

## COMESA Kicks-Off Sensitization Programmes to Enlist States to Open Up Airspace

1



Stakeholders participating in the awareness workshop in Mogadishu, Somalia

COMESA has kicked-off a series of workshops to create awareness about the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The initiative seeks to enlist regional States that have not yet signed up to establish the SAATM, leading to the liberalization of their air transport sector to do so. So far 36 African States have signed with only eight from the COMESA region.

Four countries are targeted in the first round: Somalia, Malawi, Seychelles and Burundi. The first workshop took place in Mogadishu, Somalia, 18 – 19 June 2023, and the second in Malawi on 22 – 23 June 2023. They were conducted under the programme on Support to Air Transport Sector Development (SATSD) in Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean Region (EA-SA-IO). SATSD is an eight million euros programme funded by the European Union.

The need for awareness creation on SAATM is informed by the fact that while many air transport markets outside Africa have been liberalized to a significant extent, most intra-African air transport markets remain largely closed.

"This has affected air connectivity within Africa as air travel costs remain prohibitive and continue to limit the potential for economic growth and development in our region," said the Secretary General of COMESA

Chileshe Kapwepwe in a statement presented by Mr. Francis Okome, Air Transport Policy and Regulatory Expert under the SATSD project. Inherent fear of domination and competition by big airlines and the need to protect small national carriers was cited as part of the reasons holding back the decision to open up the sector.

Launched in 2018, SAATM provides for the full liberalisation of intra-African air transport services in terms of market access, traffic rights for scheduled and freight air services by eligible airlines thereby improving air services connectivity and air carrier efficiencies.

It removes restrictions on ownership and provides for the full liberalisation of frequencies, tariffs and capacity. It also provides eligibility criteria for African community carriers, safety and security standards, mechanisms for fair competition and dispute settlement as well as consumer protection.

Within the tripartite region of COMESA, EAC and SADC, 13 States have signed the SAATM, which is low compared to the Western part of Africa.

In Somalia, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Mr Mudane Ahmed Jama Omar who opened the workshop underscored the need to establish

enabling legal and institutional frameworks that will ensure safe, effective and efficient air transport systems.

"The outcome is therefore very clear in our minds and whatever emanates from this workshop will clearly guide us and strengthen our resolve as a State to actively participate in the continental agenda for the benefit of our generation and the generations to come," Mr Omar said.

Malawi underscored its commitment during the implementation of the entire Support to Air Transport Sector Development programme. This was in a statement delivered by Mr. Fergus Gondwe, Director of Technical Services in the Ministry of Transport and Public Works on behalf of the Principal Secretary.

"We have established a Civil Aviation Authority and a board of directors is in place. Concurrently we are establishing an airport operator where the Airport Developments Limited will assume management and operations of all public airports in the country", he said.

Once the national awareness raising workshops are completed, the next step is to initiate a programme that will assist the Member States to meet SAATM requirements.



From left: COMESA ASG Dr Dev Haman, EU Head of Delegation to Zambia and COMESA Mr Jacek Jankowski, Dr George Sinyangwe PS Ministry of Health and Commerce PS Mrs Lillian Bwalya

## Zambia Receives Rapid Test Kits to Facilitate Transit Trade

COMESA handed over equipment worth EUR 227,526 to the Government of Zambia, on Friday 16 June 2023 to be used to facilitate transit trade. The equipment includes testing and diagnostic kits for tradable food products. They will be used by port health offices and other key border agencies that work on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) and issues related to Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

Commerce, Trade and Industry Minister Chipoka Mulenga, represented by Permanent Secretary at the Ministry, Mrs Lillian Bwalya received the equipment. They will be used at the borders as one of the solutions to eliminate impediments to trade at Chirundu, Mwami and Nakonde One Stop Border Posts (OSBP) under the Zambia Border Post Upgrading project.

The equipment was procured under the COMESA Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP), with funding from the 11th European Development Fund. The TFP is a EUR 53 million programme in COMESA, under which a EUR 6.8 million sub-delegation agreement was signed with Zambia in November 2020.

Mrs Bwalya said that testing of products in Zambia has been highly centralised and is usually done from the provincial centers. Hence the procurement and placement of the kits at the designated borders will enable testing of products without having to send

samples to the provincial centers. This will allow for more effective surveillance and result in more effective planning.

"Rapid response in addressing public and plant health concerns such as disease outbreaks due to food contamination and plant diseases will now be detected easily at the point of entry," she noted.

Assistant Secretary General in charge of Administration and Finance at COMESA, Dr Dev Haman, said the decision to upgrade operational efficiencies at these border posts was partly motivated by inefficiencies identified at the borders.

"Several studies conducted in the region had revealed that border posts on major trade corridors in the COMESA region were characterized by inefficient clearance procedures that cause delays in the movement of both trucks and goods leading to increased

costs of doing business in the region and consequent lack of competitiveness for regional producers," he said.

Thus, Zambia being a key transit country in the COMESA region linking many countries to the seaports, any inefficiencies at the country borders affect the whole region.

The European Union Head of Delegation in Zambia and COMESA Mr Jacek Jankowski emphasized the need to remove barriers to trade especially sanitary and phytosanitary related issues as they affect the movement of tradable food products at the borders.

"The sanitary and phytosanitary standards can indeed become technical barriers to trade if proper training coupled with agreed processes at borders do not take place," he noted adding that equipment is one of the solutions to eliminate impediments to regional trade.

**«Zambia being a key transit country in the COMESA region linking many countries to the seaports, any inefficiencies at the country borders affect the whole region.»**



## Malawi Builds Capacity in Compiling Gender Statistics

COMESA Secretariat in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender in Malawi has conducted a five-day national capacity building workshop on gender statistics. The aim of the workshop was to build the capacity of the country in producing and using timely data for effective policy making.

Speaking during the opening of the workshop, Director of Gender Affairs in Malawi Ms Alice Mkandawire described the training as an opportunity to have crucial stakeholders trained to strengthen the capacity of Malawi to collect, analyze and disseminate gender statistics. This will assist to give evidence on progress towards gender equality, contribute to closing persistent gender gaps and to correcting gender bias.

According to a 2021 study by UN Women Malawi, many Government ministries, Departments, and Agencies which are part of the National Statistical System collect and use gender statistics, do not have adequate capacity, infrastructure, and systems to ensure that quality gender statistics are regularly collected and organized.

"Gender statistics are very important because they are used for evidence-based decision-making in the country and at global level," she added "It is for this reason that this workshop targeted most sectors that deal with gender issues to inform interventions that would ensure that no one is left behind in the development sector as espoused in the SDGs, "leaving no one behind". The workshop had representation from the grassroots women organizations.

Director of Gender at COMESA Secretariat Mrs Beatrice Hamusonde said the regional organization believed that gender equality is central to the process of sustainable development and the foundation of effective national development policies and programs, for which data that reflects economic and geopolitical reality is required by all.

"In order for us to ensure that our policies align with the National, Regional, and Continental vision such as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union which informs the development of Medium Term Strategic Plans of Regional Economic Communities, it is imperative that we are familiar with the legal instruments in the region and especially those related to monitoring and evaluation of progress made in the field of women empowerment," Mrs Hamusonde said.

The workshop is expected to assist in achieving the result of the COMESA 2021 – 2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan on Strengthened Capacity of Member States to compile gender-sensitive statistics related to COMESA's regional integration agenda.

The training received financial support from the European Union through the institutional Capacity Building Programme (ICBP).



*Dr Suzgo Lungu - Legal Officer COMESA Secretariat addressing stakeholders in Egypt*

## Push for Visa Relaxation and Free Movement

A Joint team of officers from the COMESA Migration Taskforce on the Free Movement of Persons and the Taskforce on the Implementation of Legal Instruments and Council Decisions was recently in Cairo, Egypt as part of a seven-nation tour to advocate for the implementation of key instruments and decisions that are an integral part of trade facilitation in the region.

Specifically, the team went to engage government ministries and parliamentarians to improve the implementation of the COMESA Visa Protocol for Trade facilitation and to enhance the signature and ratification of the COMESA Protocol on Free Movement of Persons.

COMESA Secretariat Legal Officer Dr Suzgo Lungu, who is part of the delegation said the Secretariat hopes to engage Member States to ensure the implementation of the Treaty and to accelerate the regional integration agenda.

"With missions such as these, we are determined to engage the Member States and encourage them to implement these key protocols. The two protocols are crucial to moving regional integration forward," Dr Lungu said.

The consultative mission held on 21 and 22 June 2023 enabled the joint taskforce to discuss in detail the implementation of the COMESA Migration Agenda in the context of the Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation of Visas which is in force, and the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Goods, Labour and the Right of Establishment and Residence.

Members of the Taskforce were appointed in 2011 and in 2013 they visited eight Member States pushing for the same agenda. With support from the European Union, the taskforce has resumed the country engagements with so far Mauritius and now Egypt. The findings from these missions will be presented to the Joint Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Migration and Labour which is scheduled to take place in August this year.

In Egypt, the delegation was met by Amb. Suha El Gendy, Minister of Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs and the Assistant Minister Amb. Emr Abbas.





*Central Banks experts and CMI staff at the Intermediate Level Training*

## Central Bank Experts Undertake Intermediate Level Training

The COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) has trained experts from Member States Central Banks' experts on "Intermediate-Level Analysis of various Monetary Policy Transmission Channels using Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) Modelling Framework". This was conducted on 12 – 16 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The intermediate level module is a continuation of the basic module training that had earlier been completed. The module develops DSGE model with micro foundations for estimation, simulation and forecasting for monetary policy analysis and

formulation.

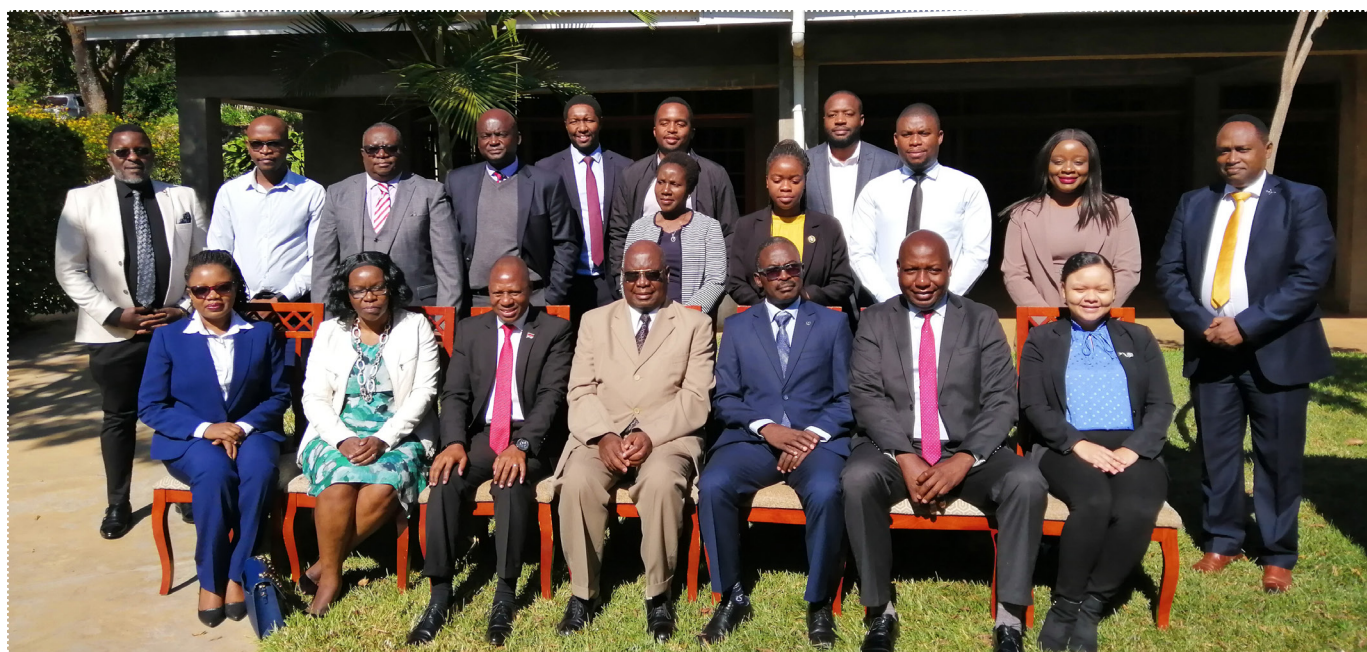
Sixteen delegates, from eight Central Banks of COMESA Member States, namely; Burundi, D R Congo, Egypt, Libya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in the training.

While addressing the delegates at the commencement of the workshop, the CMI Director, Dr. Lucas Njoroge, said the Intermediate level DSGE training, is motivated by the fact that models with rich micro foundations yield parameter estimates and forecasts that are more accurate, despite their small

data requirements relative to comparable models.

"The contemporary monetary policy formulation also requires information and forecasts on the interaction between sectors and variables in the economy, which can only be harnessed from DSGE model," he noted.

The skills gained from the training will contribute to improved monetary policy formulation and ultimately enhance the implementation of the COMESA Monetary Integration Programme by all COMESA Member States.



Participants at the Single African Air Transport Market stakeholders workshop in Malawi. This was the second awareness raising national workshop in a series of four targeting Somalia, Malawi, Seychelles and Burundi to have them sign the SAATM.





## COMESA Meetings and Events in Pictures



The Governance, Peace and Security Unit held a multi-stakeholder consultation on the Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessment for the Republic of Malawi from 19 -23 June 2023. The workshop in Lilongwe brought together representatives from different Government Ministries.

5

The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Zambia His Excellency Ali S. Alkahtani paid a courtesy call on Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe in Lusaka on Thursday 22 June 2023. The two discussed various areas of cooperation for the benefit of COMESA and Saudi Arabia.



The High Commissioner of India to Zambia His Excellency Ashok Kumar paid a courtesy call on Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe on Thursday 22 June 2023. The two discussed various programmes that could benefit both parties. These included cooperation in agriculture – food production, value addition and value chains, improving productive capacities, pharmaceuticals, technology transfer and information sharing among others.





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)