

## Seychelles Affirms Commitment to COMESA



2nd from right: SG Chileshe Kapwepwe introducing part of her delegation to President Ramkalawan

The President of Seychelles His Excellency Wavel Ramkalawan has affirmed his government's commitment to COMESA and called for deepening of regional integration through increased intra-regional trade among the 21 Member States.

President Ramkalawan says the COMESA region needs to move from mere discussions and signing of agreements to implementing decisions that will produce tangible progressive results which will have a positive impact on the lives of its citizens.

He was speaking at State House in Victoria on Mahe island in Seychelles on 31st August 2021 when he met COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe who was on a four-day official visit to that country.

"My government is committed to COMESA and expect our full support. As an organization, we need to move to making positive impact on the ground. We need programmes that our people will directly benefit from. Decisions made at the various meetings need to be implemented," said President Ramkalawan.

He also talked of the need to have a more affordable air transport system with easy

connectivity which could boost intra-COMESA trade as goods would move from one country to another without much delays and at a reasonable cost.

On her part, Secretary General Kapwepwe commended Seychelles for being a consistent and active member of COMESA who believes in its ideals. She said COMESA's current strategy which focuses on economic prosperity through regional integration is meant to positively transform the lives of the people and bring about sustainable economic development.

She mentioned some of the key benefits that COMESA offers such as a harmonized trade regime, a more competitive market, greater industrial productivity and competitiveness, more harmonised monetary, banking and financial policies and more rational exploitation of natural resources.

She also commended Seychelles for always paying its subscription fees on time a move that contributes to the Secretariat implementing set programmes.

During the working visit, SG Kapwepwe held bilateral meetings with various Ministers including Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism Hon. Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister of Finance Hon. Nadir Hassan, Minister of Investment, Entrepreneurship and Industry Hon. Mrs Devika Vidot, Minister of Youth, Sports and Family Hon. Mrs Marie Celine-Zialor and the Minister of Agriculture.

The COMESA SG was accompanied by the Director of Information and Networking Ms Lanka Dorby, Director of Industry and Agriculture Mrs Providence Mavubi and Mrs Muzinge Chibomba from the Corporate Communications Unit.

“ **My government is committed to COMESA and expect our full support. As an organization, we need to move to making positive impact on the ground. We need programmes that our people will directly benefit from. Decisions made at the various meetings need to be implemented,**” said President Ramkalawan.

# Seychelles Launches the COMFWB National Chapter



The Government of Seychelles has launched the COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB) National Chapter. The office hosted at the Seychelles Investment Board (SIB) under the umbrella of the Ministry of Investment, Entrepreneurship and Industry is expected to promote programmes that integrate women into trade and development in the region.

The National Chapter was officially launched by Republican President Wavel Ramkalawan at a colourful event at Eden Blue Hotel in the Capital Victoria Mahe. He immediately commended COMESA for all efforts geared towards supporting the economic development and empowerment of women which ultimately contributes to the country's economic growth.

"We salute the remarkable work being done by COMFWB and wish the Seychelles Chapter all the very best as they take on this journey to support government in achieving goals of promoting industrialisation and entrepreneurship specifically at Micro Small and Medium Enterprises,"

Speaking at the same event, COMFWB Chairperson Ms Maureen Sumbwe said women play a critical role in the economic

development of Member States through entrepreneurial activities, wealth and employment creation.

"I have no doubt in my mind that for our regional economic integration agenda to be achieved, we must ensure that women are equipped with the necessary resources, skills and opportunities to start and grow their business. This Chapter is here to work on those areas," Mrs Sumbwe said.

Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe added that COMESA Member States agree that women make significant contribution towards the process of socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth. "It is good that Member States acknowledge that, it would be impossible to implement effective programmes without the full participation of women," Ms Kapwepwe noted.

To this end, the Secretariat is implementing activities which galvanise support for public policy reforms and private sector actions that promote women's entrepreneurship across the COMESA region.

Other keynote speakers at the vent included the Ministers of Investment, Entrepreneurship

and Industry Hon. Mrs Devika Vidot, Minister of Youth, Sports and Family Hon. Mrs Marie Celine-Zialor, the Governor of the Central Bank of Seychelles Ms Caroline Abel and the Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Society Platform Seychelles among others.

All the speakers mentioned the importance of including women in trade and development programmes and introduction programmes in skills development and easing access to finance. The use of digital platform was also highlighted as key for women entrepreneurs if they are to effectively contribute to economic growth.

Earlier in the week on 30 August, Seychelles launched the offices of the COMFWB National Chapter.

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## COMESA to Host 1st RECAMP Steering Committee Meeting

The inaugural Steering Committee (PSC) meeting for the Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme (RECAMP) is expected to be held virtually on Tuesday 7 September 2021.

The PSC meeting will provide an opportunity to review the progress made towards implementation of the RECAMP activities that commenced in January 2020 as well as review some of the key challenges encountered so far. According to a statement issued from the COMESA Secretariat, this meeting will enable stakeholders to come up with key

recommendations and overall policy and strategic guidance, necessary for the smooth implementation and coordination of the programme.

The RECAMP is funded under the 11th European Development Fund to the tune of Euro 8.8 million. Through this support, RECAMP is expected to galvanize the deepening of regional economic integration in the COMESA region by increasing and strengthening private sector participation in regional and global value chains. The main focus will be on three priority value chains

namely, Agro-processing, Horticulture and Leather and Leather Products.

These value chains are recognized as key and instrumental towards not only increasing regional integration but fulfilling the industrialization agenda as outlined in the COMESA Mid Term Strategic Plans (MTSP). Other key tenets of RECAMP are to further improve competitiveness, market access and improvement of the business environment particularly for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who remain the cornerstone of COMESA's Industrialization aspirations.

## COMESA To Support Seychelles with Climate Change Fund

Seychelles is among four COMESA countries that will benefit from the US\$5.7million grant provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to enhance monitoring and reporting of climate actions. The other three are Zambia, Eritrea and Comoros.

The five-year project titled Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) will enable beneficiary countries to comply with the Paris Agreement's enhanced transparency

framework under Article 13.

The framework specifies how Parties to the Agreement must report on progress in climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and support provided or received in capacity building, climate finance and technology. Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe made this announced on Monday 30 August when she met the Seychelles Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Sylvestre Radegonde in

Victoria town on Mahe Island in Seychelles that the support is in response to the project submitted by the country.

"Hon. Minister I am pleased to inform you that your country is among the four that will benefit from this grant from the GEF. Once the technical teams have finalized their work, these funds will start flowing in," Ms Kapwepwe said.

## COMESA SG Attends Business Event for Visiting UK Minister for Africa

Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe met the visiting United Kingdom (UK) Minister for Africa Mr James Duddridge on Tuesday 24 August 2021 who was in Lusaka to attend the inauguration of Zambia's 7th Republican President His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema.

The business event hosted by the British High Commissioner to Zambia Nicholas Woolley was attended by leading local business leaders, Chief Executive Officers of financial institutions and captains of industry who mingled with the Minister discussing various issues centred on business.

Ms Kapwepwe used the occasion to discuss with the Minister on various issues of mutual interest.



2nd from right: SG Chileshe Kapwepwe with Minister James Duddridge (3rd from right) interacting with guests

# ESREM Validates Tariff Guidelines for the EA-SA-IO region



The Enhanced Sustainable Regional Energy Market (ESREM) Project has validated several guidelines developed to assist stakeholders enhance investment in renewable energy, promote energy efficiency and improve access to electricity.

The validation was conducted on 24th and 25th August 2021 during a virtual workshop where guidelines such as the Renewable Energy Incentive Mechanisms, the Renewable Energy Credit Line Facility Guideline and the Lifeline Tariff Policy Guideline were discussed. Others discussed included the System Loss Reduction Guideline and the Initial Open Access Guideline.

Participants to the workshop included representatives of Regional Economic Communities, power pools, centers of excellence for renewable energy and energy efficiency, Ministries in charge of Energy Affairs, and national energy regulators in the Eastern Africa-Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) Region.

Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA), Dr. Mohamedain Seif Elnasr officially opened

the workshop indicating that the focus was to enhance investment in renewable and energy efficiency which is relevant to the United Nation's Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Dr. Mohamedain stated that the EA-SA-IO Region has some notable examples of successful deployment of Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) models with private sector participation that offer examples of financial and investment sustainability adding that such models of market creation combined with improvements in RE/EE technological development can give impetus to the further development of RE/EE markets.

"It has been established that EE has potential to offer a cheaper way of investment into additional capacity to meet the ever-increasing electricity demand and there are EE quick wins that have been identified and can be exploited cheaply and quickly," He added.

It has also been established that both RE and EE present opportunities of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the energy sector hence contributing to low carbon

development in the region and achievement of SDG 13 which requires taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

In addition, Dr. Mohamedain disclosed that both the RE and EE will contribute to SDG 12 that ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns due to a wide range of benefits from the applications that can address time poverty by easing burdens of women in their roles as agricultural champions and providers of food, energy and water at the household level; as energy entrepreneurs; and facilitate provision of RE for productive purposes.

He said that it's for this reason that the CPCS Transcom International Limited in association with Multiconsult Norge AS and Econoler has been engaged to facilitate the implementation of harmonized regulatory/technical frameworks and synthesized renewable energy and energy efficiency in the EA-SA-IO region.

CPCS has since developed the draft guidelines, which were presented to the workshop for stakeholders' consideration and guidance.



## COMESA SG Confers with AU Deputy Chairperson

COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe recently met the African Union (AU) Deputy Chairperson Her Excellency Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa in Lusaka, where they discussed various issues of integration. This was their first meeting after assuming high offices at COMESA and the AU respectively.

During the brief meeting, Ms Kapwepwe who was accompanied by her two Assistant Secretaries General Amb. Kipyego Cheluget in charge of Programmes and Dr. Dev Haman in charge of Administration and Finance, updated the AU Vice Chairperson on a number of integration programmes being implementing by COMESA.

These included highlights on the innovative digital programme on value and supply chains which has resulted in the development of e-payment, e-logistics, e-trade platforms to help facilitate trade in the region amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Your excellency, the COVID 19 pandemic has actually opened our eyes we have since started to increase production of goods locally through the established value chains in the region due to shortages of essential commodities during the COVID," Ms Kapwepwe said.

This she said will result in high production of materials locally leading to industrialization in the region. She added that with the help of development partners such as the European Union and the African Development Bank, COMESA has created online trading platforms which are currently being used by various Member States.

"Due to digitalization, we are encouraging young people to come on board as they are more tech savvy and therefore the need to harness more of their innovations to improve the online trading platforms," Dr. Nsanzabaganwa appealed to all the Regional Economic Communities in Africa to embrace technology in order to improve productivity.

"it's Africa's time to ensure that we stand on our own and produce enough for our own consumption without depending on other parts of the world. I know that we can do it especially if we stand as a united force because we have what it takes to be self-reliant," Dr Nsanzabaganwa noted.

The AU Deputy Chairperson was in Zambia to attend the inauguration of Zambia's 7th Republican President His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema.

## COMESA Bids Farewell to Three Staff

COMESA Secretariat has bid farewell to three members of staff including the Director of Human Resources and Administration (DHRA) Mrs Martha Elimu whose last working day is 14 September 2021.

Mrs Elimu, who has reached retirement age, is leaving after working for the Secretariat for 9 years having joined as the Chief Human Resources Officer in 2012 and becoming the DHRA in 2018. Others bidding farewell are Mr Youssef Ibrahim an IT Expert who has served COMESA for 12 consecutive years as Automated Data Processing Expert for the ADP ASYCUDA programme.

Others are Mrs Ruth Limbambala who has worked for the organization for 38 years. She joined the then Preferential Trade Area from its inception in March 1983 and worked in the office of the Secretary General serving the first six Secretaries General from the time of the PTA to COMESA before moving to other divisions including the COMESA Court of Justice.

Speaking during the virtual farewell ceremony held on Wednesday, 25 August 2021, Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe commended the three for having served the organization with diligence and contributed to the deepening of regional integration programmes.

"We are celebrating, instead of being saddened by your departure from service. Colleagues, this is because we all cherish and hold deep in our hearts, fond memories of the high-quality professional interactions we shared with you," SG Kapwepwe said.

The Secretary General described Mrs Elimu as a pillar of human resources and administrative strength, coming with extensive experience and valuable institutional memory.

Mr Ibrahim was described as having been the go-to expert on ASYCUDA matters, making the project, in a humble, mature and proactive manner, respected by stakeholders. While Mrs Limbambala was commended for her high level of professionalism, alertness and conscientiousness, coupled with excellent grooming and deportment, qualities which have been regular highlights during all COMESA meetings.

Also in attendance during the virtual farewell ceremony was the Assistant Secretaries General for Programmes and Administration and Finance Dr Kipyego Cheluget and Dr Dev Haman both of whom commended the three colleagues for their hardwork and commitment to duty. The three staff thanked executive management for having provided wise counsel and guidance throughout their stay and service to COMESA Secretariat.

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