

## COMESA Summit Takes Place this Month

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### New theme developed to deepen business integration and economic recovery

The 21st COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit will take place on 23 November 2021. Consequently, a new Summit theme has been developed to rally Member States on the focus area in the implementation of regional integration programmes.

The Summit will be hosted by the Government of Egypt and comes three years since the last one held in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2018.

The theme is: **"Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration,"** and was motivated by the emerging regional and global economic and trade dynamics which have impacted heavily on the COMESA regional

integration agenda, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is expected to rally Member States on how to safeguard and advance the COMESA regional integration agenda using digital platforms given the uncertain nature of shocks.

At the forthcoming Summit, the President of Egypt, H.E Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, will take over the chair of the COMESA Heads of State and Government (also known as the Authority) from the outgoing chair, H.E Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar.

The 21st Summit will be conducted in both physical and virtual formats and will be preceded by two policy organs meetings: the 42 Meeting of the Council of Ministers and the 42 Intergovernmental Committee.

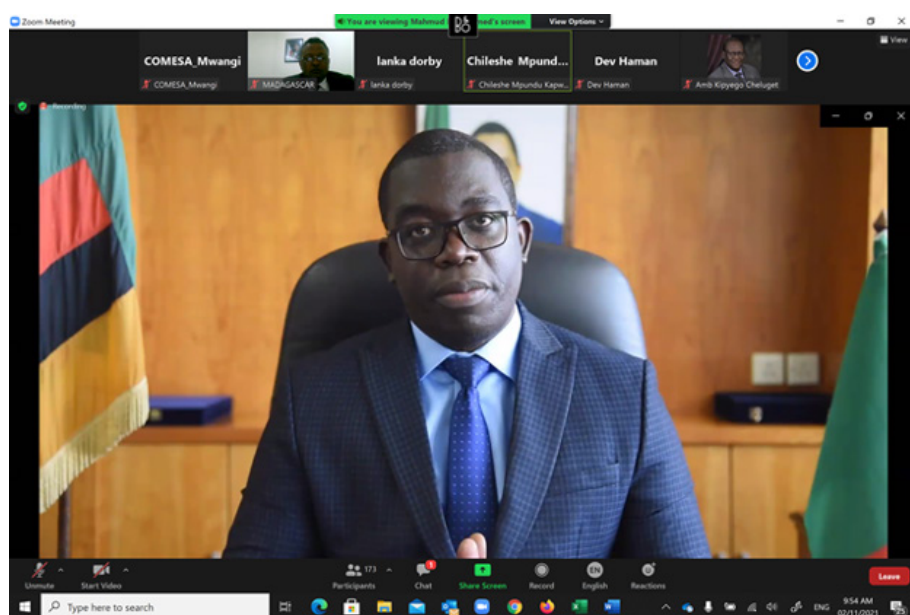
The Council will meet on 9 – 10 November 2021

to make decisions on various recommendations presented by the Intergovernmental Committee (IC) on the way forward in implementation of COMESA integration programmes. The IC will meet on 2 – 4 November 2021.

The IC comprises of Permanent/Principal Secretaries responsible for the development of programmes and action plans in all fields of co-operation except in the finance and monetary sector. It will review progress reports presented by various sectoral committees and COMESA institutions and make recommendations to the Council of Ministers for decision-making.

The Summit theme was jointly developed by the government of Egypt and the COMESA Secretariat.

# Fresh Call to Regional States to Implement COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Guidelines



Minister Hon Chipoka Mulenga

## Minister says supply chains are still constrained and prices for inputs and consumables rising

A fresh call has been made to COMESA countries to ensure full implementation of the guidelines for the movement of goods and services that was developed last year to facilitate regional trade during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Zambia Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon Chipoka Mulenga told delegates attending the 42nd COMESA Intergovernmental Committee (IC) virtual meeting from 02 - 04 November 2021, that supply chains are still constrained and prices for inputs and consumables are rising in Member States.

"Our countries have now started to experience the negative impact of Covid-19 induced disruptions of supply chains and weakening demand levels in our trading partners as our trade volumes are showing marked declines," said the Minister.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Tuesday,

02 November 2021, the minister noted that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to further weaken the performance of the Member States' external markets and will also have negative impacts on imports into the region affecting availability of supplies which will lead to further increase in prices.

Data from COMESA Statistics indicates that the value of intra-COMESA total exports declined by 11% from US\$ 10.9 billion in 2019 to US\$ 9.7 billion in 2020. Similarly, the value of COMESA's total exports to the world decreased by 27% from US\$ 123.4 billion in 2019 to US\$ 90.3 billion in 2020.

Minister Mulenga urged the 21 Member States to start strategizing on how to maintain the balance between the need to keep markets open while safeguarding the legitimate public health interests of Member States.

"One area where significant progress has been made is automation of cross-border clearance processes, the electronic tracking of movement of drivers and their cargo and the enhanced

coordination of operations of border agencies," he said adding that this has reduced non-tariff barriers at border crossing and contributed to keeping supply chains for essentials goods open.

The Guidelines for the Movement of Goods and across the COMESA Region were adopted by the 8th COMESA extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers in May 2020, to minimize disruption to cross-border trade services.

Secretary General of COMESA, Chileshe Kapwepwe, noted that the path to full integration of the region is still marked by obstacles in the movement of people and services. Hence the Secretariat has continued to build capacity of Member States on services negotiations and trade in services statistics.

She said: "Globalization of services provides the opportunity for developing countries and the COMESA region in particular, to find new niches where they can specialize, upscale and achieve rapid growth just as East Asian countries did in manufacturing."

She appealed to Member States to continue the implementation of the guidelines and make use of the Online Platform that was developed last year to ensure availability and seamless flow of goods and services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The IC comprises of Permanent/Principal Secretaries responsible for the development of programmes and action plans in all fields of co-operation except in the finance and monetary sector.

The meeting will review progress reports presented by various sectoral committees and COMESA institutions and make recommendations to the Council of Ministers for decision-making. The Council will meet on 9 - 10 November 2021 followed by the 21st COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit on 23 November 2021 in Egypt, whose theme is: Building Resilience





# Zambia launches Structural Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Strategy



Guest of Honor, Zambia's Acting President Madam Mutale Nalumango (centre) with other guests during the official opening at Mulungushi Conference Centre, Lusaka

The Government of Zambia has launched the Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Process (CSVRA). The strategy is expected to enhance national resilience and responsiveness to various structural vulnerability factors that can impact on Zambia's stability, security, and development

Supported by the African Union Commission (AUC) and COMESA Secretariat, the CSVRA is designed to facilitate the identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict at an early stage. Zambia volunteered to undergo the CSVRA process through a Cabinet Memo submitted to both AU and COMESA in October 2020.

It focuses on identifying drivers of violent conflict in diverse areas such as socio-economic development, good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights and in the security sector. This is in addition to environment and climate change, gender and youth, post conflict peace-building and transitional justice, and reconciliation.

Zambia's Acting President Madam Mutale Nalumango presided over the official launch in Lusaka.

"Let this process take Zambia to higher heights in the quest to making the country a beacon of peace and unity, noting that the new dawn government is a continuation of the benefits of democratic processes arising from peaceful transition of power, a timely reminder to Africa

and world that Zambia is making strides that are part of the good governance agenda..." noted Mrs Nalumango who is the Vice President of Zambia.

She described the CSVRA as one of the ways of creating stability as a catalyst for sustainable development, anchored on local participation especially in areas that are more prone to disasters such as floods and droughts in the country.

COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe described the launch as historic because Zambia is the first country in the COMESA Region to volunteer to undertake this process and only third in Africa after Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

"...Zambia has continued to show leadership in adopting key instruments on governance peace and stability...for example, Zambia was the second country in COMESA to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and among the top ten in Africa to do so," Ms Kapwepwe point out.

She was represented by COMESA Assistant

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Secretary General for Programmes Dr Kipyego Cheluget.

African Union Commission (AUC) Senior Political Officer Ahmed Mokhtar described the CSVRA as a unique and home grown Pan African process that seeks to identify and acknowledge structural vulnerabilities, build upon resilience factors and invest in mitigation measures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

Mr Mokhtar added that the role of the AUC and COMESA is to provide technical support which can be useful in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

Meanwhile, COMESA Secretariat and the AUC conducted a half-day consultative workshop, Thursday, 28 October 2021 with Permanent Secretaries and senior government officials in Zambia. The session received presentations on the Ghana and Ivory Coast experiences as case studies. The two countries have already launched their national strategies to address and mitigate the structural vulnerabilities identified.

Following the CSVRA launch, teams comprising of Zambian stakeholders supported by AUC and COMESA will proceed to hold wider consultations with stakeholders in the provinces across the country. Various diplomatic corps accredited to Zambia and development partners attended.

## Ministerial Conference on Youth in Regional Peace and Security



File Young people attending a COMESA event

### Initiative seeks to promote peace in the Horn of Africa

A five-day high-level ministerial conference on the role of regional economic communities in promoting the youth, peace and security agenda in the East and the Horn of Africa will take place in Nairobi, Kenya 1- 5 November 2021.

The objective of the conference is to promote the youth peace and security agenda through advocacy for more inclusive policies and meaningful engagement of young people in peacebuilding and conflict prevention mechanisms. The conference is jointly organized by the African Union working with COMESA, the Government of Kenya, and civil society organisations namely Save the Children, Life and Peace Institute and the Horn of Africa Youth Network.

The participants will review the implementation of international and regional legal and policy frameworks for youth in peace and security for different countries in the Horn of Africa. The event will also be an opportunity to popularize the frameworks to promote the

role of youth in peace and security.

In addition, varied initiatives and programmes developed or endorsed by governments, regional economic communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RM) to capacitate young people in the Horn of Africa will be showcased. They include the early warning systems of COMESA (COMWARN), the COMESA Youth engagement strategy, the AU Youth Peace and Security Framework among others

The conference will expose the region's youth on the current youth peace and security initiatives across the Horn of Africa region by regional governments, RECs and RMs including limitations and successes. There will be emphasis on partnerships and the significance of governments, AU, RECS/RMs, development partners and the young people working together in advancing the youth, peace and security agenda within the Horn of Africa region.

A communique will be issued at the end of the conference to inform policy changes following review of the international and regional legal

and policy frameworks in the region.

The conference will be attended by Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the Ministries of Youth Affairs and Foreign Affairs within the Horn of Africa namely Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Somalia. Other participants will be youth leaders from the National Youth Councils as well as the AU's African Youth Ambassador for Peace (AYAP) representative, Community Youth Leaders and Development Partners.

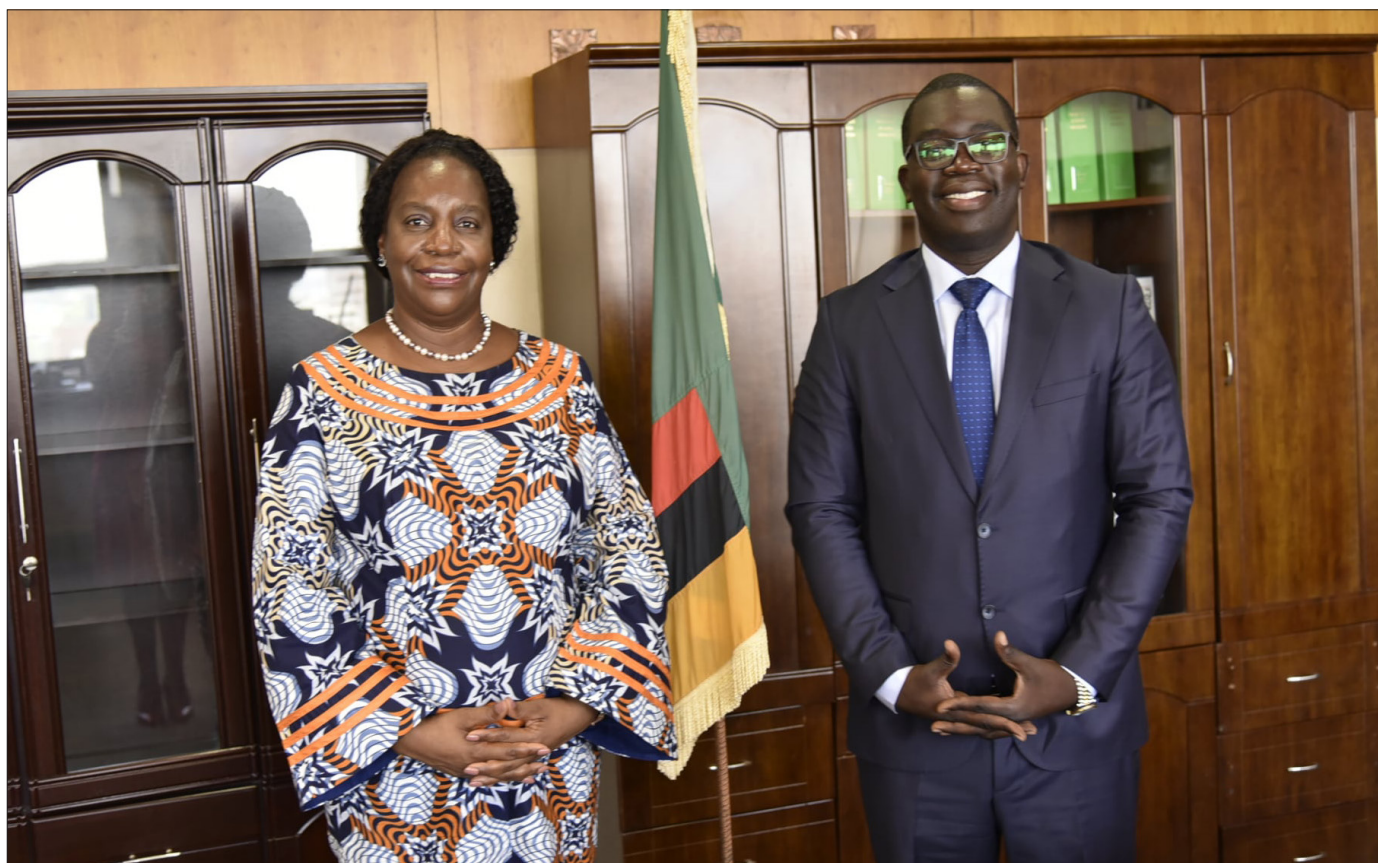
The first two days will be targeted at technical officers from Ministries responsible for youth affairs and foreign Affairs as well as youth representatives while the Ministerial engagement will commence on 3rd November 2021.

The conference is organized by the Directorates and Units for Peace and Security from the AU, COMESA Secretariat, Save the Children, Life and Peace and the Horn of Africa Youth Network.





## Zambia is re-strategizing to increase its intra-COMESA trade share



Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon. Chipoka Mulenga, with COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe at his office

The new government of Zambia is working on fresh strategies to increase its trade within the COMESA region, by closely collaborating with the COMESA Secretariat, which is based in Lusaka. This is according to the new Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon. Chipoka Mulenga.

In a meeting with COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe who paid a courtesy call on him at the Ministry, Wednesday 27 October, the Minister said the country has not been performing well in trade within COMESA, hence the need to re-strategize.

COMESA trade statistics indicates that Zambia's

total exports to the COMESA region increased by 3 percent between 2019 and 2020. The increase in nominal value terms was from US\$1.23bn in 2019 to US\$1.27bn in 2020. Zambia's imports from the COMESA region declined by 40 percent from 2019 to 2020 from US\$700 million in 2019 to US\$422 million in 2020.

Major destinations for Zambia's exports into COMESA region in 2020 were the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Burundi. Zambia's exports to Congo DR in 2020 were mainly sulphuric acid worth, copper ores & concentrates, waters, cement and electricity. Top export products to Malawi were tobacco and cement. Zambian products that were destined

to Zimbabwe were oilcake and cement. In 2020 Kenya imported raw cane sugar from Zambia worth US\$ 13.4 million

Ms Kapwepwe briefed the Minister on various programmes under implementation by the regional organization included access to markets, industrialization, trade development and harmonization, value addition and the tripartite Free Trade Area, among others.

The Director of Trade and Customs, Dr Christopher Onyango, Director of Gender and Social Affairs Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde and Executive Support Officer Mrs. Maluba Sinyambo accompanied the Secretary General.

### COMESA Diary

Dates	Activity	Venue
02 November	Launch of the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) for Zambia	Lusaka, Zambia
01 – 05 November	Joint High Level Ministerial Conference on Youth, Peace and Security	Nairobi, Kenya
2 – 4 November	42 <sup>nd</sup> Intergovernmental Committee	Virtual
9 – 10 November	42 <sup>nd</sup> Council of Ministers meeting	Virtual
11-12 November	Committee on Peace and Security	Virtual
16 November	Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting	Virtual
23 November	21 <sup>st</sup> COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit	Egypt/ Virtual



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