



PRESS RELEASE

COMESA Secretariat signs sub-delegation agreement with Malawi to upgrade Mchinji Border Post

19 January 2021: The COMESA Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Malawi have signed a 3.54 million Euros agreement that sub-delegates the implementation of coordinated border management activities under the broader Trade Facilitation programme with COMESA at Mchinji border post between Zambia and Malawi on the Malawian side. The Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Malawi, Ms. Christina Zakeyo, and COMESA Secretary General, Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe, separately signed the sub-delegation agreement in Lilongwe and Lusaka this week.

The project will support the implementation of key pillars of One Stop Border Post (OSBP) operations. Some of the major activities to be implemented under this agreement include upgrading the customs e-management system and bandwidth; improving inter-agency connectivity; implementation of the Trade and Transport Corridor Management System; capacity building, training and sensitization of National Trade Facilitation Committee and Border Agencies among others.

The signing of the sub-delegation agreement comes a month after a similar agreement was signed with the Zambian Government to upgrade its side of the border post at Mwami, on 27th November 2020. This new development is part of the 48 million Euros Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) with COMESA financed under the 11th European Development Fund (11 EDF) with the objective of deepening regional integration, improving inclusive regional economic growth and enhancing the competitiveness of the COMESA region.

The Principal Secretary stated that “the signing of the sub-delegation agreement came after an assessment of existing challenges conducted at Mchinji border post in early 2020”. She thanked the European Union for the support rendered under the programme through COMESA Secretariat to improve the facilitation of trade at Mchinji/Mwami border post. Ms Zakeyo added that the support is a testimony of the continued and strengthened collaboration between Malawi and the European Union. The COMESA Secretary General and her staff were also commended for the technical support rendered during the inception and development of Malawi’s project. The Government of Malawi desires to build on current trade facilitation efforts through programs such as the COMESA Trade Facilitation Project. The interventions at Mchinji border post are expected to enhance efficiency and ultimately reduce the cost of doing business and the support is therefore, timely as Malawi grapples with the negative effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In her remarks, Secretary General Kapwepwe explained that the modalities of implementation of the sub-delegated activities provide an opportunity for Malawi to take ownership and lead in the implementation of the activities. The COMESA Secretariat will provide technical guidance.

Mr. Jacek Jankowski, Ambassador of the European Union to Zambia and COMESA stated that “We welcome the signing of the agreement as a major step towards reduction in hindrances to trade at the border and that will lead to increased seamless flow of goods between Zambia and Malawi.”

In the same vein, the chargé d'affaires at the European Union Delegation in Malawi, Ms. Aurélie Valtat, expressed optimism that “as African states start trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the removal of any form of hindrances to cross-border trade is critical to ensure the benefits of open trade. That is why the European Union remains committed to supporting Malawi’s trade facilitation efforts and to contributing to boosting intra-Africa trade”.

By the end of the implementation period of the project, it is expected that clearance times and costs for goods processed through the border posts will be reduced. Likewise, the number of reported non-tariff barriers and cases of corruption and harassment will also record a reduction, while on the other hand, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in revenue collection through increased trade flows.

The following are links to the 11th EDF programmes:

- <https://twitter.com/ComesaEu>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/eu-comesa-trade-and-business-bba9701b6/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/EU-Comesa-Trade-Business-101295638453398>
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI4K34NDUOG3ydk0NIGJFKQ>

Contacts:

Ms. Mshuka Kamwela, EDF Programme Manager, COMESA Secretariat, mkamwela@comesa.int;

Mr. Joseph Silavwe, Project Manager, EU Delegation, joseph.silavwe@eeas.europa.eu;

Msc Christiane Haziyo, Programme Officer, EU Delegation, Christiane.haziyo@eeas.europa.eu

Mwangi Gakunga

Head - Corporate Communications

COMESA Secretariat

Email: mgakunga@comesa.int

Tel: +260 971873343

Namambo DELOT

Press & Information Officer

Delegation of the European Union to Zambia and COMESA

Email: Namambo.delot@eeas.europa.eu

Phone: +260 977 774603