedish Envoys Accredited to COMESA

Finnish and Swedish Ambassadors to Zambia have been accredited as Special Representative of their respective countries to COMESA. The accreditation ceremony was held at COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka on 15 November 2022. Ambassadors Saana Halinen (Finland) and Johan Hallenborg presented their letters of credence to COMESA Secretary General, Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe.

Both countries support COMESA bilaterally and as members of the European Union, in various sectors including energy, gender, agriculture sectors and trade facilitation. Sweden has signed an agreement with COMESA through Swedish Statistics to improve the availability of regular up-to-date statistics of good quality in developing policies such as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the AU's Plan of Action 2018-2030. These are intended to address the effects of migration on women and men in Africa

Under this Agreement, COMESA is implementing the AU Migration Statistics Programme funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The programme is helping to gradually address the challenges faced in the development of statistics such as low quality of current data; lack of data sharing; lack of coordination among statistical actors at

national, regional and continental level and lack of gender disaggregated data, among others.

With Finland, COMESA has received support through the COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA). Finland supported the organization of the first African Nordic Business Conference in 2017, in Helsinki. Further cooperation is with the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA) which signed an MoU with the Council of European Energy Regulators, which represents 37 energy regulatory authorities, including the Finnish Authority.

Receiving their letters of Credence, the Secretary General thanked the European Union to which both Finland and Sweden belong for the support to COMESA programmes.

"We are aware, that based on 'Team Europe approach', Finland and Sweden will work towards effective implementation of the EU's New Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument and the Global Europe," she said.

Ambassador Hallenborg said Sweden recognizes the important role of the regional organization and looks forward to enhanced dialogue and

relationship with COMESA in the future.

"In particular, we want to promote to promote a progressive and fair trade policy that increases women's economic empowerment as well as efforts to combat corruption and build confidence in the democratic institutions," he said.

In collaboration with COMESA, Sweden supports a continental project to collect and analyze statistics on migration with a long-term expert based at the COMESA Secretariat.

Ambassador Halinen said Finland strongly advocates for free trade and has supported economic integration in Africa to strengthen regional trade by making it more inclusive and sustainable. In Zambia, she said, Finland has assisted Zambian companies to access the huge market in D R Congo resulting in 24.5 million US dollar export deals.



# Implementation of the AfCFTA and Tripartite FTA to Bolster Regional Economic Communities



The implementation of both the regional and the continental free trade area regimes will position the regional economic communities, COMESA, East African Community and Southern Africa Development Community into a formidable economic bloc to collectively exploit the envisaged benefits of Africa's integration.

Addressing the 38th Meeting of the COMESA Trade and Customs experts meeting on 7 – 9 November 2022, Assistant Secretary General of COMESA, Dr Kipyego Cheluget said although the ratification of the Tripartite FTA has not progressed as rapidly as originally envisaged, it remains a commendable effort at RECs consolidation upon which the AfCFTA could build upon.

"The existing RECs are the natural building blocks of the wider AfCFTA trading arrangement, and we need to double our efforts to complete the ratification process to make the COMESA, EAC and SADC Tripartite FTA operational," he said.

In this regard, he proposed that the remaining processes under the TFTA should draw lessons from the AfCFTA, especially with regard to the strategies that were used to facilitate its rapid ratification and coming into force.

The TFTA was launched in 2015 and despite achieving numerous milestones, its implementation has been held back by lack of

the sufficient number of ratifications by Member /Partner States. Currently, 11 States have ratified the agreement, three short of the required 14 threshold to enable it to enter into force. On the other hand, the AfCFTA achieved the required ratification threshold in less than two years after it was launched.

The experts' meeting focused on the review of the implementation of regional programs and agreed on policy recommendations to enhance regional integration to be presented to the COMESA policy organs meetings, including the Council of Ministers meeting scheduled on 1st December 2022.

Among the key issues tabled to the meeting was the report on the COMESA trade in services which covered negotiations, strategies to fast track the negotiations and issues relating to tracking and monitoring the implementation of already agreed commitments.

"This Committee may wish to make additional recommendations that will ensure that trade in services negotiations are expedited as the implementation of liberalization commitments in services will enhance COMESA's regional integration agenda," Dr Cheluget said.

The report of the Heads of Customs was presented with the pertinent issues being the slow progress registered in the implementation of instruments expected to support

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implementation of the COMESA Customs Union. An update was also provided on how post -Covid-19 Customs Administrations have deployed ICT tools and automation to expedite clearance of goods traded within the region.

The initiatives include automation and use of non-intrusive inspection systems in lieu of physical inspections, the use of e-declaration processing and submission of electronic supporting documents, pre-arrival processing, increased use of electronic cargo tracking systems to manage transit movements among others all of which form the basis for the current COMESA theme of "Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration.

Delegates from Burundi, Comoros, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended the meeting.



# Youth-Elders Engage in First-Ever Intergenerational Dialogue



Vice President of the World Scout Parliamentary Union and Senator in Kenya

Over 70 delegates met in Nairobi, Kenya on 21-22 November 2022 for a regional forum whose main objective was to create space for intergenerational dialogue and advance transformative strategies and perspectives on maximizing the development skills of the youth.

The forum was anchored on the theme; "Enhancing the meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding and peace processes in the COMESA region" and was intended to enhance exchange of meaningful knowledge and experiences with the older generation.

Hosted in a hybrid format, it brought together the eight members of the COMESA's Committee of Elders, leaders of key institutions, key youth

constituencies led by members of the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel (COMYAP), representatives from National Youth Councils in the COMESA region, youth-led organizations, and social justice actors, among others.

Speaking at the opening of the Forum, World Scout Parliamentary Union 1st Vice President and Senator in Kenya Hon. Tabitha Mutinda urged governments and leaders to give youth the space to share their own perspectives about leadership, governance specifically the decision-making processes and to engage them in peace and security matters.

"Dear young people, it is also important for youth to understand your space and environment. Your

youth is not forever so use it wisely while you are in that space," Hon. Mutinda said.

Member of the COMESA Committee of Elders Amb. Ashraf Rashed emphasized that peace and security objectives could only be achieved by the meaningful engagement of the youth in conflict prevention, mediation and post conflict construction.

The forum was organized by COMESA, Save the Children International East and Southern Africa Region, Horn of Africa Youth Network in partnership with the Ministry for Youth Affairs Sports and Arts in Kenya.

## Agricultural Productivity Improves in the Region

The COMESA region has progressively increased agricultural productivity despite food insecurity being a major challenge. Climate-induced shocks such as unprecedented drought in the Horn of Africa, the effects of COVID-19 pandemic and other external shocks including the Ukraine-Russia conflict have worsened this situation.

To weather these shocks, the region has embarked on resilience building to ensure sustainable development and management of the environment and natural resources. In this regard, COMESA Secretariat has developed strategic frameworks, plans and guidelines aimed at enhancing sustainable development of agriculture, environment and natural resources for improved food security and livelihoods in the region.

A report on these resilience building initiatives was presented to a virtual joint meeting of COMESA Member States technical experts responsible for agriculture, natural resources and environment that took place Tuesday, 22 November 2022.

Addressing the meeting, Assistant Secretary General in Charge of Programmes in COMESA, Dr Kipyego Cheluget outlined some of the key initiatives in place to support Member States. They include policy and strategy development on climate change, review of Nationally Determined Contributions and upscaling Climate Smart Agriculture.

Further, the Secretariat has developed a Blue Economy Strategy to promote development

and transformation of an inclusive and sustainable sector. Other initiatives include the development of the COMESA Regional Guidelines for the Establishment, Operation/Management of Warehouse Receipt System for Agricultural Commodities. This initiative is expected to contribute to improved post-harvest management, commodity aggregation and enhance access to markets and trade in quality agricultural commodities within the region.

Recommendations from the experts meeting were presented to the Joint Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment on Thursday 24 November 2022.



The Guest of Honour Mr Angelos Munezero (seated middle) with some delegates and EGEE-ICT staff at the Kigali meeting

## Experts Review Proposals of Strengthening Regional ICT Association

A technical working group under the Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in Information and Communication Technology (EGEE-ICTs) programme met in Kigali, Rwanda for a two-day validation workshop to review a study on how they could provide assistance to the Regional ICT sector Associations.

The experts from COMESA, SADC, EAC, IGAD and IOC were joined by representatives from Regional ICT Associations (RICTAS) to review recommendations on the development of institutional strategies and business/membership models that would sustain their role of ensuring coordinated public and private sector policy and regulatory engagement and development.

Funded by the European Union Development Fund (EDF11), the EGEE-ICT aims at supporting the effective review and or development of various regional policy and regulatory frameworks in a harmonized manner that will contribute to enhancing competition, improved access to cost effective and secure ICT services in the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region.

To kick start the process, COMESA as the lead Regional Economic Community (REC) engaged Prof. Thomas Senaji from Kenya to carry out the consultancy services of the programme.

The specific objectives of the consultancy entailed

conducting an assessment and providing an overview and analysis of the capacity, strengths and weaknesses across the ICT sector associations and identify the main capacity gaps and demands.

Speaking when he officially opened the workshop on 16 November 2022, Public Sector Digitization Analyst in Rwanda's Ministry of Transformation, ICT and Innovation Mr Angelos Munezero commended the collaboration of the RECs in building strong meaningful partnerships to create synergies which will positively impact the people.

"Indeed having COMESA, SADC, EAC, IGAD and IOC under the EGEE-ICT programme working together is a step in the right direction to achieve ICT regional integration," he said.

He added that Rwanda acknowledges the EGEE-ICT programme, as a vital initiative that will ensure growth and development of ICT and Telecommunications in the region.

The workshop was informed that the Government of Rwanda has deliberately invested in digital transformation to change people's lives. By the end of September 2022, Rwanda had mobile telephone subscription at 82.5%, internet subscription at 60.6 % and about 80% of the most impactful services are provided online through Irempo platform.

Addressing the delegates, Telecommunications

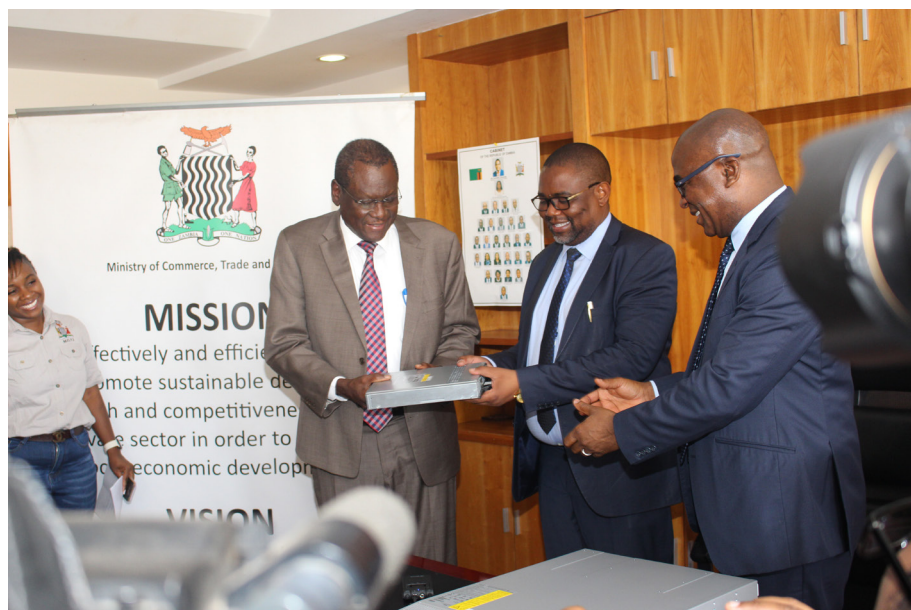
Officer at COMESA Secretariat Mr Leonard Chitundu said RICTAS play a vital role in the development of the ICT sector in the region.

"Together, they provide invaluable forums for sharing knowledge and experiences on regulatory practices, supporting the implementation of ICT policies and regulations, and sharing perspectives and experiences on institutional strategies and business models for ICT operators," he added.

Hence, a consultant was engaged to conduct the assessment and thereafter develop strategies, action plans and business models and identify training or capacity building activities required to enhance the operations of the RICTAS.

The consultant, gathered data and information on the status each of the five RICTAs in the region, namely Association of Regulators of Information and Communications for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA); Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) East African Communications Organization (EACO) Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA) and Southern Africa Telecommunications Association (SATA).





Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry John Mulongoti (centre) and Amb. Kipyego Cheluget (L) hand over ICT equipment to acting ZRA Commissioner General Moses Shuko (R)

## Zambia's Revenue Authority gets \$547,000 Worth of ICT Equipment from EU-COMESA Project

Zambia Revenue Authority has received ICT equipment worth USD 547,000 procured under the Zambia Border Posts Upgrade Project which is funded by the European Union under the 11th EDF through COMESA. They include Servers and Storage Systems to support the operations of the ASYCUDA World System and other ICT functions of the ZRA.

The equipment was handed over through the Zambian Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry by Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Mr John Mulongoti, to ZRA Acting Commissioner General, Moses Shuko in a brief ceremony conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, 18th November 2022, witnessed by COMESA Assistant Secretary General (Programmes), Dr Kipyego Cheluget.

Zambia signed a sub delegation agreement with the COMESA Secretariat on 23 November 2020 on the upgrading of the Zambia border posts of Chirundu, Mwami and Nakonde under which USD 6.8 million was provided for implementation of activities under the Trade Facilitation Project supported under the 11th EDF.

Dr Cheluget thanked the EU for the financial support provided to the organization for the implementation

of trade facilitation activities.

"The purchase and supply of servers to ZRA addresses the issue of enhanced automation of processes and also builds a foundation for further implementation of the Zambia Single Window System," he said

Mr Mulongoti said the equipment is adaptable to diverse workloads and environments and it is anticipated that it will deliver high range performance with the right balance of expandability and scalability.

"The equipment is designed for supreme versatility and resilience, and this makes it ideal to work in multiple environments, such as the Revenue Authority," he said.

Mr Shuko said ZRA will now be able to process more entries and ensure that the businesspeople do not spend longer hours at the border. He added that with the new additions to the ASYCUDA World, the servers shall play a vital role in ensuring that all border agencies are integrated with enhanced connectivity.

## Women Smallholder Farmers to Benefit from Beef Value Chain

More than 60 women smallholder farmers are expected to directly benefit from a beef value chain programme soon to be launched in Eswatini. The programme is being introduced by the COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB) Eswatini Chapter to enhance the competitiveness and participation of women entrepreneurs in the beef value chain.

The Chapter has since secured 10 hectares of land in the Manzini region and is in the process of purchasing cattle and introducing feedlot. COMFWB Eswatini will also facilitate training in livestock production, feed and fodder production and ration formulation.

COMFWB Chief Executive Officer Ms Ruth Negash revealed this in a statement issued on 7 November 2022. The land which will be used for the incubation centre will also include projects around farming such as tomato manufacturing and processing plant. The plant will be developed with support from the World Food Programme (WFP).

"This programme will go a long way to assist the target group which are women farmers who mainly lack secure land tenure," she said. "It is a fact that grazing pastures are increasingly disappearing due to the proliferation of homesteads on previously designated common fields."

In addition, supplementation of crop residues, fodder, and feed during the dry season is a considerable challenge.

The Chapter anticipates that the new programme will bring with it several benefits including strengthening the capacity of the women in beef production in both field and feedlot, increase the number of women participating in the beef value chain, improve market linkages and increase the use of improved breeds of livestock. Besides, the capacity of women farmers in handling Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards will be enhanced.

The Chapter aims to integrate the beef and dairy cattle value chains and crop production, promote the use of manure technologies for smallholder crop production and the use of skin and hides for the leather industry.

The program will indirectly benefit 800 women to competitively participate in beef feedlot farming in all four regions of Eswatini.





# Tripartite Free Trade Area Awareness Drive

The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Task Force has conducted sensitization and publicity programmes in three Member States to create awareness on the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) ahead of its full implementation.

The workshops have so far been conducted in Comoros, Malawi and Tunisia. They are meant to sensitize the business community and other stakeholders on the trade opportunities and benefits under the TFTA and provide an update on the progress towards implementation of the Agreement.

Initially, eight workshops were planned to cover the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Lesotho, Malawi, Sudan, Comoros, Madagascar and Tanzania under the Tripartite Capacity Building Programme Phase II. Four of these countries have reached advanced stages with preparations for signing and ratification. High level consultation missions led by the Chief Executive Officers of the Regional Economic Communities have been planned for

Comoros, the DRC, Tanzania and Malawi.

In Malawi, the national TFTA sensitization workshop was held on 3rd November 2022 and hosted by the country's Ministry of Trade and Industry. It was preceded by consultative meetings with senior officials to establish Malawi's preparedness and process of ratification of the TFTA Agreement.

Speaking at the workshop, the Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry Ms. Christina Zakeyo said the ministry was committed to assist the private sector get the necessary information and fully utilize the TFTA to boost intra-Africa trade.

She urged the micro, small and medium enterprises to take keen interest in the TFTA and take advantage of the available markets once the agreement comes into effect.

"Let us use the opportunity to give a full picture of what has been finalized, what is outstanding and the

current status of implementation and negotiations of the TFTA. Malawi can greatly benefit from the TFTA, so this information is needed," Ms Zakeyo said.

The two-day meeting was highly interactive, and experts sensitized the businesspersons on the trade opportunities offered by the TFTA and how to tap them. This was done through various presentations, discussions and question and answer sessions with the stakeholders.

The sessions spurred national interest in Malawi towards ratification of the TFTA with participants requesting for another sensitization workshop to be held in the business capital, Blantyre.

The team of experts was led by Mr Rashid Kibowa Director of Trade at the East African Community (EAC). The other experts included the TCBP II Project Coordinator Mr Kennedy Otwor, Tripartite Transport and Transit Programme Coordinator SADC Secretariat, Mr Lovemore Bingandadi, Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) Expert at COMESA Secretariat, Ms Vonesai Hove, Mr Geoffrey Osoro and Mr Timothy Chisembwere of the EAC Secretariat.

## COMESA Policy Organs' Meetings Kicks-off Next Week



Ambassadors and High Commissioners of COMESA attending a briefing at the COMESA Secretariat

The 43rd COMESA Policy Organs' meetings will take place from 29 November to 01 December 2022 in Lusaka, Zambia at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre. This was formally announced on Tuesday, 21 November 2022 by the Secretary General, Chileshe Kapwepwe when she met Ambassadors and High Commissioners from COMESA Member States who are accredited to COMESA as Permanent Representatives.

The Policy Organs meetings are the 43rd Intergovernmental Committee (IC) and the 43rd Council of Ministers (CM). The IC will take place on 29 – 30 November and the Council on Thursday 01 December 2022.

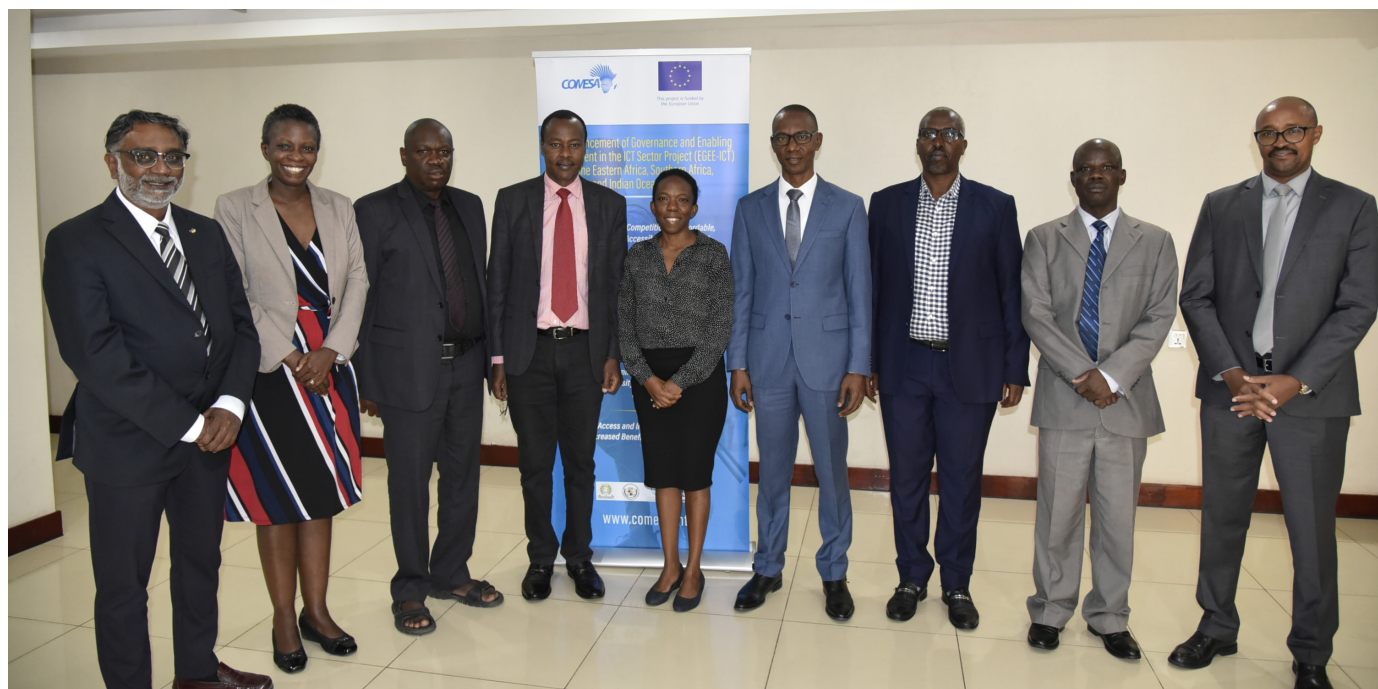
The IC will be attended by Permanent/Principal Secretaries. It will consider and deliberate on reports from COMESA institutions, progress reports

from COMESA programmes and the report of the committee on administrative and budgetary matters and present its report to the Council of Ministers.

Vice President of Zambia, Her Honour Mutale Nalumango will open the Council meeting while the Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, Hon. Chipoka Mulenga will open the IC meeting.

# Regional ICT Regulators Meet in Kigali

Regional Cyber Security Center on the agenda



Delegates at the ARICEA meeting in Kigali

After a five-year pause, members of the Association of Regulators of Information and Communications for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA) met in Kigali Rwanda, Friday 18-19 November 2022.

Delegates from Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe attended the hybrid meeting to discuss key issues including the report of the last 29th Executive Committee meeting of 2018. Also in the agenda were progress reports on hosting the ARICEA Secretariat and Regional Cyber Security Center, recruitment of the ARICEA Executive Secretary and the status of finances.

ARICEA has over the years been operating at

COMESA Secretariat, without an Executive Secretary to oversee its operations.

"This has slowed down its progress and it is important that an independent Secretariat is established, and the Executive Secretary employed to implement decisions of the previous AGMs," Mr Leonard Chitundu, Telecommunications Officer at COMESA Secretariat said.

ARICEA is a consultative and collaborative forum for ICT regulators in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region that was formally established by COMESA Member States, through a constitution in January 2003. It provides the platform where ICT regulators

and other key stakeholders of the ICT sector in the Eastern and Southern Africa region convene to discuss issues pertaining to regional integration in ICT development.

Through ARICEA, Member States exchange ideas, views and experiences on regulatory matters, promote sustainable development and application of efficient, adequate and cost-effective ICT networks and services in the ESA sub-region.

The core members of ARICEA are autonomous regulators in ESA and government ministries responsible for ICT where regulators are yet to be established.

## COMESA DIARY

Date	Activity	Organizer	Venue/Format
20 - 24 Nov 2022	Meeting of the COMESA Committee of Governors of Central Banks	COMESA Monetary Institute	Cairo
22 – 23 Nov 2022	8th Joint Technical Meeting on Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	COMESA Secretariat	Virtual
24 Nov 2022	Ministerial Committee Meeting on Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment	COMESA Secretariat	Virtual
29 - 30 Nov 2022	The 43rd COMESA Intergovernmental Committee Meeting	COMESA Secretariat	Lusaka, Zambia
01 Dec 2022	The 43rd Council of Ministers' Meeting	COMESA Secretariat	Lusaka, Zambia





COMESA SECRETARIAT  
COMESA Center  
Ben Bella Road  
P.O. Box 30051



+260 211 229 725



[www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int)



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