

## Over \$210 Billion Worth of Business Generated in COMESA as COMESA Competition Commission Turns 10

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1. Guests at the opening of the CCC celebrations with COMESA SG Chileshe Kapwepwe (3rd right) and Hon Simplex Chithyola (3rd left).

The 10 years anniversary celebrations of the COMESA Competition Commission (CCC) were held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 4 – 5 May 2023, an event that headlined key achievements of the commission in the past decade.

One of the most outstanding is investigating over 360 merger cases with the companies involved deriving an aggregate turnover of over USD 210 billion, which represents the amount of business generated from the Common Market.

The commission has also investigated 40 cases of restrictive business practices and 44 consumer cases and intervened to ensure that consumers are not misled nor exploited in the ordinary course of business.

Among the notable cases include the “Investigation into Agreements between the Confédération Africaine de Football, Lagardere Sports SAS, Orange SA and TOTAL SA relating to the commercialization of marketing rights for CAF competitions” and as well the investigation into resale price maintenance by The Coca-Cola Company. Other interventions included

consumer product recalls and compensation of passengers for unfair treatment by some regional airlines.

Hundreds of stakeholders representing governments, national competition regulatory authorities, development and cooperating partners local and international delegates from various institutions active in competition and consumer protection law enforcement and related matters attended the festivities.

Activities included a two-day conference marked by keynote statements from leaders, experts’ panel discussions on key issues in competition and consumer welfare matters the launch of the Commission’s refurbished website, an exhibition, excellence awards to business reporters and legal practitioners that have supported the CCC. COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe, Minister of Trade and Industry of Malawi Hon Simplex Chithyola and Chief Executive Officer of the Commission Dr Willard Mwemba were among the keynote speakers.

In her statement, Secretary General noted that despite numerous benefits of regional trade liberalization, which COMESA promotes, there are also risks of unfair business conduct and exploitation of consumers by unscrupulous businesses.

“The COMESA Member States foresaw this risk and therefore pursuant to Article 55 of the COMESA Treaty agreed to prohibit any practice that negates the objective of free and liberalised trade,” she said. Hence the establishment of the CCC to regulate competition and protect consumers within the Common Market on matters that have a cross-border dimension. Minister Chithyola hailed the achievements of the Commission stating:

“Effective implementation and enforcement of regional competition laws can only be realized where there are little or no structural and legal barriers to trade.” He underscored the commitment of Malawi government to support the Commission and announced the offer of land for the construction of its

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Left: President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera with Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe at the Presidential Palace in Lilongwe

## COMESA Programmes have Positively Impacted Malawi – President Chakwera

Malawi President H.E. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera has underscored his government's commitment to continue supporting COMESA institutions based in his country and programmes regional integration programmes being implemented in the region. He was speaking when he hosted the COMESA Secretary General (SG) Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe at the Presidential Palace in Lilongwe on 3rd May 2023. The SG was in the country for the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the COMESA Competition Commission (CCC) which is based in Malawi.

The President stated that his administration believes in fair trading practices among sector players in the country which the CCC continues to support this cause through various interventions.

Specifically, the President thanked COMESA for supporting government agencies in the country with capacity building programmes conducted by the CCC.

"I'm proud to say that the USD 1.9 million given to the Fair-Trading Commission (FTC) for capacity building in various government institutions has gone a long way in uplifting the standards of service delivery in the country," said the President.

The SG thanked the President for hosting two COMESA institutions including the COMESA Federation of Women in Business COMFWB. She assured that COMESA remains committed to always provide the needed support to its Member States and cited the newly commissioned USD 3.5 million Mwami/Mchinji One Stop Border Post between Malawi and Zambia.

She also cited the Malawi Enterprise Productive Enhancement (MEPE) project which has supported the leather, textile and agribusiness sectors in the country whose economic impact has been impressive. The project was funded by the European Union through COMESA.

COMESA is also supporting the construction of a 300km road to the tune of over USD 42 million under the Africa Investment Facility Grant.

COMESA Director of Trade and Customs Dr Christopher Onyango and the Chief Executive Officer of the CCC accompanied the Secretary General.

## Over \$210 Billion Worth ...

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headquarters.

In his speech, Dr Mwemba said despite the high number mergers and acquisitions investigated, the Commission's approach has always been cautious of the business implications of competition regulation. "It should also be borne in mind that mergers and acquisitions are a form of foreign direct investment such that their regulation has direct implications on FDI inflows into the Common Market," he noted. Others that addressed the participants included the chairperson of the Commission Ms. Ellen Ruparanganda and Mr Yahya Bellah, First Under Secretary and Head of Egyptian Commercial Office, representing the government of Egypt which is the current chair of COMESA.

Meanwhile, the 7th COMESA Business Reporters Forum, which brought together 21 journalists, staff of the Commission and COMESA Secretariat preceded the celebrations. The two-day event 2 - 3 May 2023 is an annual forum for strengthening the capacity of regional journalists to report on the activities of the Commission and the COMESA regional integration agenda.





## New Theme as the 22nd COMESA Summit Heads to Zambia

The 22nd COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit will be hosted in Lusaka, Zambia on 8 June 2023. Ahead of the Summit, a new theme that will focus the activities of the regional bloc for the next one year has been unveiled: "Economic Integration for a Thriving COMESA Anchored on Green investments, Value Addition and Tourism".

This theme has been motivated by the need to address the current regional and global economic and trade dynamics including the effects of COVID-19 which, especially affected tourism- dependent economies. Besides, the current geo-politics that continue to affect global supply chains, such as the conflict in Eastern Europe, high debt burdens and extreme weather conditions among others continue to weigh heavily on regional economies.

Hence, the theme was designed to rally COMESA Member States on key areas of focus in dealing with these challenges to ensure the regional integration agenda remains on track.

The COMESA theme is jointly developed by the host government in collaboration with the COMESA Secretariat. It therefore reflects the focus of the incoming chair of the Summit during his/her tenure. During the Summit, the President of Zambia, H.E. Hakainde Hichilema will take over the chair of COMESA from the current chair, the President of Egypt H.E. Abdel Fattah el Sisi.

Each Summit comes with a Theme which is maintained until the next Summit. Previous themes have been as follows:

2021 - 2023:	Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration
2016 - 2021:	COMESA: Towards Digital Economic Integration
2015 - 2016:	Inclusive and sustainable industrialisation
2014 - 2015:	Consolidating Intra-COMESA Trade through Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development;

## Malawi Urged to Speed up Joining ZEP-Re



Left: Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe with Malawian Minister of Finance Hon. Sosten Alfred Gwengwe

Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, has called on the Malawian government to speed up the process of joining the COMESA Re-insurance company ZEP-Re to foster the regional integration agenda.

This was during a courtesy call on the Minister of Finance for Malawi Hon. Sosten Alfred Gwengwe at his office on 5th May 2023 in Lilongwe. Currently, she said 86 percent of ZEP-Re shares are owned by the various Governments and Government institutions

while the rest are owned by private sector players.

"Hon Minister, you may wish to know that ZEP-Re is a highly rated company at B++ by global rating agencies and we are currently sitting on assets worth 500 billion US Dollars," she added.

The Minister has assured COMESA that his country will speed up the process of joining Zep-Re adding that his country is aware of the numerous benefits that comes with joining the institution, more so as Malawi is a founding Member State of COMESA.

"Malawi has been looking elsewhere for the reinsurance services because there has been lack of information on the availability of services from within and therefore I will engage my team to discuss further with your team so that we bring this matter to a conclusion," the Minister emphasized.

He added that more capacity building for the government and private institutions on re-insurance and services was needed.



Participants before touring the Kenya Meat Expo in Nairobi

## Regional Experts Discuss Ways to Improve Livestock Trade

Representatives from ten COMESA Member States concluded a three-day consultative meeting on 5 May 2023 in Kenya, which was convened to map out ways of enhancing trade and promoting sustainable regional and global value chains by small and medium scale actors in animal and animal products.

The participants were drawn from the government and the private sector as well as regional and world associations conducted. They discussed strategies to strengthen the capacity of producers, producer organisations and other value chain actors to enhance competitiveness, value addition and market access.

The delegates also identified challenges and agreed on the way forward to support small and medium scale dairy, poultry, meat, live animal and leather and leather products producers and value chain actors to improve their competitiveness.

Member States represented at the meeting included the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

On the agenda were topical issues including the current situation in the animal and animal product value chain and trade in COMESA, challenges in maintaining international standards and policy directions, improving standards/sanitary of animal and animal

products and activities by Member States in improving trade in dairy and poultry products. The COMESA region is endowed with huge livestock resources and in 2019, cattle was recorded at almost 170 million, goats at 168 million, sheep at 140 million and camels at 19 million among other animals.

Speaking at the meeting, COMESA Director of Agriculture and Industry, Mrs Providence Mavubi, said recent studies have identified that several Member States within the region face constraints in improving animal and animal products trade.

Major limitations include weak organizational capacity of small-scale operators, post-harvest loss, lack of basic information on the trade, inefficient cross-border trade facilities as animal products are perishable.

"There is need to step up efforts to promote domestic and regional trade, by enhancing competitiveness of products, facilitation/ smoothening of cross border trade as well as ensuring wider participation and empowerment of women and youth in the animal and animal product trade sector across the region," she said.

Kenya's Director of Livestock, Dr. Bishar Fille Elmi said the lack of access to markets for animal and animal products has confined livestock keepers and pastoralists to poverty

and food insecurity in the region and his country as well.

"Efforts to access regional markets have continued to face many challenges which include stringent Sanitary and Phytosanitary requirements, exotic quality standards, lack of market information, lack of linkages among enterprises in various countries, poor communication networks and inter-connectivity, lack of harmonized procedures and standards, Transboundary Animal Diseases, competition from cheap imports from other region," he noted.

Dr. Patrick Bastiaensen, representing the World Organization for Animal Health said, sourcing of safe and nutritious food of animal origin needs to remain high on the national and the regional agendas for decades to come.

Dr Nick Nwankpa representing the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources commended COMESA's efforts in promoting the involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Member States that attended the consultative meeting include the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.





# Ethiopia Moves Towards Liberalization of Trade in Services

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*Ethiopian services negotiators and stakeholders attending the COMESA Training Workshop on Trade in Services in Addis Ababa*

Trade in Services plays a key role in the economic growth and development of a country. Services directly support production but also value chains and create jobs and other economic and non-economic opportunities.

For Ethiopia, there exist numerous strategic services namely transport (air transport where Ethiopia Airlines remains a leader when it comes to air connectivity), arts, sports & recreational services. Others are financial, tourism and energy related services.

Over the years, Ethiopia has been undergoing crucial economic reforms in line with regional and international developments. The goal is to gradually yet effectively liberalize the economy, enhance competitiveness in production and export of goods and services.

Dr Chris Onyango, Director of Trade and Customs in COMESA, says it is in such context that COMESA undertakes to provide technical assistance and capacity building in services to Member States to facilitate the negotiations.

Addressing the Ethiopian services negotiators

and stakeholders attending the COMESA Training Workshop on Trade in Services in Addis Ababa, last month, he said this will facilitate speeding up the preparation of the country's services offer.

"It will enable the country to participate fully, not just in the COMESA regional integration, but also in the broad continental and multilateral contexts," he said. According to the Director, the workshop was therefore critical given the great interest expressed by the Ministry of Trade, Ethiopia, to speed up the stakeholder engagement process as Ethiopia finalizes its services offer in preparation for its submission.

At the training, the officials received practical guidance on how to prepare a Services Offer under the World Trade Organization, COMESA, and the AfCFTA, taking into account the special circumstances of the country.

Going forward, the trained officials are expected develop legal and institutional frameworks, defending the country's interests and positions with the knowledge acquired, on how to mainstream global and regional frameworks on trade in services into national development plans for easier

implementation of agreed commitments.

Currently, negotiations on trade in services liberalization programme in COMESA, the AfCFTA and WTO levels are still ongoing. These form an integral part of Ethiopia's national development and by extension regional economic integration. Thus, as a member of COMESA and the other regional economic communities, Ethiopia is expected to play an active role in these negotiations and make specific commitments in various services sector.

The training was funded under the 11th European Development Fund.

**"It will enable the country to participate fully, not just in the COMESA regional integration, but also in the broad continental and multilateral contexts."**



File photo/ Sampling maize grains for laboratory testing.

## Laboratory Quality Systems Education Course

Over Sixty lab technicians from all COMESA Member States have graduated from a six-month course on Laboratory Quality System (LQS) which is a process approach to ensure accurate, defensible and timely results. The online course is part of the continuing education programme by AgriLife Research of the United States of America in collaboration with COMESA Secretariat.

The two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2022 to support mycotoxin risk management involving aflatoxins and fumonisins for trade commodities and staples.

COMESA advertised the course in August 2022 and solicited applications from individuals from all Member States who had a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science, Biochemistry, Chemistry or a related discipline. In addition, would be participants had to be employed and responsible for laboratory operations and analysis.

Nearly 80 applications were received with each participant indicating why they wished to take the course and how they would apply the knowledge together with a letter of resources commitment from their laboratory.

Participants who completed all course assignments in the four units namely ISO/IEC 17025:2027 laboratory standard, quality control techniques, method validation and laboratory management and scored 70% or higher received a certificate of completion.

Technical Barriers to Trade Expert at COMESA Secretariat Dr Mukayi Musarurwa said participants appreciated the continued access to the materials for use in their laboratories.

"Specifically, they mentioned that they would use the course materials and concepts to improve their laboratories and share the newly acquired knowledge with colleagues," Dr Mukayi added.

## Central Banks Staff Trained on Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium Modelling Framework

Seventeen economists representing nine Central Banks from the COMESA region have been trained on basic analysis of various monetary policy transmission channels using the Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium Modelling Framework (DSGE).

The training was organized by the COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) and conducted on 24 - 28 April 2023 in Nairobi Kenya. It provided a platform for knowledge sharing and networking among staff from member central banks. CMI Director Dr Lucas Njoroge said the training on the DSGE modelling for monetary policy formulation particularly in inflation targeting monetary policy regime was critical for the participants as most Central Banks are transitioning to the new system.

"Contemporary monetary policy formulation requires information and forecasts on the interaction between sectors and variables in the economy while underscoring that the DSGE framework is best suited given its richer micro-foundation that captures economic relationships than other comparable models," he said.

Participants were drawn from Burundi, D R Congo, Egypt, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The skills gained are expected to contribute to improved monetary policy formulation and ultimately enhance the implementation of the COMESA Monetary Integration Programme by all COMESA member countries.





*Participants to the two-day partnership dialogue between COMESA and UNDP at Sarovah Hotel in Lusaka*

## COMESA, UNDP Unveil Roadmap for Deepened Strategic Partnership

COMESA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) unveiled a roadmap for deepened strategic partnership in the region and announced new areas for joint programming that consider innovation, adaptability and sustained regional leadership aimed at addressing Africa's development challenges. This was during a two-day partnership dialogue between the two organisations in Lusaka, Zambia 4 – 5 April 2023.

The dialogue themed: "Enhancing COMESA-UNDP Synergy for Regional Integration and Promoting Socio-Economic Opportunities in the Borderlands of East and Southern Africa", attracted participants from the UNDP regional offices in Kenya, Zambia and COMESA staff.

The two-day dialogue aimed at strengthening the

partnership between the two organizations and provide an opportunity to advance towards common goals in the areas of economic development, investment, peace and security, environmental sustainability and cross border cooperation in the region.

Secretary General of COMESA, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe addressed the meeting. She stressed the central role of regional integration to the successful realization of the region's aspirations for sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

"COMESA's concrete initiatives on trade integration focus on gender equality and youths, democracy and governance, small-scale cross-border trade initiatives, conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction and development initiatives," she said.

These initiatives have been facilitated through various cooperating partnerships both at the regional and international level to address the thematic issues, that are critical in the attainment of regional peace and security, and which include transnational organized crimes, youth empowerment, children affected by armed conflict, and climate security. UNDP Zambia Resident Representative, Lionel Laurens expressed the necessity for women and youths to thrive, by unlocking the full potential of the region by creating a more prosperous future for all.

He added that UNDP seeks to deepen collaboration on supporting Africa's borderland communities adding that Africa's borderlands and communities are a unique source of ingenuity, places of untapped opportunity and of great resilience.



Trademark Africa Chairman Mr. Erastus Mwencha accompanied by the CEO Mr. David Beer paid a courtesy call on acting COMESA Secretary General Dr Dev Haman in Lusaka, Zambia on Thursday 4 May 2023. Their discussions focused on reinforcing the existing partnership and collaboration in trade facilitation projects without duplication.

Dr Haman briefed the delegation about the upcoming 22nd COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Government which is scheduled for 8th June 2023. Preceding the Summit will be a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 6th June and the COMESA Business forum on the 7th of June. Mr Mwencha is a former Secretary General of COMESA.





The High Table during the opening session of the High Level Ministerial Meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi.

## Conference to Advocate for Inclusion of Young People in Peace Building in East Africa

More than 120 delegates representing young people, governments, Regional Economic Communities and Civil Society Organisations are meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi to advocate for more inclusive participation of youths in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in east Africa.

The meeting from 9 – 12 May is discussing the many challenges that youths have continued to face and it will propose ways that governments should consider implementing to change this situation for the benefit of the region. Speaking during the opening ceremony on Tuesday 9th May, all partners called for the recognition of the strategic role that young people have continued to play in governance issues.

Burundi's Minister of East African Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture Dr. Ezechiel Nibigira who addressed the meeting called on governments in East Africa to include young people in national programmes and give them the needed support to achieve their aspirations.

"The seemingly low levels of inclusivity of young people in many national programmes and turning a blind eye to their demands has

contributed to some conflicts which could have easily been prevented," he noted. Pledged Burundi government's commitment to work with the young people.

African Union Commission representative for the Great Lakes Region and Head of the Liaison Office in Burundi, H. E. Sghair M'berek said the adoption of the Continental Framework on Youth Peace and Security in 2023 and its 10-year implementation plan, added the much-needed impetus to the empowerment of youth in peace and Security.

"Conflict is multi-dimensional and it requires that a wide range of stakeholders work together to address conflict which must be done in a coordinated manner," he said. "I believe the Continental Framework and its implementation plan have provided the Member States, AU and RECs a very good tool to include a very important stakeholder, the youth, in the quest for peace and security in a coherent manner."

The Head of Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) at COMESA Secretariat Ms Elizabeth Mutunga added that RECs, and Regional Mechanisms are a good vehicle to support the

empowerment of youth as they have a platform to encourage sharing of experiences and exchanges on best practice.

"We have found that there is normally a lot of value on youth learning from youth based on experiences. This makes them good providers of skills to empower the youth people," she noted. The COMESA Governance, Peace and Security programme has commenced an internship programme to provide hands-on experience to young people in an environment that supports regional integration and regional peace and security.

Ms Mutunga said this has become a symbiotic relationship, where the engaged youth acquire valuable skills, while COMESA benefits from the young people's innovative ideas.

Others that spoke are Mr Geoffery Kirenga, Save the Children Burundi Mission Director, Angel Mbutia, the Chair of the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel and Diana Chado, the AU Youth Ambassador for Peace East Africa Region.

The Burundi conference is the third of a series of four conducted in the COMESA Region. The last





Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe with the COMESA Federation of Women in Business Acting CEO Chikakula Miti (in blue suit) and staff in Lilongwe on 5th May 2023.

## COMESA DIARY

Date	Activity/Event	Venue/ Format
9 – 12 May 2023	3 <sup>rd</sup> High-level Ministerial Conference on the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in the East African Region	B u j u m b u r a , Burundi
16 – 18 May 2023	Awareness on the Importance of Metrology to National Development	Djibouti
22 – 26 May 2023	COMESA Ministers of Infrastructure Meeting	Kigali, Rwanda
6 June 2023	22 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting of COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs	Lusaka, Zambia
7 June 2023	COMESA Business Forum and Exhibition	Lusaka, Zambia
8 June 2023	22 <sup>nd</sup> COMESA Heads of State and Governments Summit	Lusaka, Zambia



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