

# COMESA NEWS

Vol 4 | Oct - December 2021

## The 21<sup>st</sup> **COMESA SUMMIT** in Focus

### Inside

- New COMESA Chairperson outlines priorities
- COMESA trade fairs to make comeback
- Building regional capacities in trade negotiations
- Call to restart the regional customs programme
- New study done on formalizing the informal economy in the region
- Trade experts meet to speed-up negotiations on market access
- COMESA's new Theme

# Editorial

## Time to align instruments of governance with the new reality



Finally, the 21st COMESA Summit has come to pass. This is one Summit that experienced unprecedented challenges. First was a sudden change of government in Sudan, which was the prospective host in 2019, to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The two developments delayed the Summit for two years. To host the Summit in 2021, amidst a ranging pandemic, it took the resolve of the Egyptian Government and COMESA Secretariat to ensure it happened. Supported by technology, the event was a first; a hybrid, with the host President as incoming chair of COMESA, alongside the outgoing chair and President of Madagascar, conducting the Summit physically in Cairo. Going by the number of Heads of State that attended virtually and some physically, it was one of the most successful in recent times. But one thing has come to the fore; that regional integration activities cannot stop as there will always be solutions around challenges that emerge from time to time. That is why the instruments that underpin governance and implementation of regional integration ought to be aligned with the new order that the pandemic has thrust upon us. The drafters of the COMESA Treaty, for example never envisaged a situation where policy organs, more so the Summit, would meet virtually. But that is now the reality. Physical meetings have had to give room to the virtual and the hybrid. It is time therefore to consider revisiting the supreme instruments of governance to align them accordingly with the new reality.

*Mwangi G*

## COMESA INSTITUTIONS

COMESA Clearing House  
COMESA Monetary Institute  
Trade and Development Bank  
African Trade Insurance Agency  
COMESA Competition Commission  
PTA Reinsurance Company  
COMESA Regional Investment Agency  
Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute  
COMESA Federation of Women in Business

### Specialized Agencies

Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa  
COMESA Business Council  
Regional Association of Energy Regulators in Eastern and Southern Africa  
East African Power Pool

### Judicial Arm

COMESA Court of Justice

## CONTENTS

- 1 COMESA Summit Conducted in November
- 3 New COMESA Chairperson outlines priorities
- 5 Leaders urge for upscaling investments in health
- 7 COMESA annual report 2020 is launched
- 10 Trade experts meet to speed-up negotiations on market access
- 11 COMESA conducts study on formalizing the informal economy in the region
- 13 Building regional capacities in trade negotiations
- 15 COMESA Member States validates regional resilience framework
- 17 Civil society trained on conflict early warning tools
- 20 Zambia launches structural vulnerability assessment and resilience strategy
- 23 New study identifies gaps in youth engagement in democratic governance
- 27 COMFWB, D R Congo trains business mentors
- 27 100,000 Euros worth of equipment to facilitate border trade fish trade commissioned in Zambia
- 31 COMESA at the Dubai Expo

### EDITORIAL TEAM

#### EDITOR:

Mwangi Gakunga

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

Mwangi Gakunga  
Muzinge Nampito-Chibomba  
Daniel Banda

#### ARTWORK/LAYOUT:

Philip Siphon Kambafwile

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

Philip Siphon Kambafwile  
Daniel Banda  
Mwangi Gakunga  
Muzinge Nampito-Chibomba

#### Disclaimer

The COMESA News is published by the Corporate Communications Unit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa – COMESA. Articles and photos in this publication may be freely reproduced but with acknowledgement of the source. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the policy of COMESA.





## COMESA Summit Conducted in November

New theme developed to deepen business integration and economic recovery

The 21st COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit was held on 23 November 2021. The Summit was hosted by the Government of Egypt and came three years since the last one held in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2018. Consequently, a new Summit theme was developed to rally Member States on the focus area in the implementation of regional integration programmes.

The theme: ***“Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration,”*** was motivated by the emerging regional and global economic and trade dynamics which have impacted heavily on the COMESA regional integration agenda, such as the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Summit rallied Member States on how to safeguard and advance

the COMESA regional integration agenda using digital platforms given the uncertain nature of shocks.

At the Summit, the President of Egypt, H.E Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, took over the chair of the COMESA Heads of State and Government (also known as the Authority) from H.E Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar.

The 21st Summit was conducted in both physical and virtual formats and was preceded by two policy organs meetings: the 42 Meeting of the Council of Ministers and the 42 Intergovernmental Committee.

The Council met on 9 – 10 November 2021 to make decisions on various

recommendations presented by the Intergovernmental Committee (IC) on the way forward in implementation of COMESA integration programmes. The IC met on 2 – 4 November 2021. Both meetings were virtual.

The IC comprises of Permanent/ Principal Secretaries responsible for the development of programmes and action plans in all fields of co-operation except in the finance and monetary sector. It reviewed progress reports presented by various sectoral committees and COMESA institutions and made recommendations to the Council of Ministers for decision-making.

# Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration



## Record attendance at the 21st Summit

The 21st COMESA was attended by nine Heads of State and Governments, the highest in recent times. They included the host President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, Pres. Evariste Ndayishimiye, (Burundi), Pres. Andry Rajoelina (Madagascar) Pres. Mohamed Younes al-Menfi, (Libyan Presidential Council), Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth (Mauritius), Pres. Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Pres. Wavel Ramkalawan (Seychelles), Pres. Mohamed Abdullahi



(Somalia) and Pres. Kais Saied (Tunisia).

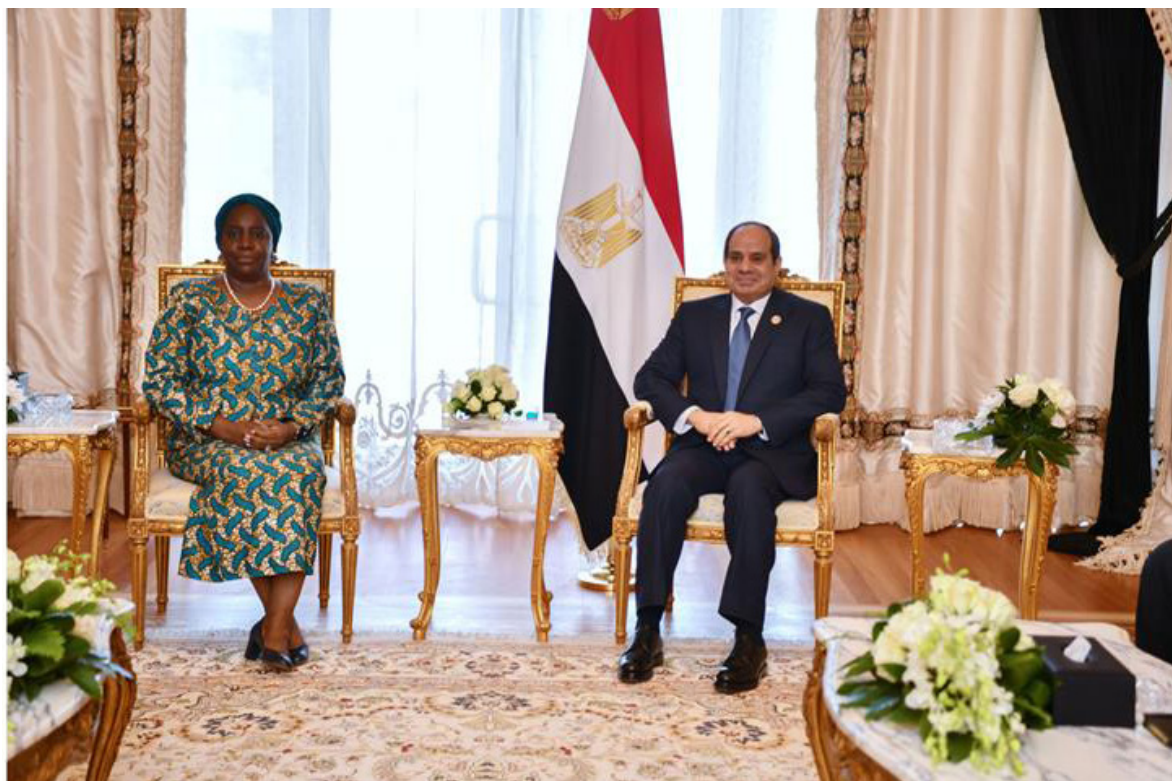
In the previous Summits, three heads of State attended the 20th and 19th Summits (2018 and 2016) and seven each at the 18th and 17th Summits in 2015 and 2014 respectively. These Summits were, however, fully physical.

At the Summit in Egypt, three Vice-Presidents attended and presented statement on behalf of their respective

Heads of State. They were Mr Saulos Chilima, (Malawi) Madam Jessica Alupo (Uganda) and Madam Mutale Nalumango of Zambia. The DR Congo President, who is the Chair of the African Union, was represented by Amb. Didier Mazenga Mukanzu, Minister of Regional Cooperation while the President of Kenya, who is the chairperson of the East African Community was represented by Treasury Cabinet Secretary, Amb. Ukur Yatani.



# New COMESA Chairperson outlines priorities



President Abdel Fattah El Sisi (R) meets COMESA Secretary General, Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe at the Summit in Cairo

Egypt took over the Chair of COMESA from Madagascar, which had been steering the organization since 2016. President Abdel Fattah El Sisi took over from President Andry Rajoelina of Madagascar during the 21st Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Governments on 23rd November in Cairo, Egypt.

Heads of State and their representatives attended the Summit physically and virtually. Soon after, President El-Sisi outlined his areas of focus during his tenure as the Chair of COMESA, which are also aligned with the COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2025. The MTSP was launched at the Summit.

His focus, he said will be on achieving regional economic integration by working towards elimination of barriers to regional trade and promoting

“.....  
Egypt firmly believes in  
the importance of regional  
and continental integration  
and constantly seeks to  
develop intra-trade within this  
integration,” President El-Sisi

industrialization to increase productivity in the region.

“Egypt firmly believes in the importance of regional and continental integration and constantly seeks to develop intra-trade within this integration,” the President said.

He also identified infrastructure development particularly transport, energy, information, communication

technology as his priority. Moreover, encouraging the flow of investments in the region, promoting regional integration in the health sector would also be top on his agenda.

During his tenure, he will also focus on creating a conducive business environment, particularly initiatives targeting digital transformation and financial inclusion to serve small- and medium-sized companies.

President El Sisi commended his predecessor, President Rajoelina, for the concrete achievements realized to strengthen regional economic integration. President Rajoelina was chairperson of COMESA for three years, out of the cumulative five years that Madagascar was at the helm of the regional bloc.

In his address, President Rajoelina said

*Continued to page 4*



*Continued from page 3*

digital transformation has been a key plank in his tenure. Specifically, he said digital trade had proven critical during the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked the COMESA Secretariat for coming up with digital solutions, such as online platforms, to facilitate trade.

Nonetheless, he said the major challenge to regional integration remains funding.

"If we really want COMESA to become an effective tool of development, we have to think of better alternatives of financing opportunities," he said.

The 2021 Summit themed "Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration" was held three years after the last was hosted by the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia, on 18 - 19 July 2018. Egypt last hosted the COMESA Summit in 2001.

Heads of State who participated and addressed the Summit were; President Evariste Ndayishimiye, (Burundi), Pres. Kais Saied (Tunisia), Pres. Mohamed Younes al-Menfi, (Libyan Presidential Council), Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth (Mauritius), Pres.

Wavel Ramkalawan (Seychelles), Pres. Mohamed Abdullahi (Somalia) and Pres. Paul Kagame (Rwanda). Three Vice Presidents; Malawi, Uganda and Zambia and two ministers from Kenya and D R Congo represented their Heads of State and addressed the Summit.

The leaders called for adoption of digital technologies, harmonization and adoption of policies that promote the creation of such systems in various sectors. They further, stressed the need to develop green economies in the region to cushion the impact of climate change. They commended the COMESA Secretariat for implementing innovative systems such as the digital online platform to facilitate trade amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In her address to the Summit, Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe said that, owing to the COVID-19, the COMESA region's average growth had slowed to 0.6% in 2020 down from 5.2% in 2019 and 6.0% in 2018.

"It is my hope that renewed commitment will address the challenges faced by COMESA, which include amongst others,

slow ratification and domestication of legal instruments, delayed implementation of the Decisions by the Authority and the Council of Ministers," she said.

Other leaders that spoke at the Summit were the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the World Bank Director for Regional Integration, Africa, Middle East and North Africa Regions, Ms. Boutheina Guermazi, and the African Development Bank President, Dr Akinwumi Adesina.

.....  
**"If we really want COMESA to become an effective tool of development, we have to think of better alternatives of financing opportunities,"** President Andry

**Rajoelina.**





## Leaders urge for upscaling investments in health

COMESA Heads of State urged Member States to scale up investment in research and innovation in the health sector and to prioritize all programmes that would enhance socio-economic recovery and generate more resilient societies that are ready to respond to disasters that may come.

In their Communique issued at the end of their 21st COMESA Summit, the leaders noted the devastating socio-economic and cultural effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across various sectors of the economy and the low vaccine production and access in the region.

They urged Member States to invest in digital infrastructure to enhance universal access to internet to address the challenges arising from the digital divide and support the digitalization of the economies.

The focus on the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic and way forward, is in line with the theme of the COMESA Summit: Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration, which advocates for the application of ICT solutions in driving regional integration forward.

They commended Egypt, Rwanda, Uganda and other Member States that are taking initiatives for vaccine production and called for the fair global distribution of vaccines particularly for Africa.

Further, the Heads of State endorsed the establishment of a Multi-Sectoral Technical Committee on health matters to coordinate and support regional programmes on health-related matters at the COMESA Secretariat. This is in line with Article 110 of the COMESA Treaty on Cooperation of Member States on Health Matters.

## Fresh call to ratify the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite agreement

In November 2021, COMESA Heads of State made a fresh call to Member States that are yet to ratify the tripartite Free Trade Agreement to do so to enable it to enter into force. So far, the agreement required three ratifications to attain the 14 threshold for its implementation.

The leaders recalled that the tripartite COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) Agreement was launched six years ago, in June 2015 in Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt.

They recognized the importance of the Tripartite Agreement in resolving the challenges of multiple memberships in the three RECs and of championing and expediting continental integration process.

They noted that 11 Tripartite Member/ Partner States have submitted instruments of ratification including Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The objective of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite group is to strengthen economic integration of the southern and eastern Africa region through joint planning, design, coordination, and implementation of policies and programmes across the three blocs. The focus areas are trade, customs and infrastructure development, and industrialization. The Tripartite also provides a platform to address the overlapping memberships of countries to the three RECs.

Early in 2021, Ministers from the tripartite group set June 2021 as the deadline to achieve the threshold of 14 ratifications. This was missed, hence the fresh call by the Heads of State was seen as a welcome intervention.



File photo/ COMESA booth at the Ndola Trade Fair in Zambia

# COMESA trade fairs to make comeback

The 21st Summit endorsed the revival of the COMESA Trade Fairs to exploit the trade potential of the region. At the same, it re-emphasized the important role played by the private sector in enhancing regional integration.

The objective of the trade fairs is to provide opportunities for businesses in the COMESA region to showcase their products and services and demonstrate their potential, to facilitate business linkages, partnership and joint ventures.

The initiative by the COMESA Business Council, was earlier in October, presented and adopted by the COMESA Council of Ministers as a mean of promoting intra-trade within the COMESA region, through trade and investment.

The trade fairs will be structured in two major activities: exhibition and conference. Participating Member States and corporates will set up pavilions and

exhibition booths to showcase their goods and services.

The proposed conference dubbed "COMESA Taste for Africa Conference" will run alongside the expo and will address topical issues relating to trade finance, payments, trade facilitation, trade-enabling infrastructure, harmonisation of trade standards and regional value chains.

At the Council meeting conducted on 9th November 2021, Egypt indicated it would explore the possibility of hosting the first Intra-COMESA Trade Fair during the first half of 2022. Hence, the Council decided that COMESA Secretariat and CBC in collaboration with Member States mobilize resources to organize the trade fair which will be held every two years. With the endorsement of the Heads of State, the resumption of the trade expo is expected to make a comeback after more than a decade.

## New judge, commissioners sworn in



Justice Salohy Norotiana Rakotondrajery Randrianarisoa

Justice Salohy Norotiana Rakotondrajery Randrianarisoa of Madagascar was sworn-in as one of the five judges of the Appellate Division of the COMESA Court during the Heads of State Summit in Cairo, Egypt. Justice Randrianarisoa, a Senior Judge and Director General of Judicial Affairs, Research and Reforms at the Ministry of Justice in Madagascar replaced the late Justice Abdalla El Bashir from Sudan, who passed on in February 2020.

She was virtually sworn in during the 21st COMESA Heads of State and Government held on Tuesday 23rd November 2021.

Four new Commissioners for the COMESA Competition Commission were also sworn-in to serve for a period of four years. They were Mr. Mahmoud Momtaz from Egypt, Mr. Mesganu Arga Moach (Ethiopia) Mr. Lloyds Vincent Nkhoma (Malawi) and Ms. Beatrice Uwumukiza (Rwanda). The Commissioners were appointed by the 41st COMESA Council of Ministers Meeting held on 26 November 2020 for a three-year period from 15 - July 2021 to 14 July 2024.

Others sworn-in were three members of the COMESA Committee of Elders. They were Mrs. Hasna Barkat Daoud from Djibouti, Ambassador Mohamed Ashraf Gamal Rashed from Egypt and Mme Monique Andreas Esoavelomandroso of Madagascar.

The Committee of Elders was established by the COMESA Heads of State in 2006 to complement peace-making and peace-building capacity of the Office of COMESA Secretary General under the COMESA Governance Peace and Security Programme. Among its key activities is leading the COMESA Elections Observation Missions in Member States.





President Andry Rajoelina (R) hands over the COMESA Annual Report - 2020 to President Abdel Fattah El Sisi

## COMESA annual report 2020 is launched

Outgoing chairperson of COMESA, President Andry Rajoelina launched the 2020 COMESA Annual Report which he handed over to his successor President Abdel Fattah El Sisi. The report outlined the achievements during the past year, which was characterized by the COVID-19 Pandemic and its aftermath.

During the period, COMESA region recorded a negative macroeconomic growth shrinking by negative 5.4 percentage points to 0.2%, from 5.6% in 2019. Resultant COVID-19 response measures that included lockdowns, travel restrictions, border closures, constrained external financing following capital outflows and sharp declines in capital inflows and remittance are some of the factors that affected growth.

In addition, the impact of multiple shocks, particularly the effects of floods, locust invasion and collapse of commodity prices have also contributed to the negative

growth.

However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April 2021 projections showed that the COMESA region average growth would rebound to 4.3% in 2021 and further to 6.0% in 2022.

This recovery in growth forecast in the region is being anchored on several factors including optimism about a recovery in advanced economies, driven in large part by scale up of vaccination efforts against COVID-19, and the extraordinary level of policy support - fiscal stimulus and continued accommodation by central banks.

The recovery in commodity prices and firm worldwide demand particularly in China and broadly accommodative global financial conditions, given low global interest rates and spreads are expected to boost the economies.

The report indicated that the immediate challenge for most countries in the region is stopping the COVID-19 pandemic and saving lives by among others, quality spending to strengthen local health systems and containment efforts and enhancing the roll out and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Other interventions, include measures to support speedy recovery of economies, reign on the threatening debt levels and in the medium term, ensure structural transformation and economic diversification of individual economies.

Leveraging on African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to strengthen value-addition and industrial growth and to increase the role of digitization, will be important steps in the right direction.

## Summit adopts measures to enhance youth involvement

The Summit endorsed the establishment of the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel to foster engagement of the youth in policy dialogue. The Panel would be a consultative regional body on youth-related matters, which have the mandate to bridge the gap between the young people and the decision-makers at both regional and Member States levels.

Members of the panel will contribute to the decision-making processes in the region on youth participation in democratic governance and socio-economic development processes. The panel is one of the forums and instruments developed to harness the potential for young people to strengthen and grow the continent's economies.

The initiative is part of the activities under the COMESA gender and social affairs programme.

The Summit also endorsed the COMESA Gender Policy Implementation Plan to strengthen gender mainstreaming at all levels. It commended Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius and Seychelles on the signing of the Social Charter and urged Member States that have not yet signed to do so.

Common Market for  
Eastern and Southern Africa



MEDIUM TERM  
**STRATEGIC PLAN** 2021-2025

## COMESA's five-year blueprint launched

The COMESA Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2021- 2025 (MTSP) was launched at the 21st COMESA Summit in Cairo.

The new strategy recognizes the socio-economic adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on COMESA's integration agenda and incorporates policy interventions required as economies enter the successive phases of crisis-response, recovery and building of resilience.

The plan has four strategic pillars: market integration; physical integration/connectivity; productive integration and gender and social integration. It will serve as a useful tool to engage COMESA's strategic partners in the pursuit of regional integration and provide a framework by which detailed annual work programmes and budgets will be developed.





## Leaders welcome the restoration of civilian rule in Sudan

COMESA Heads of State welcomed the Agreement of November 21, 2021, to reinstate Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to office and the restoration of civilian rule in Sudan. In their communique issued at the closing of their 21st Summit in Cairo, the leaders urged that every effort be made to lead Sudan towards close adherence to the timelines of the Transition.

The leaders reiterated the importance of peace, security and stability for creating an enabling environment for investment, sustained economic development and a viable integration for the region. They encouraged the political leaders in Sudan to expedite the creation of a unified army as well as the drafting of a new constitution that will, among other things, outline the partnership between civilian and military in the transition government.

The Summit welcomed the other elements of the November 2021 Agreement on Sudan including the restoration of the Council of Ministers and the release of political detainees

On Libya, the leaders lauded the signing of the October 2020 Ceasefire Agreement and commended the stakeholders on their commitment to the attainment of lasting peace in the country. They welcomed the roadmap developed by the Libya Political Dialogue Forum towards free, fair, and inclusive presidential election on 24th December 2021 and called on all the parties to redouble their efforts to ensure that the elections are held on schedule.

The Heads of State called on all Member States to respect the Ceasefire

Agreement and to fully comply with the Arms Embargo; and reiterated its call for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from all Libyan territory, land, sea, and air, without delay.

They noted that the problem of illegal immigration places a lot of pressure on Libya as a transit state and emphasized that the problem requires a political solution for its resolution.

They called on the European Union and COMESA Member States to support social economic programmes particularly for the youth.



## Trade experts meet to speed-up negotiations on market access

Trade experts from Member States concluded a three-day virtual meeting, Thursday 30 September 2021, which reviewed progress on the liberalization of trade in services for enhanced market access under the COMESA Free Trade Area.

The meeting was the 10th for the COMESA Trade in Services Committee. It received updates from Member States on the progress they have made in their bilateral negotiations and tariff offers.

Further, discussions were conducted to finalise the negotiations on the priority sectors; communication, financial, tourism and transport services, and proceed to the implementation of the commitments made by countries. COMESA has prioritized and negotiated schedules of specific commitments in

the four priority sectors.

The proposals emerging from the Committee's meeting will be tabled before the upcoming Trade Policy Organ Meetings when the final and legally scrubbed schedules will be submitted for approval and adoption by the Council of Ministers.

The Committee of Trade in Services leads in the negotiations as mandated by the Council to spearhead the COMESA trade in services liberalisation programme. The Council adopted the COMESA Regulations on Trade in Services in 2009 and initiated negotiations on the progressive reciprocal removal of related barriers in seven priority sectors, focusing on only one major area of services negotiations; market access.

"The basis or general assumption at the time - and most Member States accepted that assumption - was that the most important and essential outcome for any trade in services negotiations was market access," Dr Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General of COMESA told the delegates.

The assumption and expectation of the Council was that the COMESA programme on progressive liberalization of trade in services, would be complete and operational so that the COMESA Free Trade Area covers both trade in goods and services as envisaged in the Treaty.

"Unfortunately, that has not been the case and the negotiations for market access under the schedules of specific commitments is still incomplete," Dr Cheluget noted. "The lack of progress



affects the implementation of the adopted commitments in 2014 and finalising negotiations on the remaining additional priority sectors.”

The liberalisation of services in member countries is expected to unlock many opportunities for all COMESA service suppliers. For example, many of the lesser developed COMESA countries, have a distinct shortage of quality and efficiently priced services to underpin all other economic activity.

It is also expected to lead to deeper integration, support regional markets, promote healthy competition of quality services, enhance COMESA's services sector and its access to other markets outside COMESA and create the basis for wider markets under the AfCFTA and the Tripartite Free Trade Agreements for the future.

Dr Cheluget implored the Committee to set timeframe for the completion of the process of negotiations so that Member States can start to implement the commitments made.

“Let us commit to finalise this process by mid-year, June 2022” he urged the delegates.



**The basis or general assumption at the time - and most Member States accepted that assumption - was that the most important and essential outcome for any trade in services negotiations was market access,” Dr Kipyego Cheluget,**



Small Scale traders at Kasumbalesa border between Zambia/DDR Congo

## COMESA conducts study on formalizing the informal economy in the region

COMESA has conducted a study, which reviewed Member States policies related to the formalisation of the informal economy, focusing on informal trade. It focused on the drivers of informality, the impacts of informality on the economy, including on government revenue and on productivity. It also identified the policies that Member States have instituted to address informality.

The study is part of the implementation of the Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI) funded under the 11th European Development Fund (11th EDF). This project is intended to increase formal small-scale cross-border trade flows in the COMESA/tripartite region, leading to higher revenue collection for governments at the borders as well as increased security and higher incomes for small-scale cross-border traders.

The study report was presented to Member States for validation in a virtual meeting on 7 October 2021. It was attended by senior government representatives from the ministries responsible for trade, finance, gender, small and medium enterprises as well as immigration, customs and other

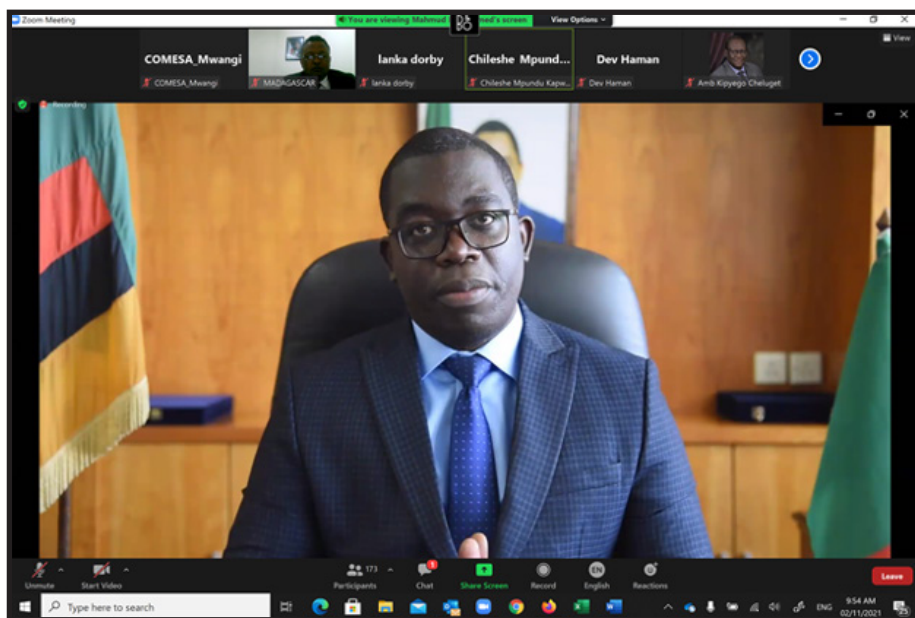
relevant border level representatives from the countries covered by the SSCBT project: D R Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

According to the study conducted by a consultant, Dr Evarist Mugisa, all the seven Member States, including Tanzania, have a sizeable informal economy, serving as a source of livelihoods. However, the size of the informal economy was not clear due to the lack of reliable data. Estimates suggest it exceeds the official economic activity.

“An important component of the informal economies of these countries is Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT), which involves small scale traders who carry goods across borders evading all regulatory requirements,” Dr Mugisa observed. “The immediate impact of this is that governments do not receive the tax revenues on these transactions. ICBT also distorts the trade policy in these countries.”

The proliferation of informality in these countries is driven by a wide range of factors, including poverty, a restrictive

*Continued to page 15*



*Zambia Trade Minister, Hon Chipoka Mulenga*

## Fresh call to regional states to implement COVID-19 Trade Facilitation Guidelines

*Minister says supply chains constrained and prices for inputs and consumables rising*

A fresh call was made to COMESA countries in November 2021, to ensure full implementation of the guidelines for the movement of goods and services that were developed in 2020 to facilitate regional trade during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Zambia Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon Chipoka Mulenga told delegates attending the 42nd COMESA Intergovernmental Committee (IC) virtual meeting from 02 - 04 November 2021, that supply chains were constrained and prices for inputs and consumables were rising in Member States.

"Our countries have now started to experience the negative impact of Covid-19 induced disruptions of supply chains and weakening demand levels in our trading partners as our trade volumes are showing marked declines," said the Minister.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Tuesday, 02 November 2021, the minister noted that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were likely to further weaken the performance of the Member States' external markets and would also have negative impacts on imports into the region affecting availability of supplies which would lead to further increase in prices.

Data from COMESA Statistics indicated that the value of intra-COMESA total exports declined by 11% from US\$ 10.9 billion in 2019 to US\$ 9.7 billion in 2020. Similarly, the value of COMESA's total exports to the world decreased by 27% from US\$ 123.4 billion in 2019 to US\$ 90.3 billion in 2020.

Minister Mulenga urged the 21 Member States to start strategizing on how to maintain the balance between the need to keep markets open while safeguarding the legitimate public health interests of Member States.

"One area where significant progress

has been made is automation of cross-border clearance processes, the electronic tracking of movement of drivers and their cargo and the enhanced coordination of operations of border agencies," he said adding that this has reduced non-tariff barriers at border crossing and contributed to keeping supply chains for essentials goods open.

The Guidelines for the Movement of Goods and across the COMESA Region were adopted by the 8th COMESA extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers in May 2020, to minimize disruption to cross-border trade services.

Secretary General of COMESA, Chileshe Kapwepwe, noted that the path to full integration of the region was still marked by obstacles in the movement of people and services. Hence the Secretariat had continued to build capacity of Member States on services negotiations and trade in services statistics.

She said: "Globalization of services provides the opportunity for developing

➔ [Continued to page 23](#)



# Building regional capacities in trade negotiations

COMESA, World Trade Institute collaboration will give fresh impetus to ongoing Trade in Services negotiations



File photo: Trade experts' meeting

The World Trade Institute and COMESA conducted a training course for COMESA Member States aimed at strengthening human and policy-making capacities on Trade in Services. The course took place virtually from 6 – 8 December 2021. It was attended by trade and trade law experts from Member States that deal in multilateral, regional and sub-regional trade negotiations, to sharpen their skills in analysis, formulation and implementation of Trade in Services policy frameworks.

The training was designed to widen participants knowledge on the key concepts and legal obligations under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the COMESA Regulations on Trade in Services, and the Protocol on Trade in Services under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Director of Trade and Customs in COMESA, Dr Christopher Onyango described the training as critical for the COMESA trade liberalization programme.

"Whereas significant progress has been made in liberalizing trade in goods in

COMESA, the same is not the case as regards the services sector despite existence of a framework for trade in services," he said when addressing participants at the opening of the training.

Currently, all COMESA Member States are involved in negotiations on seven Trade in Services sectors that have been prioritized for liberalization namely: communication, finance, tourism, transport, business, construction and energy-related services.

Dr Onyango observed that effective participation of Member States in multilateral, regional and sub-regional trade negotiations will ensure that the outcomes of such negotiations bring about desired results to bolster trade and contribute to the broader human development.

Two resource experts; Dr Jan Bohanes and Pierre Sauvé from the World Trade Institute, University of Berne, Switzerland, conducted the training which broadly covered economics, law and policy of trade in services. Critical topics covered included the importance of Trade in Services to the economy and

its potential for enhancing exports within the region and globally.

Other topics were COMESA Treaty obligations to Member States under the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services and other regional trade agreements; best practices for negotiating services globally and in regional trade agreements; sharing of best experiences in services development and liberalization of regional integration groupings.

Participants acknowledged that Trade in Services sector presents the greatest potential to spur economic growth and create employment opportunities through value added to manufactured, agricultural, and mining products. Services also promote innovations and technology transfers critical for enhancing productivity and competitiveness.

The relevance of the services sector has also become even critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which information, communication and technology services have taken centre stage in all aspects of life.



Dr Kipyego Cheluget

## Call to restart the regional customs programme

There is fresh attempt to revitalize the COMESA Customs Union agenda, which will result in the full realization of the Common Market. The COMESA economic integration timetable envisaged the attainment of the Customs Union by 2004, but this has since faced headwinds stalling the programme.

As a result, COMESA Secretariat has called for interventions to address the implementation of the regional Customs Union agenda by including it in the Customs and Trade and Facilitation Work Programme for 2021-2023.

Addressing the 7th Meeting of the Heads of Customs Sub-Committee on 6 October 2021, Assistant Secretary General of COMESA in charge of programmes, Dr Kipyego Cheluget said the attainment of this milestone has faced considerable challenges even though Member States and the Secretariat have worked hard to address the emerging challenges.

"Between 2012 and 2017 concerted efforts were made to get this process back on track," he said. "National consultations were facilitated, and technical studies were undertaken and at the end of it all, we set ourselves certain actions that seem to have fallen through the cracks as there has been limited activity on Customs Union related issues after 2017."

The following have been identified as the main areas that needs attention: harmonization of industrial rebates and exemptions, alignment of national laws to Customs Management Regulations (CMR), alignment of national tariffs to COMESA Common Tariff Nomenclature (CTN) and Common External tariff (CET).

"We can still address the outstanding issues and you have an opportunity to revisit these issues when you consider the Customs and Trade and Facilitation Work Programme for 2021-2023," he urged the heads of Customs administration.

Through financial support from the European Union under the EDF 11 Trade Facilitation Programme, COMESA has been supporting interventions specifically aimed at building the capacity of Customs Administrations.

The other key item on the agenda was the implementation of measures under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement. The agreement is being implemented since February 2017 with most COMESA/WTO Member States having notified their needs in technical assistance and capacity building under the Special & Differentiated provisions of the Agreement to the WTO Secretariat.

Emerging reports, however, show that this support is not readily available, and Member States are now requesting COMESA to act collectively to address

implementation challenges as decided by Council in 2015.

"If the COMESA region fully implements the WTO measures as expected, the trading environment of the region will be enhanced and will lead to increased intra-regional trade," Dr Cheluget stated.

He urged Customs Administrations to facilitate cross-border trade flows in an efficient manner that reduces NTBs and creates a trading environment where products from the COMESA region remain competitive and can be traded locally, regionally and globally.

The meeting, which was virtual, also discussed the following reports: The inaugural meeting on Customs Capacity Building, validations workshops on cross border management guidelines and Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) Standard Operating Procedures Manual; an update on the implementation of the 2018-2020 Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme and proposals for the Work Plan for 2021-2023. The

An update was provided from UNCTAD, on the implementation of delegated activities under the 11th European Development Fund - Trade Facilitation Programme on the Customs Automation Regional Support Centre and Regional Trade Information Portal.





*Delegates attending the climate change regional resilience framework meeting.*

## COMESA Member States validates regional resilience framework

COMESA Secretariat convened a regional meeting to validate the Climate Change Regional Resilience Framework (RRF) implementation plan and Resource Mobilization Strategy. The meeting took place on 8 - 9 December 2021 and provided a platform for Member States and key stakeholders to review and provide inputs to the draft RRF implementation plan and Resource Mobilization Strategy.

Participants were drawn from Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, D.R Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. They included senior officials from selected ministries responsible for planning, disaster management and mitigation units, agriculture, environment, health and other stakeholders who have a key role in mainstreaming resilience.

The meeting discussed the implementation plan, financing opportunities and strategies for the regional resilience framework interventions. COMESA Climate Change Programme Manager, Ms. Edith Tibahwa said the recommendations from the meeting would help domesticate the

framework to strengthen national resilience-building efforts.

"We expect the meeting to roll out an implementation roadmap of the COMESA Regional Resilience Framework," she said.

Representatives from the African Union Commission (AUC), the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were among the participants.

COMESA is implementing a regional climate change project with funding from the European Union under the Intra-African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)+ programme. The overall objective is to increase the resilience of the COMESA region (and its Member States) to climate change and achieve the UN's sustainable development goals. The specific objective is to improve regional and national adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change challenges faced by COMESA Member States at operational, institutional and financial levels.

## COMESA conducts study...

*Continued from page 11*

business environment, the failure of government policies to translate into development and create decent employment opportunities in the formal sector, and the poor performance of the economies, among others.

The study also found that challenges faced by ICB traders vary; but they include burdensome customs and border procedures, poor or lack of border infrastructure (storage facilities or accommodation, poor transport infrastructure, etc), lack of understanding of the trade formalities and procedures due to illiteracy and lack of information.

In all the countries targeted, the study found that trade policies are silent about ICBT and therefore not mainstreamed in national policies, plans and strategies.

Among the key recommendations in the study were: to offer technical assistance and quality support services to informal traders and build greater trust between the private sector and border agencies; promote broad regulatory and administrative reforms; simplify official administration for businesses and tax administration and rationalization of business registration and licensing regimes.

The study also recommended that governments consider reducing the cost of trading formally and enhance the efficiency of border controls to improve compliance with existing trade-related regulations and addressing the implementation challenges of the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR).

Following the study, COMESA Secretariat will engage the targeted Member States individually and collectively to identify activities for implementation.



Project Manager Mr. Fambaoga Myambo (L) at the COMESA Clearing House hands over equipment to ZimTrade Director of Operations Similo Nkala in Harare

## Zim Trade receives €98,000 worth of equipment and technical support

### Cotton Research Institute release new varieties after getting €105,000 Cotton Fibre High Value Instrument

COMESA has provided the Zimbabwe National Trade Development and Promotion Organization (ZimTrade) with over Euro 98,000 worth of equipment, trainings and technical interventions. These includes laptops, Tablets, servers and other accessories.

The equipment were handed over to ZimTrade Director of Operations Similo Nkala by the project Manager Mr. Fambaoga Myambo at the COMESA Clearing House offices in Harare on 17th November 2021. The support will enable ZimTrade, to improve statistics that assist the Zimbabwean business community, to develop, promote and facilitate export of their goods and services to the world. The support comes under the Regional Integration Implementation Programme (RIIP II) under COMESA Adjustment Facility through Regional Integration Support Mechanism funded by the European Union.

Mr Nkala appreciated COMESA stating: "We used to have a lot of challenges in gathering statistics that informs trade decisions by the various sector players, but now this equipment will help us generate accurate and timely statistics for business decisions."

By working closely with other partners, industry experts and development cooperation partners, Mr Nkala said that ZimTrade provides a comprehensive suite of value-added services that is aimed at enhancing the quality of products and services by the country.

Meanwhile, the Cotton Research Institute based in Kadoma, Zimbabwe has started developing new cotton varieties after a long time. This follows the procurement of a Cotton Fibre High Value Instrument (HVI) at a cost of Euro 105,000 through the COMESA RIIP I project.

The HVI is a computer aided instrument that tests different fiber quality parameters of cotton. It also informs both cotton seed varieties and the final lint quality produced in the cotton industry.

The head of the research Institute, Mr. Washington Mubvekeri told a monitoring mission by the COMAid team that the support by COMESA helped revive the activities of the institute that had stopped due to poor equipment.

"As we speak now, we have released two new seed varieties on the market and we are expecting to release two more varieties by 2022 and by the year 2024 we

should be able to release four more new varieties," Mr Mubvekeri said.

With the equipment in place, the Research Centre is expected to accommodate more farmers from the current 300,000 to way over 400,000 to use the facility for testing the cotton in the coming year.

COMAid Coordinator, Mrs. Hope Situmbeko, commended the efforts of the institute which she noted, will contribute to the COMESA regional integration objectives, focusing on cotton to clothing value chains.



As we speak now, we have released two new seed varieties on the market and we are expecting to release two more varieties by 2022 and by the year 2024 we should be able to release four more new varieties,"

Mr Mubvekeri.





*Members of the civil societies attending the Training of Trainers Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya*

## Civil society trained on conflict early warning tools

COMESA Secretariat working with the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Regional Economic Communities conducted a four-day training of trainers' workshop for 12 countries in December 2021 on conflict prevention and peace building in the continent.

The workshop was conducted on 7 – 10 December in Nairobi, Kenya and focused on the AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) Africa Reporter Tool, the AU/COMESA Structural Vulnerability Assessments (SVAs), the COMESA Early Warning System (COMWARN) and the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) methodology.

Twenty-four focal persons from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Seychelles, Madagascar, Zambia and Malawi attended the training. Representative from the Southern Africa Partnership for Prevention of Conflict (SAPPC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) also part participated.

At the training, representatives from

the AU, COMESA and UNDP called for enhanced collaboration with the civil society as it is crucial in conflict prevention and peace building. Specifically, civil society have contacts on the ground who can be very useful in conflict early warning by monitoring the situation and thus anticipate the emergence of conflicts.

Besides, civil society organisations (CSOs) are strong in research and analysis, that can benefit state-level interventions by providing information and policy options. They are also known to build consensus around negotiations thus providing quality analysis which can go a long way towards the success of the talks.

COMESA Head of Governance, Peace and Security Ms Elizabeth Mutunga said the workshop was necessary to maximise effectiveness of all the potential partners.

"Our workshop is designed to equip civil society with the tools that exist in our organisations so that as they work with us, we can all reap the greatest synergies. Apart from the training, this will be a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other."

The COMESA Peace and Security (GPS) Programme have nurtured strategic partnership with the Civil Society in conflict prevention and peace building since the programme was established in 2000.

Earlier, GPS conducted a study on the root factors of conflicts in the subregion to inform COMESA's entry point into peace and security matters in the region. The study and consultations found that conflicts were very complex and exhibited dynamism that called for use of multifaceted approaches and the actions of a wide variety of stakeholders working together to address them. Specifically, the consultations identified an important role for civil society organisations in all aspects of conflict prevention and peace building.

The West Africa Network of Peacebuilders (WANEP) from the Regional Office in Accra, Ghana and the Nigeria Country Network provided additional hands-on training based on their experience of field reporting using the Africa Reporter and the ECOWAS Early Warning (ECOWARN) Reporter.



File/ Chishimba Power station in Zambia

## AMDA and COMESA join hands to enhance modern and sustainable energy access in COMESA states

The Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA), represented by Chief Executive Officer, Jessica Stephens, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) represented by the Secretary General, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations in December 2021, to promote sustainable energy access and energy trade in the COMESA region.

Under this agreement, AMDA and COMESA agreed to enhance the quality of data collection and dissemination about the minigrid sector in the region, improve the availability of financial instruments that increase the sustainability to the sector and support programmes that build synergies with the agriculture, health and education industries. This will be supported by the overarching commitment to work with COMESA states to develop and implement policies and regulations that are supportive of minigrids as a tool to help Africa achieve the United

Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7: universal access to affordable and clean energy by 2030.

"The signing of the MoU is part of our efforts as AMDA to create the right policy and finance environment that will help African nations meet their growing energy and climate resilience needs," Ms Stephens said.

This notion of cross-continental action was reiterated by Ms Kapwepwe:

"COMESA recognizes that the key challenges faced by most of its Member States include inter alia low-level access to modern energy, weak development of energy infrastructure, lack of appropriate financing mechanisms and unclear regulatory environments for private sector involvement in renewable energy projects. We believe that by implementing the regional infrastructure Finance Facility Project (RIFF) and working with organizations such as AMDA, we can see a modern, sustainable

energy systems develop in COMESA Member States."

The Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA) is the leading body representing private sector minigrid developers on the continent. It works with governments, donors, funding partners and the wider energy sector to build an optimal energy network that will meet the current and future needs of African economies. AMDAs' work focuses on improving the financial and regulatory landscape for the decentralized utilities sector ensuring that the access to energy challenge is collectively tackled in order ensure that energy poverty is eliminated. Currently, AMDA represents over 35 companies, who operate minigrids in 15 Sub-Saharan countries.





COMESA Director for Gender and Social Affairs, Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde

## 50MAWSP national focal points meet to review progress

The 50 million African Women Speak Project (50MAWSP) national focal points (NFPs) met Monday 6 December to review progress on the implementation of the initiative in the COMESA Member States. NFPs from 13 Member States attended the meeting, out of the 16 Member States where COMESA has launched the initiative.

The one-day meeting provided the Member States and the COMESA Secretariat an opportunity to share updates on activities which have been undertaken, share experiences, and provide feedback.

Opening the meeting, the COMESA Director for Gender and Social Affairs, Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde thanked the NFPs for their dedication to working on the platform and challenged them to make sure it grows and succeeds.

"50 Million African Women Speak is a critical intervention for the transformation of women in our region and the African continent as a whole. During the recent COMESA Summit of

Heads of State held on 23 November in Egypt, 50 Million African Women Speak received resounding endorsement from the highest COMESA Organ as a viable vehicle to empower our women economically.

"When this stamp of approval comes from such a high office, we as the primary drivers of the platform are left with no option but to make sure it works." Mrs. Hamusonde said.

The Director informed the delegates, who were meeting for the second time this year, that one of the recommendations they had made at their meeting in March to include SMS-based registration on the platform had been done, making the platform more friendly for users who do not have access to email. She added that

various other platform enhancements were under development.

During the same meeting, Libya was officially welcomed to the NFPs' forum, which was also attended by Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The 50 Million African Women Speak initiative is jointly implemented by COMESA as the lead agency, the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Under the Project COMESA is directly responsible for 17 of its 21 Member States, with four Member States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda) under EAC.



.....  
When this stamp of approval comes from such a high office, we as the primary drivers of the platform are left with no option but to make sure it works." Mrs. Hamusonde.



Zambia's Vice President, Madam Mutale Nalumango (centre) with other guests during the official opening of Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Process.

## Zambia launches structural vulnerability assessment and resilience strategy

The Government of Zambia has launched the Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment and Resilience Process (CSVRA). The strategy is expected to enhance national resilience and responsiveness to various structural vulnerability factors that can impact on Zambia's stability, security, and development.



.....  
**Let this process take Zambia to higher heights in the quest to making the country a beacon of peace and unity."**  
**Vice President, Mutale Nalumango**

Supported by the African Union Commission (AUC) and COMESA Secretariat, the CSVRA is designed to facilitate the identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict at an early stage. Zambia volunteered to undergo the CSVRA process through a Cabinet Memo submitted to both AU and COMESA in October 2020.

It focuses on identifying drivers of violent conflict in diverse areas such as socio-economic development, good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights and in the security sector. This is in addition to environment and climate change, gender and youth, post conflict peace-building and transitional justice, and reconciliation.

Zambia's Vice President Madam Mutale Nalumango presided over the official launch in Lusaka.

"Let this process take Zambia to higher heights in the quest to making the country a beacon of peace and unity, noting that the new dawn government is a continuation of the benefits of democratic

processes arising from peaceful transition of power, a timely reminder to Africa and world that Zambia is making strides that are part of the good governance agenda..." noted Mrs. Nalumango.

She described the CSVRA as one of the ways of creating stability as a catalyst for sustainable development, anchored on local participation especially in areas that are more prone to disasters such as floods and droughts in the country.

COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe described the launch as historic because Zambia is the first country in the COMESA Region to volunteer to undertake this process and only third in Africa after Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

"...Zambia has continued to show leadership in adopting key instruments on governance peace and stability... for example, Zambia was the second country in COMESA to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and among the top ten in

*Continued to page 21*



**“Zambia was the second country in COMESA to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and among the top ten in Africa to do so,” Chileshe Kapwepwe**

---

Africa to do so,” Ms Kapwepwe pointed out.

She was represented by COMESA Assistant Secretary General for Programmes Dr Kipyego Cheluget.

African Union Commission (AUC) Senior Political Officer Ahmed Mokhtar described the CSVRA as a unique and home-grown Pan African process that seeks to identify and acknowledge structural vulnerabilities, build upon resilience factors and invest in mitigation measures to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

Mr Mokhtar added that the role of the AUC and COMESA is to provide technical support which can be useful in preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts.

Meanwhile, COMESA Secretariat and the AUC conducted a half-day consultative workshop, Thursday, 28 October 2021 with Permanent Secretaries and senior government officials in Zambia. The session received presentations on the Ghana and Ivory Coast experiences as case studies. The two countries have already launched their national strategies to address and mitigate the structural vulnerabilities identified.

Following the CSVRA launch, teams comprising of Zambian stakeholders supported by AUC and COMESA proceeded to hold wider consultations with stakeholders in the provinces across the country. Various diplomatic corps accredited to Zambia and development partners attended.



## Steps to shield the youth from the pandemic sting

COMESA countries came together to deliberate on ways to cushion the youth in the region from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 in the region. Subsequently, a two-day experience-sharing meeting and mitigation was conducted on 28 -29 September 2021.

In attendance were young people, youth experts from governments led by Permanent Secretaries, and representatives of regional and international organizations dealing in youth empowerment programmes.

This meeting was called for by Ministers in charge of the youth when they met in June this year – the first time ever. In their decisions, the Ministers noted that the youth had experienced the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic. Limited youth access to education and opportunities in the job market were cited as some of the negative impacts.

The meeting was therefore aimed at addressing the specific impacts of

Covid on the youth and learn what has best in shielding the youth from further negative impacts.

Zambia PS for Youth Affairs Dr John Phiri opened the meeting and urged COMESA to convene such forums more regularly.

The experience-sharing intervention is part of the recently adopted COMESA Youth Engagement Policy, which provides for direct engagement with youth-led or focused networks and organizations that are increasingly organising themselves along national and regional formations. The aim is to aggregate youth perspectives into the national and regional policy, strategies and programmes.

Through this strategy, COMESA will support Member States to institute their own specific youth engagement strategies using it as a model to further integrate young people in democratic governance and socio-economic processes.

# Ministerial conference on youth in regional peace and security

Initiative sought to promote peace in the Horn of Africa



*File /Young people attending a COMESA event*

A five-day high-level ministerial conference on the role of regional economic communities in promoting the youth, peace and security agenda in the East and the Horn of Africa was held in Nairobi, Kenya 1- 5 November 2021.

The objective of the conference was to promote the youth peace and security agenda through advocacy for more inclusive policies and meaningful engagement of young people in peacebuilding and conflict prevention mechanisms. The conference was jointly organized by the African Union working with COMESA, the Government of Kenya, and civil society organisations namely Save the Children, Life and Peace Institute and the Horn of Africa Youth Network.

The participants reviewed the implementation of international and regional legal and policy frameworks for youth in peace and security for different countries in the Horn of Africa. The event also offered an opportunity to popularize

the frameworks to promote the role of youth in peace and security.

In addition, varied initiatives and programmes developed or endorsed by governments, regional economic communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RM) to capacitate young people in the Horn of Africa were showcased. These include the early warning systems of COMESA (COMWARN), the COMESA Youth engagement strategy, the AU Youth Peace and Security Framework among others.

## Youth Peace Initiatives

The conference exposed the region's youth on the current youth peace and security initiatives across the Horn of Africa region by regional governments, RECs and RMs including limitations and successes. There was emphasis on partnerships and the significance of governments, AU, RECS/RMs, development partners and the young people working together in advancing the

youth, peace and security agenda within the Horn of Africa region.

A communique was issued at the end of the conference to inform policy changes following review of the international and regional legal and policy frameworks in the region.

Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the Ministries of Youth Affairs and Foreign Affairs within the Horn of Africa namely Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, South Sudan, and Somalia attended the conference. Other participants were youth leaders from the National Youth Councils as well as the AU's African Youth Ambassador for Peace (AYAP) representative, Community Youth Leaders and Development Partners.

The conference was organized by the Directorates and Units for Peace and Security from the AU, COMESA Secretariat, Save the Children, Life and Peace and the Horn of Africa Youth Network.



## New study identifies gaps in youth engagement in democratic governance

A new baseline study conducted on youth engagement has found that only seven out of 21 COMESA countries have adopted youth quotas, which is now becoming a popular tool for increasing the political presence of underrepresented groups.

The quotas are in three main forms: Legislated Quota, Political Party Quota, and the Reserved Quotas. Under the Legislated quota, political parties are obligated to have a minimum number of youths in their party list of elective candidates as a qualification to participate in the election.

The same principle applies under Political party quota, whereby the youth are included in party affairs through advocacy and sensitization of the party leadership. Under Reserved quota, specific slots in the legislatures are guaranteed for young people.

The study titled: Baseline Study Report on Youth Engagement in Democratic Governance and Socio-Economic Processes in the COMESA Member States, aims at fostering the election of young members of parliament under 35 to 40 years old. It was presented during a one-day validation meeting for national youth councils on 22 October 2021.

The study found that a few COMESA Member States have implemented youth engagement programmes. Some of the existing strategies to encourage youth participation in democratic governance include parliament's youth caucus, national youth councils, political youth wings and youth leagues. Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

are the only Member States with youth parliaments.

The COMESA Youth Advisory Panel is one of the strategies to engage young people in democratic governance and socio-economic development. The panel is expected to mainstream youth issues in all development policies and programmes in Member States.

Going forward, the study recommends strengthening of youth engagement which includes addressing barriers to political participation. Through inclusive dialogue and engagement with other stakeholders, underlying factors such as politically motivated violence will be addressed.

On strengthening socio-economic development processes, the study recommends targeted employment creation, education and training and having a youth-centred pandemic recovery programme. Under this initiative, Member States are expected to design gender-responsive and youth-centred pandemic recovery plans and programmes to ensure socio-economic recovery within a reasonable period.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Director of Gender and Social Affairs at COMESA Secretariat, Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde said the study will bolster the implementation of the COMESA youth programme.

The study was conducted through the COMESA-African Governance Architecture Project which is supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency.

## Fresh call to implement Covid-19 guidelines...

.....

**"Our countries have now started to experience the negative impact of Covid-19 induced disruptions of supply chains and weakening demand levels in our trading partners as our trade volumes are showing marked declines."**

*Continued from page 12*

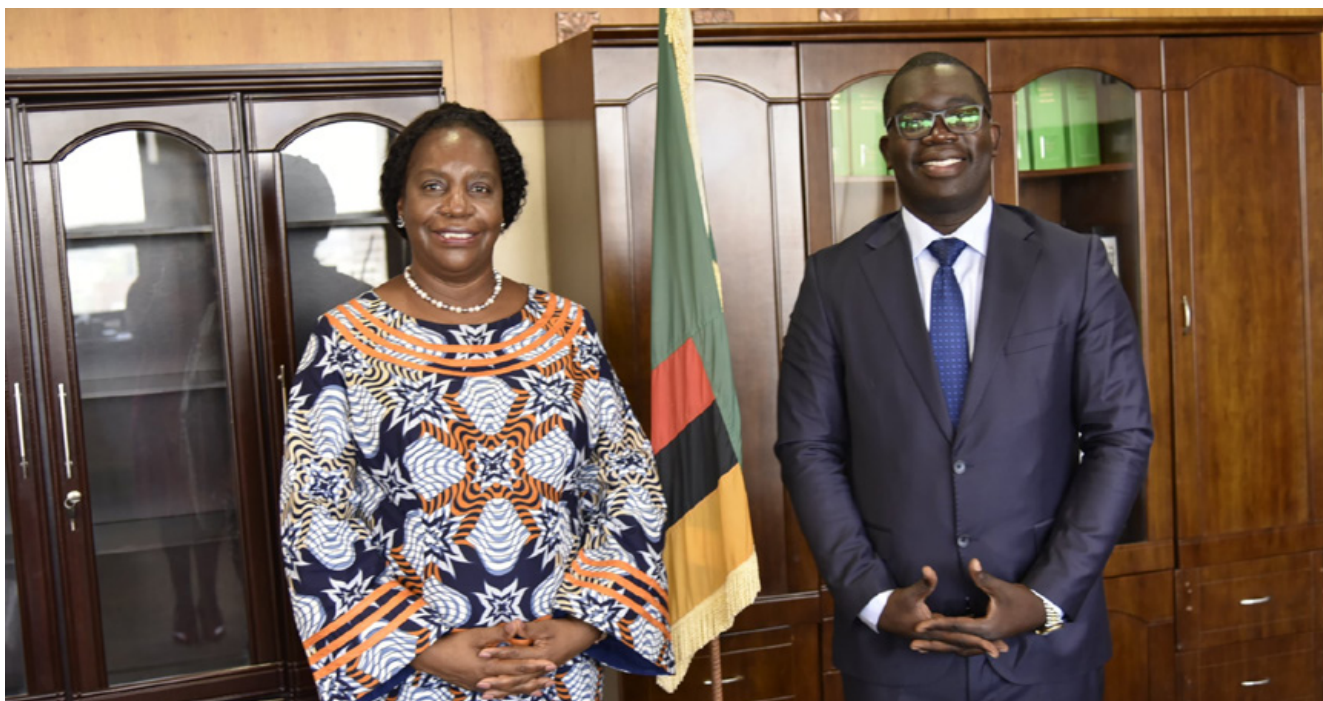
countries and the COMESA region in particular, to find new niches where they can specialize, upscale and achieve rapid growth just as East Asian countries did in manufacturing."

She appealed to Member States to continue the implementation of the guidelines and make use of the Online Platform that was developed last year to ensure availability and seamless flow of goods and services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The IC comprises of Permanent/Principal Secretaries responsible for the development of programmes and action plans in all fields of co-operation except in the finance and monetary sector.

The meeting reviewed progress reports presented by various sectoral committees and COMESA institutions and made recommendations to the Council of Ministers for decision-making.

The Council met on 9 – 10 November 2021 followed by the 21st COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit on 23 November 2021 in Egypt, whose theme was: Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration.



Zambia Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry Hon. Chipoka Mulenga (R) with COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe

## Zambia is re-strategizing to increase its intra-COMESA trade share

The government of Zambia is working on fresh strategies to increase its trade within the COMESA region, by closely collaborating with the COMESA Secretariat, which is based in Lusaka. This is according to the new Minister of Commerce, Trade, and Industry Hon. Chipoka Mulenga.

In a meeting with COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe who paid a courtesy call on him at the Ministry, Wednesday 27 October 2021, the Minister said the country has not been performing well in trade within COMESA, hence the need to re-strategize.

COMESA trade statistics indicates that Zambia's total exports to the COMESA region increased by 3 percent between 2019 and 2020. The increase in nominal value terms was from US\$1.23bn in 2019 to US\$1.27bn in 2020. Zambia's imports from the COMESA region declined by 40 percent from 2019 to 2020 from US\$700 million in 2019 to US\$422 million in 2020.

Major destinations for Zambia's exports into COMESA region in 2020 were the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Burundi. Zambia's exports to Congo DR in 2020 were mainly sulphuric acid worth, copper

ores & concentrates, waters, cement and electricity. Top export products to Malawi were tobacco and cement. Zambian products that were destined to Zimbabwe were oilcake and cement. In 2020 Kenya imported raw cane sugar from Zambia worth US\$ 13.4 million

Ms Kapwepwe briefed the Minister on various programmes under implementation by the regional

organization included access to markets, industrialization, trade development and harmonization, value addition and the tripartite Free Trade Area, among others.

The Director of Trade and Customs, Dr Christopher Onyango, Director of Gender and Social Affairs Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde and Executive Support Officer Mrs. Maluba Sinyambo accompanied the Secretary General.

## COMESA has a new Theme

The theme of the 21st Summit was ***"Building Resilience Through Strategic Digital Economic Integration"***. It was communicated by the government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, which hosted the COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit.

The theme was motivated by the emerging regional and global economic and trade dynamics which have impacted heavily on the COMESA regional integration agenda. The outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic has been the most impactful phenomenon, with devastating aftermath on lives and economies. Hence, this theme was developed as a

rallying call to Members States on what to focus on.

Since the 2016 Summit, the theme: COMESA: Towards Digital Economic Integration had been running, was the longest ever. Normally, the theme runs for one year – from one Summit to the next. However, hosting of the Summit had not followed a regular pattern since 2016, leading to the unprecedented five-years-long running theme.

Other previous themes were: *'Inclusive and sustainable industrialization'* (2015 – 2016) and *'Consolidating Intra-COMESA Trade through Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development'* (2014 – 2015).





File Photo of Tunduma Border between Zambia/Tanzania

## COMESA, Tanzania signs 2.7m Euro's agreement to upgrade Tunduma border post

In October 2021, the COMESA Secretariat and the Government of Tanzania signed an agreement of €2.7 million that sub-delegated to the latter, the implementation of coordinated border management activities including construction of cross border infrastructure.

The funds were provided by the European Union under the COMESA Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI) and Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP). The upgrading of the Tunduma border is part of the COMESA, East African Community and the Southern Africa Development Community Tripartite Free Trade agreement framework, whose main objective is the creation of a single economic area.

The framework provides for the progressive removal of trade barriers to facilitate trade and increase formal small scale trade flows between the countries. Through the sub-delegation agreement, Tanzania would also receive support to develop and improve harmonized regulatory frameworks and procedures at the border.

Activities will focus on upgrading priority cross-border infrastructure and the procurement of equipment, which is needed to improve cross-border trade

and transport facilitation at the Tunduma border point.

The project will also support capacity building of border agencies and national stakeholders on coordinated border management, customs valuation, harmonized system classification, setting up and management of joint border committees, risk management and One-Stop-Border-Post (OSBP) procedures.

COMESA Secretary General, Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe, and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Tanzania, Mr. Doto James, signed the sub-delegation agreement separately in Lusaka and Dodoma.

Ms. Kapwepwe said: "My expectation is that the stakeholders in Tanzania will embrace the programme and take advantage of this grant and ensure the implementation of our integration programmes among the beneficiaries."

Mr. James appreciated COMESA and the EU for the continued development support. He said the funds will be used to enhance operational efficiency of the Tunduma OSBP and rehabilitation/ construction of small-scale market at Majengo area in Tunduma town.

Further, he said the support will also

boost trade between the Tanzania and Zambia by improving efficiency and reducing the clearance time for goods. This will contribute to a reduction in transport cost, whilst increasing volumes of transshipment cargo through Tunduma/Nakonde border.

Mr. Jacek Jankowski, Ambassador of the European Union to Zambia and Special Representative to COMESA observed: "The Tunduma border post is the gateway to reaching a Free Trade Area and strengthen the relationships between the two regions, namely the EAC and COMESA."

The Ambassador of the European Union in Tanzania and the East African Community Mr. Manfredo Fanti noted: "Tunduma border post is a node on an important transit route linking the ports of Dar es Salaam and the rest of Southern Africa. We are pleased to see that the upgrading of this border post will strengthen cross regional trade contributing to sustainable economic development in the region."

COMESA will facilitate financial, logistical, and administrative processes in line with its contractual obligations. The funds will follow the agreed action plan between COMESA and Tanzania and in line with the Covid-19 pandemic.



Zambia Revenue Authority customs officer at Kasumbalesa border between Zambia/DR Congo

## Member States share experiences on border management amid COVID-19

Public officials working in customs, immigration, port health, drug law enforcement, and police from 11 COMESA Member States participated in a one-day regional webinar on implications of COVID-19 pandemic on border management.

The event conducted on Wednesday 20 October 2021 was necessitated by the need to address the health challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic on border officials and small-scale cross border traders in the region. This was in acknowledgement that it was primarily public health concerns that led to national travel restrictions and measures that disrupted border management, trade and movement of goods and services.

The quest for safe and free movement of goods and services amid the pandemic, is what led the COMESA Secretariat

to develop guidelines in May 2020. Subsequently, the Secretariat engaged the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), through the Migration EU Expertise (MIEUX) initiative to collaborate on a project that would identify the need to complement the guidelines.

The project was mainly focused on capacity building, awareness-raising and communication measures targeting stakeholders at selected border crossings including border management agencies, small-scale cross-border traders, and truck drivers.

In June and July of 2021, the ICMPD and COMESA conducted a series of fact-finding meetings and survey among pilot countries namely Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This activity focused on assessing the training and information needs on the management of migration/mobility during a health crisis at the selected borders. The meetings revealed several challenges that border officials were dealing with such as policy incoherence, cross border differences in their approach to handling the pandemic and lack of resources to meet the aspirations and deliverables of the COMESA 2020 COVID-19 guidelines.

Further, the meetings found common challenges at the global level with the pandemic affecting all fields of border management.

Speaking at the webinar, ICMPD Senior Advisor Ms. Monika Weber explained that different regulatory frameworks meant that border management officials and agencies, all over the world had to quickly adapt their practices.

Dr. Tony Elumelu, of the Free Movement Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission, explained how COVID-19 caused a new policy shift in border management in Western Africa thus making digitalization a priority.

Zambia representatives shared information on how COVID-19 test results were integrated within a platform developed with the support of the African Union. This enhanced communication between the health services and border agencies and with cross-border partners.

The MIEUX+ Senior Advisor on Border Management, Jean-Yves Charriou, urged the delegates to harmonise and simplify procedures, with methodologies like 'business process analysis' to determine what works, what does not and what can be adapted.

The event was supported by the ICMPD, through the Migration EU Expertise (MIEUX+).



## Intra-COMESA export trade drops by 11%

The value of intra-COMESA total exports declined by 11% from US\$ 10.9 billion in 2019 to US\$ 9.7 billion in 2020. The low performance was attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic and pre-existing factors such as supply-side challenges and prevalence of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs).

According to an update presented at the 37th Meeting of the COMESA Trade and Customs Committee, 13 – 15 October 2021, the low intra-regional trade resulted from existing gaps in information availability on trading opportunities, regulatory requirements in markets and factors that inform business decisions on production of goods and trade.

The meeting brought together trade and customs experts representing governments from the 21 Member States and deliberated on issues that affect regional trade and integration. Key among them was how to get all Member States to participate in the COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA).

Besides, they discussed the identification and elimination of NTBs, implementation of trade facilitation measures including the COMESA digital FTA, how to advance services liberalization and build effective platforms for trade promotion and e-commerce.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Assistant Secretary General in charge of Programmes, Dr Kipyego Cheluget observed that regional trade could flourish if Member States embraced the COMESA trade and customs facilitation instruments and policies.

"If well implemented these could

*Continued to page 28*



Delegates attending the women in business training in D R Congo

## COMFWB, D R Congo trains business mentors

To build capacity for the women in business in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the COMESA Federation of Women in Business, (COMFWB) through the national chapter, conducted a two-week Trainer of Trainers workshop aimed at developing business mentorship and training skills for various sector players.

The training targeted Congolese businesswomen and was supported by the national chapter, Commission Nationale des Femmes Entrepreneur, (CNFE) in D R Congo from 01- 14 October 2021 in Kinshasa. Facilitators of the training were drawn from the COMFWB DR Congo Chapter.

CNFE President Madame Eliane Munkeni Kiekie addressed the 28 participating trainees on how to conduct company diagnostic, mentorship, process of coaching and mentoring business owners. The trainees, among

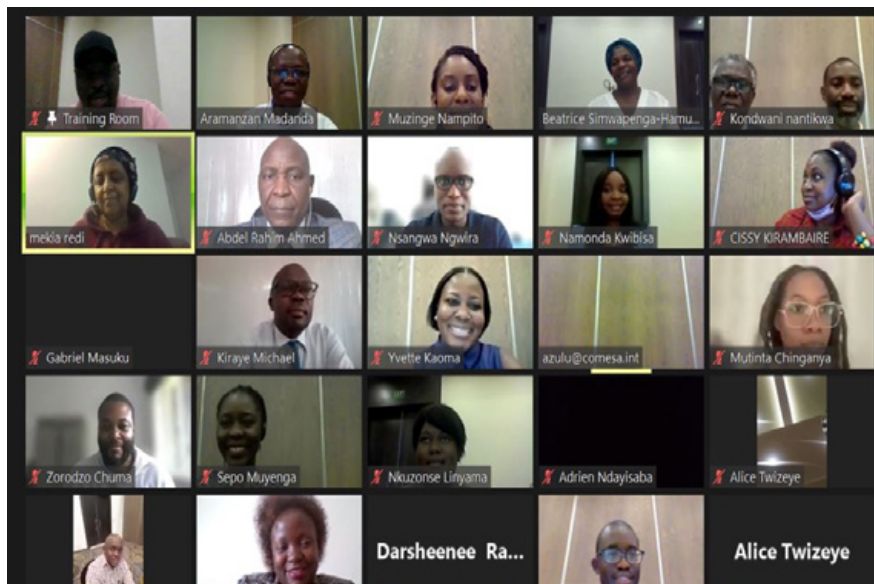
them one male, will work with prominent entrepreneurs in DR Congo for the next three months after which they will each prepare a report to be presented before a panel in February 2022. After successful evaluation they will receive the expert certificates.

Speaking at the opening ceremony Ms Kiekie said that the DR Congo Chapter which already has 14 trained women experts, aims at training a minimum of 50 to 60 experts to cover the whole country.

"By 2023 the Chapter plans to train a total of 200 women managers including 60 Experts," Madame Kiekie said.

Currently there are about 140 expert trainers in the country.

# Mainstreaming Gender in COMESA



A virtual group photo of the delegates

**T**wenty-eight staff from COMESA Secretariat and its institutions have been trained on gender mainstreaming techniques to enhance application in the implementation of regional integration programmes. The training will strengthen institutionalisation and accountability mechanism for gender mainstreaming in COMESA.

Director of Gender and Social Affairs at COMESA, Mrs. Beatrice Hamusonde, who organized the four-day hybrid training forum, said mainstreaming of gender is an obligation of all COMESA staff in line with the COMESA Treaty, which provides for the twin track approach to the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women.

"The full inclusion of women in all parts of society including the economy, is of utmost importance. Without the active participation of half of the population of our region, we will not reach the regional, continental and global goals on gender equality and empowerment of women," she said.

Pursuant to this goal, the Secretariat has created a Gender Technical Working Group as a multisectoral approach to continue advocating for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in all activities and programmes.

Over the years, COMESA Member States and institutions have also made commitments and directives to mainstream gender in all activities and to support initiatives on women in business. This has been done through Decisions of the Council of Ministers.

Staff from the Secretariat, COMESA Court of Justice, African Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI), and the Trade and Development Bank (TDB) participated.

The training workshop was conducted from 29 November to 2 December 2021 in Lusaka, Zambia and online.

## Intra-COMESA export trade drops by 11%...

*Continued from page 27*

significantly increase intra-COMESA trade, reduce time and cost, increase regional competitiveness, create jobs and positively impact on living standards of our people," he said.

However, he noted that the implementation of regional commitments and full participation of all Member States in COMESA FTA required greater efforts and improvement.

Last year, COMESA developed COVID-19 guidelines and an online platform for exchange of information on movement of essential goods and services. The aim was to ensure safe trade continued across the region.

The utilization of the platform is however still low; hence Dr Cheluget appealed to member States to mobilize national business bodies to ensure its full utilization not only to address information gaps, but also to create market linkages and business opportunities.

During the meeting, COMESA Business Council presented a concept for hosting biennial COMESA Trade Fair to promote investments in regional value chains and leverage greater participation of the private sector in the integration process.

A technical study on export potential for intra-COMESA trade was also presented at the meeting.

The outputs of the meeting would be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee and later to the Council of Minister scheduled to meet next month ahead of the 21st COMESA Summit in





Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS) officers testing the newly donated equipment in Luangwa during the official launch

## 100,000 Euros worth of equipment to facilitate border trade fish trade commissioned in Zambia

COMESA has commissioned EUR 100,000 worth of equipment under its Green Pass (GP) Certification Scheme in Luangwa District of Zambia, to facilitate small-scale cross border trade in fish.

The procurement of the equipment was funded under the 11 European Development Fund (EDF) Small Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI) Programme. The equipment was commissioned on 7 October 2021 to support fish trade at Luangwa, bordering Mozambique and Zimbabwe at the confluence of the Zambezi and Luangwa rivers.

The equipment included pesticide residue rapid test kits and reagents (organophosphates; organochlorides; heavy metals), industrial electronic/platform scales: (250kg capacity) and digital electronic balance [0,01kg – 6kg]. Others were office equipment (laptops, printer and router) for online dissemination of certificates of analysis. These have been installed in a standard 40ft metal container as office space and storage of the equipment.

The objective of the GP is to reduce overall trading costs for small scale

traders, through simplifying and consolidation of sanitary measures and border verification procedures. It is anchored within the framework of the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) and includes interventions such as governance structure (small border committees comprising key stakeholders under the joint border management committee) and provision of basic verification and testing equipment for the regulators.

### Risk Profiling

Risk profiling of the traded commodities such as dried smoked and salted fish entering Zambia destined to other neighbouring countries such as DR Congo and Angola is also included in the framework.

Speaking at the site, Zambia's Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Dr Benson Mwenya emphasized the importance of ensuring that the equipment was put to the intended use and is well maintained.

"For the first time, we will now be able to measure accurately the quantity of fish coming into the harbour and being shipped across to various destinations

in the region," he said.

He noted that unpredictable sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) inspections and verification checks contributed to high trading costs, forcing small scale traders into informal routes.

Luangwa was selected as the pilot project for its thriving trade in fish across multiple borders and strategic location at the intersection of three countries: Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The project's framework was informed by studies carried out by COMESA, which showed that intra-regional and informal fish trade is a well-organized entrepreneurial activity. If well structured, it has the potential to contribute to regional economic development and enhance the livelihoods of the populace.

Assistant Secretary General in charge of programmes, Dr Kipyego Cheluget led the COMESA team at the event. Others were the Director of Agriculture and Industry, COMESA, Ms Providence Mavubi and the Director for Health Promotion, Environment and Social Determinants at the Ministry of Health, Zambia, Dr Abel Kabolo.



Rural farmer in Ezulwini in Eswatini

**"The Broken Promise: Analysis of the Benefits Derived by Women from the 10% Agriculture Budget in Selected Countries in East and Southern Africa", and "Opportunities for Youth in Rural Business and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture"**

## COMESA, UN-Women mark International Rural Women's Day

COMESA and the UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (UN Women ESARO) organized a two-day webinar to mark the International Rural Women's Day, on 12 October 2021.

The event was aimed at utilizing the Day's celebrations to disseminate the findings of two studies that were conducted by UN-Women, during the period 2019 – 2021, with focus on women and youth smallholder farmers. The studies focused on Ethiopia, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda.

The studies were: "The Broken Promise: Analysis of the Benefits Derived by Women from the 10% Agriculture Budget in Selected Countries in East and Southern Africa", and "Opportunities for Youth in Rural Business and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture".

The first report would be discussed on 12th October and the second on 14th October 2021. These studies will support the development of recommendations to engage with policymakers in their quest to ensure that gender equality

and women's empowerment through agriculture is achieved.

The webinar was also aimed at leveraging on ways to operationalize the findings and recommendations of the studies by exploring partnerships with interested stakeholders in further advancing work on women's economic empowerment. It is expected to inspire discussion among relevant stakeholders on agricultural investments for women and youth to advance women and youths economic empowerment.

Participants also discussed selected good practices from country climate smart agriculture programmes. Participants at the meeting included representatives from member States, cooperating partners, regional organizations, UN Agencies, civil society organizations, and others.

Dr Kipyego Cheluget, Assistant Secretary General of COMESA, addressed the opening session and encouraged Member States to enhance public investment in agriculture by allocating at

least 10% of the total public expenditure. This is expected to grow agriculture value addition by at least 6% annually.

He called on all actors in public, private, civil society organizations and development partners to identify concrete actions to support securing rural women's rights and empowerment and to facilitate building of partnerships.

"Legal, policy and strategic frameworks on agriculture must recognize rural women as agriculture producers, entrepreneurs, and managers of natural resources, and address their specific needs, concerns, and interests such as access to agricultural technologies, labour-saving agricultural equipment, and modern means of communication," he stated.

Agriculture is the mainstay of most regional economies with the regional bloc supporting its member states to develop and implement their National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans for improved food and nutrition security and livelihoods.

# COMESA at the Dubai Expo



Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe was one of the speakers at the Global Business Forum – Africa. Along with the Group Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Trade and Development Bank, Mr Admassu Tadesse, the two were among three discussants on the subject: Transformation Through Trade which is anchored on three pillars: **RESET – RESTORE – RENEW.**

The Forum was part of the activities at the Expo 2020 Dubai.

Their topic focused on the RESET pillar which explores policy and regulatory reforms and assess the economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the region. It further explored how the continent's countries could work together to deliver on the promise of the AfCFTA and enable sustainable growth.

Madam Kapwepwe told the audience that the role of digital technologies in

mitigating the effects of the pandemic had proved critical by providing alternative methods of doing business in an unprecedented environment.

She cited the COMESA Digital Free Trade Area as one of the initiatives that aims at transforming the business processes that impede the attainment of the desired levels of efficiency and reducing the cost of doing business.

"This is a system, together with the regional guidelines on trade during the COVID 19 which will contribute to coping with challenges caused by the pandemic," she said.

Among the lessons learned, during the pandemic, she noted, was the importance of accelerating innovation capabilities that allow embracing new technologies which remain the only way to improve efficiency and cutting costs of doing business.

*"This is a system, together with the regional guidelines on trade during the COVID 19 which will contribute to coping with challenges caused by the pandemic," Chileshe Kapwepwe.*



# Farewell to Ms. Hope Kivengere

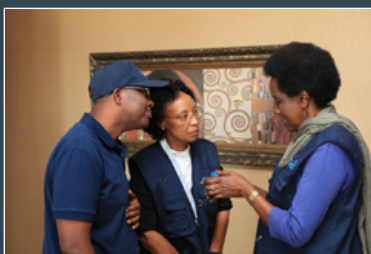
Member of the COMESA Committee of Elders succumbed to sudden illness

COMESA mourned the demise of Ms Hope Kivengere, a member of the COMESA Committee of Elders, who passed away on 19 October 2021 in her home country, Uganda.

Ms Kivengere was appointed to the Committee of Elders in April 2015 where she also served as the Deputy Chairperson. In the course of service to the regional bloc, she carried out several assignments including that of leading COMESA Election Observer Missions. Among these were the Zambia's General Elections in August 2021, the 2019 General Elections in Malawi and Comoros and the 2018 Presidential Elections in Egypt.

The COMESA Committee of Elders was established by the COMESA Heads of State in 2006 to complement peace-making and peace-building capacity of the Office of the Secretary General.

Since its establishment, members of the Committee have led more than 30 COMESA elections observer missions, pre-election assessment missions and mediation support among other peace and security related assignments.



In a message of commiseration, sent through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kampala, Uganda, COMESA Secretary General, Chileshe Kapwepwe described Ms Kivengere as an active elder who executed her role with energy and excellence.

Madam Kivengere was well versed in peace and security matters and had sharp diplomatic skills having worked as the Spokesperson for the Presidency in Uganda from 1986-2001.



COMESA SECRETARIAT  
COMESA Center  
Ben Bella Road  
P.O. Box 30051



+260 211 229 725



[www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int)



[info@comesa.int](mailto:info@comesa.int)



[facebook.com/ComesaSecretariat/](https://facebook.com/ComesaSecretariat/)



[@twitter.com/comesa\\_lusaka](https://twitter.com/comesa_lusaka)