



# LAUNCH OF THE COMESA CIVIL SOCIETY/PRIVATE SECTOR **ONLINE PLATFORM**

21<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2021. LIVINGSTONE - ZAMBIA

Link to the COMESA-CSO/Private Sector platform: <https://gps.comesa.int>



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**Save the Children**



## **Introduction**

Article 3 (d) of the Treaty of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa – COMESA, prioritizes the promotion of peace and security in the region. This is in recognition that without peace and security, the regional integration agenda cannot be realized and sustained. To this end, COMESA has been implementing different programmes in peace and security in the areas of:

- Conflict Prevention,
- Conflict Management,
- Governance and Democratization
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development and
- Maritime Security.

## **Partnering with the Civil Society**

In the implementation of these programmes, COMESA under the Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) unit has been working closely with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the region. This partnership and collaboration is based on the various decisions of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Specifically, the Second Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Lusaka, Zambia on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2001 made a Decision to involve Civil Society and Private Sector Organizations in peace and security matters within the framework of the COMESA Programme on Peace and Security.

## **Objective of the COMESA/CSOs partnership**

The objective is to enhance the role of the Civil Society and Private Sector Organizations in conflict prevention, management and peace building given that conflicts in the COMESA region are complex and call for multi-faceted approaches. This in turn requires a variety of stakeholders including CSOs/Private Sector Organizations to work together to address them.

## **Ministerial Decisions on CSOs**

The Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2005 urged COMESA to work closely with Civil Society Organizations in the region in the promotion of the peace and security agenda. The meeting further directed the COMESA Secretariat through the Governance, Peace and Security Unit to identify and accredit credible CSOs in the region through national consultations.



### **Rules and Procedures Developed**

In response to the Ministerial Decisions, the Secretariat developed Rules and Procedures for accrediting Civil Society and Private Sector Organizations and these were validated by Government Officials, representatives from Civil Society and Private Sector Organisations in Eswatini in May 2004 and adopted by the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Kampala, Uganda in June 2007.

### **Country Consultations Conducted**

As a follow up, the COMESA Secretariat conducted 17 Country-level consultations in the following member states:

- Burundi
- Comoros

- Djibouti
- DR Congo
- Egypt
- Eswatini
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Sudan
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe.

### **Accreditation of CSOs**

Through the National Consultations, 30 organizations were granted accreditation. Subsequent meetings of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs granted accreditation to additional CSOs in the region. In its work plans COMESA has continued to involve Civil Society Organizations in promoting the COMESA Early Warning System (COMWARN) Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) methodology through participation in the national multi-stakeholder consultations, development of mediation handbooks for resource-based and electoral-related conflicts and elections' observation, among others.

### **Purpose of Accrediting CSOs/Private Sector Organizations**

- To establish a formal working partnership for the promotion of peace and security in the region;
- To enable the Peace and Security Programme to obtain information or expert advice from the Civil Society or Private Sector Organizations with special expertise in a particular sector of the Programme's activities;
- To enable such Civil Society or Private Sector Organizations whose activities have an important and direct bearing on the work of COMESA to have an input in the proceedings of the Programme.



## Principles applicable to accreditations of CSOs/Private Organizations to COMESA's Peace and Security Programme

- The promotion of good governance and corporate governance as a way of conflict prevention;
- The promotion of trade-based practices/strategies for peace-building, and in particular the elimination of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons; the prohibition of trade in minerals and other natural resources for the purpose of financing conflicts; prohibition of dumping of toxic waste and the elimination of drug trafficking;
- The promotion of the ban against the manufacture, transfer, stockpiling, sale, use and removal of existing land mines;
- Participation in development efforts in the COMESA region;
- The promotion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) activities.

## Areas of collaboration between COMESA and accredited CSOs/Private Sector Organizations

- Information sharing;
- Promotion of a culture of dialogue, peace and tolerance;
- Capacity building;
- Mobilisation of financial and other resources;
- Promotion of trade-based practices in peace building as a way of preventing conflicts;
- Provision of peace workers;
- Provision of research and training in conflict management and peace building.

## Criteria of accreditation of CSOs/Private Sector organizations

- The organization accepts the fundamental principles underlying the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa as provided for in Article 6 of the COMESA Treaty;
- The purposes of the organization are directly related to the fundamental and operational principles of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and are fully in harmony with its spirit and functions;
- The organization can contribute to the strengthening of regional integration in the COMESA region;
- The organization is able to enhance development partnerships;
- The organization possesses objectives of common interest to Member States as enshrined in Article 3 of the COMESA Treaty;
- The organization has past, current or projected activities which can be reasonably considered to demonstrate the relevance of its work and interests to those of the Programme;
- The organization has at least three (3) years of active operation in the COMESA region.

## COMESA CSO/Private Sector Organization Platform

COMESA Secretariat in collaboration with the African Union - Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), and the Save the Children Fund have developed an online platform for the CSO/Private Sector to serve as information sharing hub to promote collaboration and partnership in the implementation of peace and security programmes.

# Strategic Analysis Course



## Objectives of the platform

- Information sharing on relevant themes in the area of peace and security;
- Interactive forum for policy debates;
- Platform for CSOs/Private Sector Organizations to showcase their work in areas of peace and security; and share best practises
- Provide a platform for networking and collaboration among CSOs/Private Sector Organizations in the region;
- Provide a platform for engagement at regional and continental levels between CSOs, RECs, AU and other international organisations.

Link to the COMESA-CSO/Private Sector platform: <https://gps.comesa.int>

**PROGRAMME FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE COMESA CSO/  
PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS PLATFORM**

0900 – 0930	Remarks
	Representative of the Save the Children International
	Representative of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC)
	Secretary General of COMESA
0930 -1000	Demonstration of the CSO/Private Sector platform (COMESA IT Division)
1000 – 1030	-Official launch of the Platform





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