



STATEMENT

**COMESA SECRETARY GENERAL
CHILESHE MPUNDU KAPWEPWE**

**AT
THE OPENING OF THE TRAINING ON COMWARN SVAS FOR
KENYA STAKEHOLDERS**

17TH MAY 2021

Distinguished Commissioners and Staff of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission of the Republic of Kenya

Honourable Members of Parliament of the National Assembly of Kenya

Senior Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya

Representative from the African Union Commission

Representatives from Save the Children

Members of Staff of the COMESA Secretariat

I am delighted to welcome you to this High-Level training workshop that is aimed providing the Commission a better understanding of the COMWARN SVA methodology and utility. We hope the workshop will also provide greater impetus to the Kenyan authorities to hasten the implementation COMESA COMWARN SVAs and the African Union Conflict Country Structural Vulnerability Assessments and Mitigation Strategy.

Before I get into the main business of the day, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to our partners the African Union Commission for the support you have accorded us throughout the development of COMWARN. Personnel from the AU Continental Early Warning System have been very instrumental in the success of the development of COMWARN through technical support provided to us as well as sharing some of their tools and consultants. The AU CSVRA and COMWARN SVA processes use similar methodologies to provide complementary results and I believe the kind of partnership we forged has advanced the implementation of both systems at a greater pace and with more impact than any of our two organisations could have achieved on their own.

I also wish to acknowledge the representatives from Save the Children who are among the latest strategic partners to join hands with us as we collectively work

to towards enhancing peace, security, and stability in this region. The need to address the issues of children affected in armed conflict cannot be overstated and I trust our two organisations will make a visible impact on children in our region.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Zambia SVA stakeholders for accepting our invitation to share experiences with the Kenyan authorities later in the week. Zambia is the first country in COMESA to volunteer for the CSVRA process of the AU and only the third in the Continent. I hope that the experience earned from Zambia will provide enough incentives to hasten Kenya to incorporate the use of COMWARN SVAs into the national early warning system as well as volunteer for the AU CSVRA process.

Distinguished Delegates

As some of you are aware, COMESA has been implementing an early warning system that provides forecasts on the structural drivers that could lead the country towards higher or lower levels of peace and prosperity. The model, which is anchored on the COMESA Peace and Prosperity Index has the overall goal of supporting member states to build resilience. We were therefore very encouraged by the request from the Commission for COMESA to provide training on the COMWARN SVA process, especially that you intend to use this model of explore a social cohesion index.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that certain events can devastate economies over a very short time including the industrialised countries, which were the most affected by the severity of the Pandemic. We are grateful that our region did not suffer the worst of the Pandemic and it would be important for us to see it as a wake-up call that will lead us to develop preventive actions. Importantly, all our countries need to focus on strengthening the resilience that will make us more prepared to withstand any future global threats. These include

epidemics, pandemics, and climate change among others, which could undermine the gains that were made over the years. This will call for prioritising the identification of structural vulnerabilities factors in respective member states with the view of strengthening them. While these efforts may seem to be costly especially given the state of our economies, I believe it will be infinitely more expensive if we are hit by another crisis before building our resilience. In this vein, I wish to congratulate the Kenyan authorities for the initiative you are taking in considering the development of a cohesion index as you prepare to go for elections.

Distinguished delegates

The benefits for any country to incorporate COMWARN SVAs into your early warning system and volunteering to undertake the AU CSVRA/MS process cannot be overstated. The process will enable Kenya stakeholders to systematically identify areas of vulnerability as well as agree on the best response options. Most importantly, the process will be driven by Kenyan stakeholders and not external parties. I would however like to assure you that COMESA and the AU will work closely together to mobilize the necessary resources to ensure its success. Apart from equipping your situation room, which shall be done by the AU, we shall also support the meetings and workshops as well as support the recruitment of a consultant who will be identified by Kenya once the country agrees to volunteer to the process. We shall also readily provide you whatever technical support that you shall need to ensure that the process is successful.

I hope that the Kenyan authorities will also prioritize the customisation of COMWARN SVAs into their early warning system and thus join Zambia which has been a pioneer in this matter. We need to establish Member States Champions on SVAs so that ultimately, we can create a critical mass of Member

States that start to deliberately focus on prioritising the address of structural factors of conflicts.

Distinguished Delegates,

As I conclude, I must say that I am very delighted that the Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also invited the Committee of Parliament that deals with matters of Cohesion and Integration to this workshop. That is a winning combination towards championing the SVA process.

I would like to urge the Commissioners represented here as well as the Members of Parliament to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be in the forefront in championing the SVA and CSVRA processes in Kenya. I once again thank all of you for coming and I really look forward to the rest of the workshop.

I thank you all.