

African States Renew Commitment to Yamoussoukro Decision for Improved Air Transport



Participants at the Regional Workshop in Kigali

A regional capacity building workshop was successfully held in Kigali, Rwanda from 8 to 12 September for Member States on Annexes 3, 5 and 6 of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD). These Annexes are detailed regulations and guidelines that elaborate on the YD's core principles for the liberalization of intra-African air transport markets, covering aspects such as competition, definitions of airlines and services, and procedures for commercial and operational flexibility.

Jointly organized by COMESA through the European Union funded Support to Air Transport Sector Development (SATSD) Programme and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), the workshop concluded with a strong appeal for deeper cooperation to advance the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The event, brought together Member States from Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean region,

alongside Regional Economic Communities, courts of justice and aviation authorities.

In his closing remarks, the Guest of Honor, Mr. Emmanuel Nuwamanya, Head of Policy and Planning at Rwanda's Ministry of Infrastructure, described the workshop as "a great opportunity to bring together regional stakeholders to find practical solutions to the challenges facing Africa's aviation sector. One of the biggest issues remains the lack of direct air connectivity within the continent." He added.

Mr. Nuwamanya described the workshop as an opportunity for genuine collaboration and practical solutions. He highlighted the challenge of limited direct air connectivity within Africa, observing that it remains common for travellers to fly outside the continent before reaching another African destination.

Speaking on behalf of COMESA, Senior Transport Economist Dr. Zacharia Kingori reaffirmed COMESA's commitment to SAATM, emphasizing that "strengthening regulatory and institutional frameworks will ensure fair competition, protect consumers, and create a more stable environment for investment in air transport."

He pointed out that the Yamoussoukro Decision is a continental vision to liberalize air transport markets, strengthen connectivity and promote Africa's integration, which are key to creating a safe, fair and competitive aviation market.

The workshop concluded by calling for continued collaboration, sustained resource mobilization and capacity building, to enable Member States to fully implement their responsibilities under SAATM.



Unlocking COMESA'S Vast Agri-Food Potential through Smart Data Systems

COMESA, through its institution the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) has reaffirmed it's shared commitment to building resilient climate-smart, data-driven food systems across the Eastern and Southern Africa.

Speaking when he delivered a keynote speech at a side event during the 2025 Africa Food Systems Forum Summit, held in Dakar, Senegal, ACTESA CEO Dr John Mukuka highlighted the crucial role of one of COMESA flagship programmes the Regional Food Basket (RFBS) in ensuring proactive governance, stable markets, increased intra-regional trade and agricultural transformation.

Mr Patrick Maingi, the RFBS Manager at COMESA Secretariat emphasised its role in boosting farmer incomes, unlocking the agriculture trade and investment potential, and building Africa's climate-smart food systems.

The highly interactive panel discussion dubbed "Production estimation using satellite data and machine learning for Regional Food Balance and Security Monitoring, highlighted the important role that the RFBS can play in the region and beyond.

The Food Summit held from August 31st to September 5th took note of the crucial role that the continent's fast-growing young population can play in the agriculture sector that contributes nearly a quarter of Africa's GDP.

Key sessions of the forum addressed challenges of agricultural transformation, land access, youth participation, finance, innovation, and technology. The forum also reviewed the African Union's new Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP/PDDAA), a roadmap for 2026–2035 to strengthen food sovereignty and cut reliance on imports.

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President Paul Kagame.

Africa's Food Systems Forum, formerly AGRF, is the world's premier forum for African agriculture and food systems, bringing together stakeholders to take practical actions and share lessons that will move African food systems forward. Africa Food Systems Forum is designed to energize political will and advance the policies, programs, and investments required to achieve an inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation.

H.E. Paul Kagame President of Rwanda, who addressed the Food Summit, pointed out that youths are key innovators, drivers of economic growth and agricultural transformation.

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Joint African Union – COMESA Election Observation to Malawi



Former Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn BOTCHE (R) with Amb. Ashraf Rashed

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Former Ethiopian Prime Minister H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn BOTCHE, is heading the Joint AU- COMESA Election Observation Mission to the 16 September 2025. He is assisted by Amb. Ashraf Rashed, Chair of the COMESA Committee of Elders. The Mission comprises 65 short-term observers drawn from ambassadors accredited to the AU and COMESA, officials of election management bodies, members civil society organisations, election experts, human rights specialists, gender and media experts, and representatives of youth organizations.

The observers will be deployed to all three regions in Malawi where they will observe the election day procedures including the opening of polls, voting, closing and the counting processes at the polling stations.

The AUEOM will base its assessment on the legal framework governing elections in the Malawi and the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections, the standards and obligations stipulated in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the International Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, among others.

The Mission shall interact with state

authorities, including, the Malawi Electoral Commission, political parties, the media, civil society organisations and representatives of the international community based in Malawi and other election observation missions.

They will release a Preliminary Statement of its overall findings and assessment of the conduct of the elections on 18 September 2025 at a press conference in Lilongwe, Malawi. A final and comprehensive report will be released within one month from the date of the announcement of final election results and will be published.

The observers are drawn from Botswana, Burundi, CAR, Comoros, Djibouti, DRC, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Mission's Secretariat is located at the Sunbird Capital Hotel, Lilongwe, Malawi

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COMESA Empowers Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders on Regulations

COMESA Secretariat conducted a Regional Training of Trainers Workshop on the COMESA Regulations on the Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders, referred to as the "Regulations". The training workshop was convened from 19–22 August 2025 in Gitega, Burundi.

It marked the start of a series of national workshops that will be rolled out in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), targeting small-scale cross border traders and border officials. The objectives of the training were to build and sustain the technical capacity of Burundi and DRC's officials on the Regulations and finally kick starts the rolling out of a sensitisation programme on the same.

The workshop emphasised the strategic importance of small-scale cross-border trade which represents 30-40 percent of COMESA's formal trade, with over 70 percent of participants being women and youth.

The Regulations are a distinguished framework to encourage inclusivity of all stakeholders and empowerment of

disadvantaged groups, including women, youth, and other marginalised groups to participate in cross border trade. They endeavour to eliminate entry barriers to small scale cross border trade by defining a set of minimum rights and obligations, making trade rules and procedures simple, clear and accessible. They are also meant to reduce misunderstandings and corruption, ensure equal treatment for all traders, regardless of gender or background and promoting accountability among border officials.

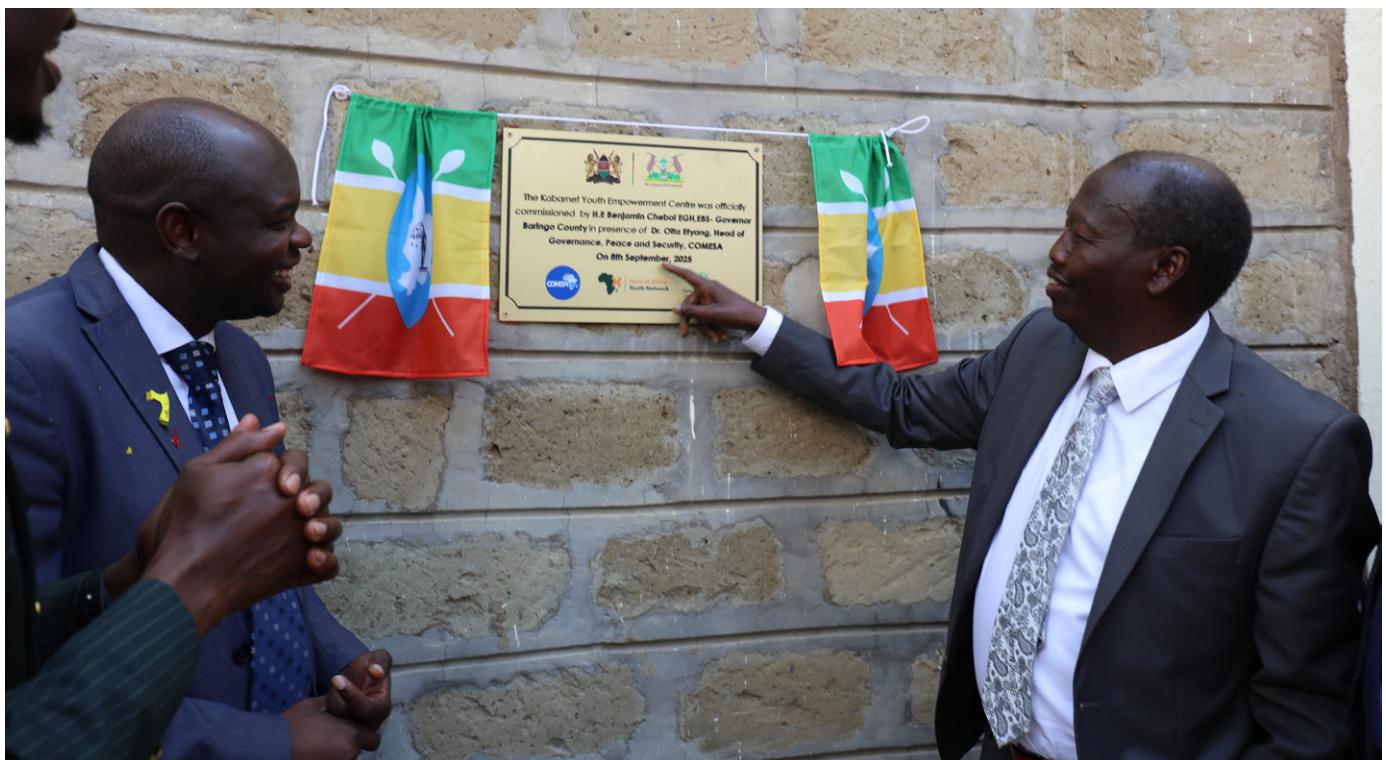
It brought together 40 participants (20 from Burundi and 20 from DRC) who are now equipped as master trainers. They will cascade knowledge to wider networks of small-scale traders and frontline officials, ensuring that information on the Regulations reaches border communities. It was conducted under the World Bank-funded Great Lakes Trade Facilitation and Integration Project (GLTFIP), jointly implemented by Burundi, DRC, and the COMESA Secretariat.

Burundi's Director General of Trade in the Ministry of Trade, Transport, Industry and

Tourism Mr. Jacques RUSENGO opened the workshop and point out that the COMESA Regulations provide an essential framework for transparency, integrity, and accountability at border points.

In his remarks, Mr. Corneille WASIKWA, Head of Division, Provincial Division of External Trade, South Kivu and head of DRC delegation, affirmed that the training workshop was not only about trade facilitation, but also to empower women and youth to thrive in safer, faster and fairer conditions.

Mr. Adam Willie, who represented COMESA Secretariat reiterated the role of the COMESA Regulations in making trade policy more inclusive of all stakeholders, particularly, women, youth, and other marginalised groups. He encouraged the two Member States to develop and implement national programmes for rolling out awareness campaigns on the Regulations.



One-Stop Youth Centre Launched in Baringo

As part of efforts to empower young people in Kenya's Baringo County, COMESA in collaboration with the Horn of Africa Youth Network, has officially launched a One-Stop Youth Centre in the county aimed at transforming the lives of local youth through integrated services and opportunities.

The initiative is supported by the European Union and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) through COMESA, reinforcing regional efforts to promote peace, stability and youth inclusion.

The launch event, held in Kabarnet District, was officiated by the County Governor, H.E. Benjamin Cheboi, and attended by key stakeholders.

It will offer career guidance, skills training, psychosocial support, Sports indoor sports facilities, a voice and video recording studio, conference centre and access to digital tools. In addition, COMESA has provided forty laptops to the centre to support digital learning and innovation supported by Turing Trust.

Speaking during the launch, County Governor Cheboi, indicated that the One-Stop Centre is expected to change lives of the youths in the county and beyond and

contribute to digitalization in the area.

"This centre is a game-changer for our youth," said Governor Cheboi. "It brings together essential services under one roof—education, entrepreneurship, mental health support, and digital access".

Head of Governance, Peace and Security at COMESA Secretariat, Dr. Oita Etyang noted that the centre shall contribute to peace building and sustainable development. He promised to offer more support to the centre through provision of training and providing support for internet services for the whole year.

"Through our Unit, COMESA is committed to building inclusive and resilient communities," said Dr. Etyang. "This centre reflects our dedication to youth empowerment, peacebuilding and sustainable development."

Local youth expressed optimism and gratitude for the new centre adding that the challenges they faced including access to digital tools, mentorship, health talk and many others will now be addressed at the centre.

"Before this, we had nowhere to go for

guidance or support," said Cynthia Irungu, a youth leader in Baringo county. "Now I can learn digital skills and get help to start my business,"

Prior to the launch of the youth Centre, COMESA and the Horn of Africa Youth Network, conducted a regional sensitization workshop aimed at strengthening National Youth Councils on the COMESA guidelines for the establishment of effective NYCs.

The two-day workshop, brought together over 30 youth leaders from COMESA Member States in the Horn of Africa region.

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