

## COMESA, AU Sign Protocol to Consolidate Relations



Left: COMESA SG Chileshe Kapwepwe, AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and EAC Secretary General Dr. Peter Mathuki holding copies of the Protocol

COMESA has signed the Protocol on Relations between the African Union Commission (AUC) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) meant to consolidate relations with the mother body. Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe signed the Protocol in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 4 February 2022 on the margins of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Governments.

The Protocol aims to among other things, formalise, consolidate and promote closer cooperation among the RECS and between them and the AU through coordination and

harmonisation of their policies, measures, programmes and activities in all fields and sectors in line with the principle of subsidiarity and complementarity.

Other regional economic communities that have already signed the Protocol include the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This Protocol entered into force on 10 November 2021 after being signed by the Chairperson of the Commission and three chief executives of three RECs.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission HE Moussa Faki Mahamat and East African Community (EAC) Secretary General Dr. Peter Mutuku Mathuki witnessed the signing of the Protocol.

HE Kapwepwe was in Ethiopia to attend the 40th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the African Union. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government met physically for the first time in two years since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# COMSHIP Launched in Tunisia to Widen Regional Seed Market



*Stakeholders in the seed industry during the launch of COMSHIP in Tunis*

Tunisia has become the 19th COMESA Member State to launch the Regional Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP). The overall goal of COMSHIP is to implement the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations which are expected to enhance seed production, reliability, improve seed trade including increasing the competitiveness of the seed industry in the southern and east African region.

The launch was facilitated by the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), a specialized agency of COMESA mandated by Heads of State and Governments to integrate smallholder farmers into domestic, regional and international markets through an improved policy environment, expanded market facilities, services and capacity building. Speaking in Tunis during the launch in December 2021, Director of Agriculture and Industry at COMESA Secretariat Mrs Providence Mavubi commended Tunisia

for the commitment to regional integration programmes adding that other Member States would benefit from that country's expertise in agriculture and livestock farming.

"We commend the government of Tunisia's commitment to COMESA's agenda and we will continue to encourage exchange visits with other Member States in order for the region to learn from each other and develop the agriculture sector for the benefit of its people," Mrs Mavubi said.

The event in Tunis also enabled the COMESA team to create awareness on COMSHIP and the Seed Trade Harmonisation regulations, highlight the status of COMSHIP at regional and national level, distribute the publications on the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulation and it allowed local delegates to develop a national roadmap on the alignment of the Tunisian seed laws to the regional seed harmonisation regulations.

The participants agreed to conduct wider

consultative meetings with the stakeholders such as farmer organisations, civil society, non-governmental organisations dealing with seed production and marketing, seed companies, agro-industry and institutions involved in research among others.

Tunisia is expected to adopt the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations by June 2022.

The COMSHIP is a framework that describes the implementation plans and modalities required to effectively implement, monitor and ensure compliance and execution within the COMESA Member States.

Tunisia joins Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Eswatini, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.





# RIFF Holds Planning Workshop for Project Roll-out



RIFF PIU orientation workshop in progress

The Regional Infrastructure Financing Facility (RIFF), an investment financing arm funded by the World Bank to support infrastructure development in the COMESA region is set to roll out its activities for 2022.

Recently, the Project Implementation Unit of the RIFF held a three-day orientation workshop in Siavonga south of Lusaka to discuss the work plan and review the guidelines, processes and

procedures that apply to the World Bank and COMESA Secretariat.

The objective of the interaction was to enable officers and partner divisions and units from COMESA Secretariat to have a common understanding of the RIFF implementation plan and the linkages.

RIFF was launched in August 2020 and has three

components which include a US\$325 million credit facility for Project and Infrastructure Finance. This will provide long term finance to infrastructure projects that meet the development impact criteria and it will be administered by the Trade and Development Bank (TDB).

The second Component is the COVID Infrastructure Sector Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Response with US\$75 million which will facilitate access to debt financing to renewable energy. It will support SMEs such as the Solar Home-Systems (SHS) operating in Southern and Eastern Africa to provide power to households. This is also administered by the Trade and Development Bank (TDB).

The last Component is Technical Assistance set at US\$25 million with sub-components such as Capacity Building. The TDB will benefit from this sub-component by receiving expertise to support the bank's strategic decision to scale up project and infrastructure finance and strengthen its capacity on Environmental & Social Safeguards.

The second sub-component is Capacity Building and Technical Assistance to COMESA Secretariat pegged at US\$ 10 million and will support the enabling environment for private infrastructure finance with a focus on building a regional off-grid energy market.

It will allow the COMESA Secretariat to support the harmonisation of policies and regulations for cross-border infrastructure, trade and investment, regional integration activities on the off-grid energy sector and market development activities in in Fragile Conflict and Violence (FCV) countries.

## COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite CEOs Confer



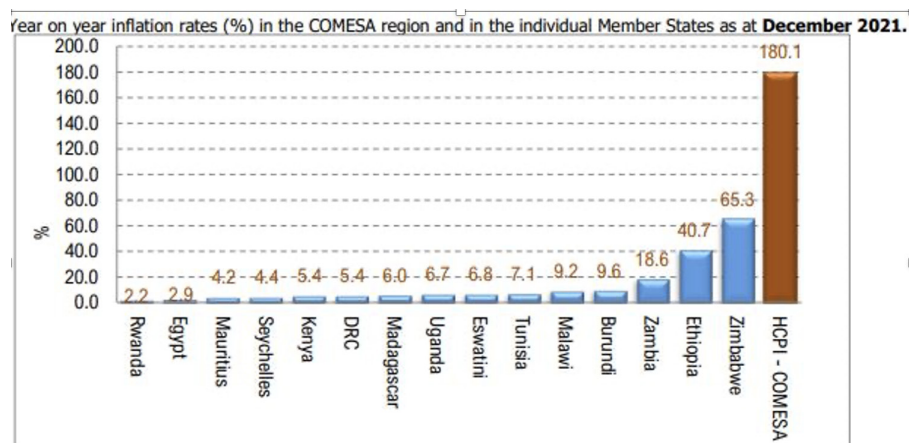
From left to right: HE Dr. Peter Mathuki, EAC Secretary General, HE Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, COMESA Secretary General and HE Elias Mpedi Magosi, SADC Executive Secretary.

Chief Executive Officers of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Taskforce held a breakfast meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 6 February 2022 on the margins of the Assembly of the African Union.

The Taskforce discussed among other issues, the progress made with regard to the ratification of the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement and the upcoming Tripartite Meetings.



# Regional Annual Inflation Rate at 180.1% to Close 2021



Sudan recorded the highest year-on-year inflation at **(+292.0%)** with Rwanda recording the least average change at **(+2.2%)** during the same period.

## COMESA Year on Year Inflation Table

The annual inflation rate in the COMESA region was recorded at 180.1% as at December 2021. According to the latest Harmonised Consumer Price Index (HCPI) monthly news release produced by the Statistics Unit at COMESA Secretariat, the December inflation rate was up from 156.8% registered in November 2021.

A year earlier, the rate was at 94.1%. The month-on-month inflation rate in the

COMESA region as measured by HCPI-COMESA stood at 14.5% for the month of December 2021, up from 7.9% registered in November 2021. It was 5.1% in December 2020.

The HCPI-COMESA comprises of twelve divisions of expenditure which registered the different average price changes during the month of December 2021 compared with December 2020.

Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages recorded +117.7%; Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco +93.8%; Clothing and Footwear +118.1%; Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels were at +110.2%; Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance +210.3%; Health +101.6%; Transport +164.6%; Communication +112.9%; Recreation and Culture +1072.8%; Education +207.5%; Restaurants and Hotels +533.5%; and Miscellaneous Goods and Services +161.3%.

Participating Member States that contribute to HCPI-COMESA registered the following rates of total inflation in December 2021 compared to December 2020. Burundi (+9.6%); Democratic Republic of Congo (+5.4%); Djibouti (+2.4%); Egypt (+2.9%); Eswatini (+6.8%); Ethiopia (+40.7%); Kenya (+5.4%); Madagascar (+6.0%); Malawi (+9.2%); Mauritius (+4.2%); Rwanda (+2.2%); Seychelles (+4.4%); Sudan (+292.0%); Tunisia (+7.1%); Uganda (+6.7%); Zambia (+18.6%); and Zimbabwe (+65.3%).

## Sudan Ambassador to Zambia Pays a courtesy call on COMESA SG



From left to right: Mrs Maluba Sinyambo, Ms. Haifa Mustafa, HE Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, COMESA Secretary General, Sudanese Ambassador, HE Al Walead Hassan Abdo Hassan and Jeromine F Fanjanirina.



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