

COMESA Launches Digital Yellow Card Mobile App



The COMESA Regional Third-Party Motor Vehicle Insurance (Yellow Card) Scheme has launched a Digital Yellow Card Mobile Application. It is designed to provide access to real-time information to Yellow Card motorists, law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders.

The Application is accessible on Google Play Store and Apple iStore and will enable law enforcement agencies to verify validity of digital Yellow Cards. It will also enable motorists to report accidents when travelling in foreign countries, get notifications on the status of their Yellow Cards and call for support during traffic emergencies. This is in line with the Yellow Card Scheme Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 goal to transform service delivery and enhance customer satisfaction.

The Yellow Card was developed to facilitate the smooth movement of motor vehicles, persons and goods in the region through the establishment of a common system for the settlement of claims

arising from inter-state motorists.

The Scheme is currently operational in 13 countries; namely: Burundi, Djibouti, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition, Yellow Card is also issued in non-COMESA countries including Mozambique, South Africa and will soon be issued in Botswana and South Sudan under the Business to Business (B2B) arrangement. This will facilitate the smooth movement of vehicles from other regions to the COMESA region.

Yellow Card operations have been digitalized since November 2018, a move which has led to an unprecedented annual average growth rate of 15 percent.

Region's Annual inflation Rate Rose to 125.4%

The year-on-year annual inflation rate in the COMESA region stood at 125.4% for the month of December 2022 as measured by the Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI-COMESA). This was an increase from 99.3% registered in November 2022. A year earlier, the rate was at 147.5%.

The latest HCPI-COMESA Monthly News Release states that the inflation rate represents price changes recorded in the 12 divisions of expenditure. These include food and non-alcoholic beverages, clothing and footwear, housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels. Others are furnishings, household equipment, health, transport, communication, recreation and culture, education, restaurants and hotels among others.

Based on the main components of expenditure, the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels registered the highest annual inflation rate of +171.0% while restaurants and hotels registered the least average price change of +55.3%.

Member States that contribute to the HCPI-COMESA are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



National statisticians attending the GDP rebasing workshop

National Accounts Statisticians Trained on GDP Rebasing

More than 70 national accounts statisticians from 37 countries in Africa participated in a workshop on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rebasing in the framework of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), implementation in Africa. This is part of the Statistical Capacity Building Program, Phase 5 supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB) through COMESA.

The five-day workshop 30 January - 3 February 2023 was conducted in Kigali, Rwanda and involved expert training sessions on methodological issues related to rebasing of GDP and implementation of the 2008 SNA, country presentations and

discussions.

Chief Statistician at COMESA Secretariat Mr Themba Munalula who addressed the participants said the national accounts component of the programme aims at improving the statistical capabilities of African States qualifying for African Development Fund in managing their GDP rebasing efforts and implementing the 2008 SNA.

"The rebasing of the national accounts is an essential exercise, in line with the need for macroeconomic data that are reliable, exhaustive and consistent with the real economic situation of a country," said Mr Munalula. "The international

recommendation is that a country's national accounts should be rebased every five years."

This workshop was one of the activities in the national accounts statistics component covered by the multi-country statistical capacity building program (SCB-V). The other activity is an in-country technical assistance.

According to statistics experts, the rebasing exercise is becoming imperative and urgent, particularly in the current context of various international, regional, sub-regional and national commitments. It provides an ideal opportunity for countries to comply with international standards in terms of national accounts compilations, in particular, the implementation of the recommendations of the 2008 SNA. They introduce improvements in the measurement of economic activity (hidden economy, social action, foreign trade, informal sector, digital economy, environmental accounting) or to correct errors in estimates and measurements identified after the previous rebase.

Participants were informed that not all African nations have migrated to the 2008 SNA; some have, while others have just started. Further, the situation in Africa reveals significant challenges of human, material, and financial resources. While Africa is considering the implementation of the 2008 SNA, great strides are being made vis-à-vis the revision of the current SNA, under the leadership of the United Nations. Thus, opportunity to include African specificity and, more particularly, to create implementation strategies that are more successful than those that were previously used is now presented.

Steps Towards Upgrading Chirundu Border Post

The COMESA Secretariat is supporting the Government of Zimbabwe to prepare tender documents to facilitate the implementation of the Chirundu Border Post Upgrade Project. To this effect, a consultative meeting of key stakeholders in various Ministries and government agencies was held from 23-27 January 2023 in Kadoma, Zimbabwe.

This technical assistance to the country is supported through the European Union under the 11th European Development Funded Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP).

COMESA and the Government of Zimbabwe signed a sub-delegation agreement on 15th February 2021 for the project with a total funding of Euro 4,096,820 under the TFP. The project aims at enhancing Zimbabwe's participation in COMESA's

regional integration agenda to reduce poverty and inequality and thus contribute towards attainment of sustainable development in the country. Under the project, priority cross-border infrastructure and procurement of equipment will be upgraded. These include streamlining of electronic Certificate of Origin and Single Window System, enhancing and upgrading customs automated systems among others at the Chirundu border between Zimbabwe and Zambia. Once completed, these services will facilitate the increased efficiency of border coordinated systems making trade between the two countries streamlined and cost effective.

Twenty seven focal persons attended the consultative meeting. They included engineers, procurement experts, trade and legal experts, representing government ministries and agencies responsible for the implementation of the

programme. The consultative meeting facilitated the development and finalisation of tender documents that will culminate in the effective implementation of the Coordinated Border Management activities at the border.

The Government of Zimbabwe and COMESA are also in the process of signing a sub-delegation agreement for the construction of the Chirundu Border Market under the 11th EDF Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative.

Once constructed, the market will provide key gender-sensitive infrastructure to facilitate cross border trade between Zimbabwe and Zambia. This will maximize trade opportunities and increase incomes for the border communities.



COMESA Business Council Strategy Plans

Commitment to facilitate strong business synergies, advocacy and participation in regional integration



L-R: Teddy Soobramanien, CBC CEO, Mr. James Chimwaza- CBC 2nd Vice-President - Malawi, CBC President Mr. Marday Venkatasamy - Mauritius, Outgoing COMESA Assistant General for Programs, Amb. Kipyego Cheluget and Mr. Mucai Kunyihya , CBC 1st Vice President- Kenya.

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COMESA Business Council (CBC) conducted its Strategy Planning Meeting and 19th Board Meeting on 17th January 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia, with the immediate former Assistant Secretary General in Charge of COMESA programmes Dr. Kipyego Cheluget stressing the importance of implementing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Dr Cheluget, whose 10-year term of office ended on 31 January 2023 said the AfCFTA had huge potential to accelerate intra-Africa trade, growth of the private sector and infrastructure

development on the African continent. "For actualization of the effective implementation of the AfCFTA, there is need for COMESA and Africa to take positive action, such as development and implementation of enabling policy frameworks for sustainable businesses and robust economies," he said when he addressed the meeting.

CBC President Marday Venkatasamy called on CBC to increase its relevance by ensuring effective regional advocacy.

"For effective private sector development, I urge CBC to ensure that policy decisions taken at COMESA level translate into effective decisions at national level and need to facilitate establishment of institutionalized mechanism to translate national changes in legislation following policy decisions taken at regional level," he said.

Chief Executive Officer, Teddy Soobramanien reaffirmed CBC's commitment to facilitate strong business synergies, advocacy and participation in regional integration, investment and global trade.

COMESA Diary

Date	Activity/Event	Venue/ Format
13 – 17 February 2023	Identification of Commodities and associated SPS/TBT issues for Small-Scale Traders	Chirundu & Mwami/ Mchinji Border
17 – 18 Feb 2023	Training of Trainers on Rules of Origin	Nairobi, Kenya
21 – 22 Feb 2023	Second Meeting of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) Focal Points	Virtual
23 - 24 February 2023	Validation of legal metrology legislative framework for Burundi, DR Congo and Madagascar	Virtual
28 Feb – 2 Mar 2023	Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT sector (EGEE-ICT) Programme Technical and Steering Committee Meetings	Nairobi. Kenya



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