



# Governance, Peace & Security

*Newsletter*

Seventh Edition, July - Sept 2025

## Introduction

Guided by Article 3 (d) of the COMESA Treaty, the COMESA Governance, Peace and Security Unit continued to make steady progress in advancing regional peace, security and stability. This third quarter (Q3) newsletter (Vol. 7) captures the Unit's programmatic milestones, achievements and outcomes – spotlighting the diverse initiatives undertaken across the region. From safeguarding children affected by armed conflicts and strengthening democratic governance, to empowering youth as key actors in peace and security, the highlights herein reflect COMESA's enduring commitment to a safe and prosperous region. The following thematic areas are covered:

**This edition covers the following thematic areas:**

1. **Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)**
2. **COMESA Committee on Peace and Security**
3. **Democracy and Governance**
4. **Transnational Organised Crime**
5. **Trading for Peace (TfP)**
6. **Youth Engagement**

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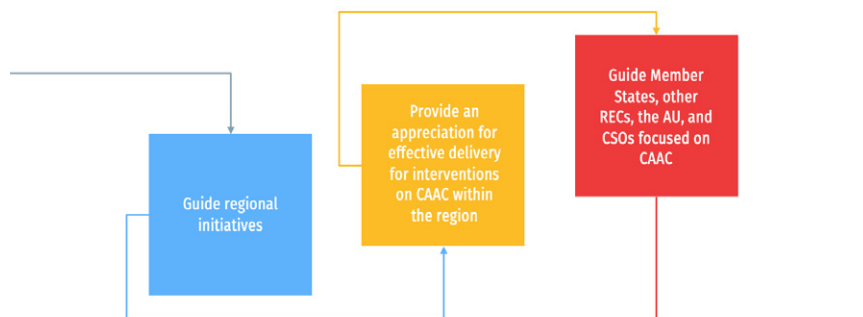
*Member States validate the CAAC & CTOC/AML/CFT Strategies*

## Validation of the COMESA Regional Children Affected By Armed Conflict (CAAC) Strategy

**“The impact of armed conflict on children is everyone’s responsibility. And it must be everyone’s concern.” – Graça Machel-Mandela**

A validation workshop for the COMESA Regional Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) Strategy was conducted on 3 - 6 September 2025 in Entebbe, Uganda. The validation workshop was attended by Member State representatives from Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The CAAC Strategy is intended to:





# Meeting of the COMESA Committee on Peace And Security

*Article 3(d) of the COMESA Treaty reminds us that peace and security are not side notes in integration—they are its very heartbeat.*



The 20th Meeting of the COMESA Committee on Peace and Security was held on 29-30 September, 2025. The meeting was attended by delegates from Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The meeting reviewed the status of the regional peace and security and the status of implementation of COMESA's Governance, Peace and Security program activities. The recommendations of the meeting were adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Meeting on 8 October 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Speaking during the opening session, the Assistant Secretary General incharge of Programs Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Kadah underscored the critical role of peace and security in the COMESA's regional integration and development agenda. Citing Article 3(d) of the COMESA Treaty, he emphasised that without peace, efforts to deepen trade, attract investment, and achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 cannot be attained. On his part, the Chairperson of the Committee on Peace and Security - the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and Development Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Ferdinand Bashikako emphasised that:

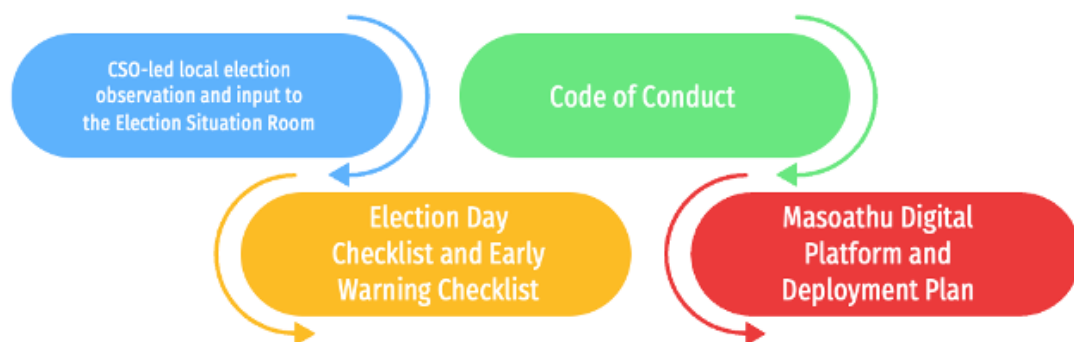
**"Peace and security can only be built in a spirit of regional solidarity and strengthened cooperation, with a focus on prevention, democratic governance, social inclusion and resilience against emerging threats."**



## Training of Trainers for Malawi's Election Situation Room Monitors

COMESA supported the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) in conducting the Training of Trainers for Election Situation Room monitors. The training was conducted from 14-15 August 2025. The training attracted approximately 100 participants. The aim was to provide capacity to all sitting Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on understanding electoral code of conduct, observation and to ably use the digital platform (Masoathu) and transfer the knowledge to observers at lower levels. The training covered:

The training facilitated the deployment of 6,331 Stationed observers at each polling centre across the country, 509 Roving observers in each ward with a smartphone/tablet, 30 Roving observers at the district level, 25 Roving observers at the national level, observing across districts and 10 Observers stationed in the Elections Situation Room (ESR). These observers were very instrumental in feeding the Election Situation Room with data from the field. The Situation Room was critically important in ensuring a peaceful and credible elections in Malawi.





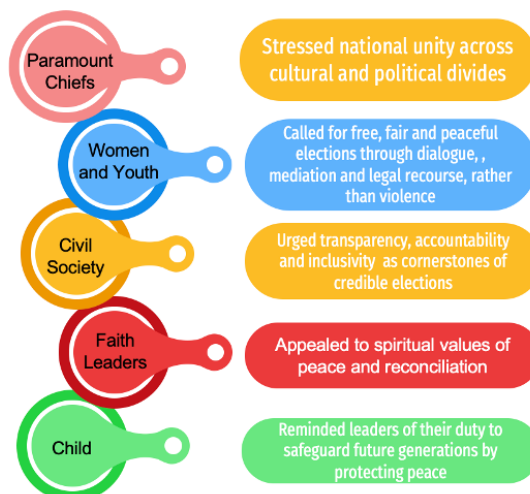


## Launch of the Malawi Pre-Election Initiative

COMESA, in partnership with the African Union (AU) launched the a pre-election initiative for Malawi on 28 August 2025. The initiative was designed to promote strategic preventive diplomacy, dialogue, and consensus-building for peaceful and credible elections. The Launch brought together high-level stakeholders, including government officials, regional leaders, civil society, traditional leaders, youth, women, and faith-based representatives, among others. The delegates underscored Malawi's commitment to peaceful democratic processes.

The AU and COMESA reaffirmed their solidarity with the Malawian people. The Government welcomed the initiative as timely support for the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) and the Malawi Peace and Unity Commission (MPUC), while also underscoring the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and collaboration across all sectors.

Goodwill messages from a wide range of stakeholders including the AU Panel of the Wise, and the COMESA Committee of of Elders, and other elders , reinforced the central themes of peace, unity, and collective responsibility.

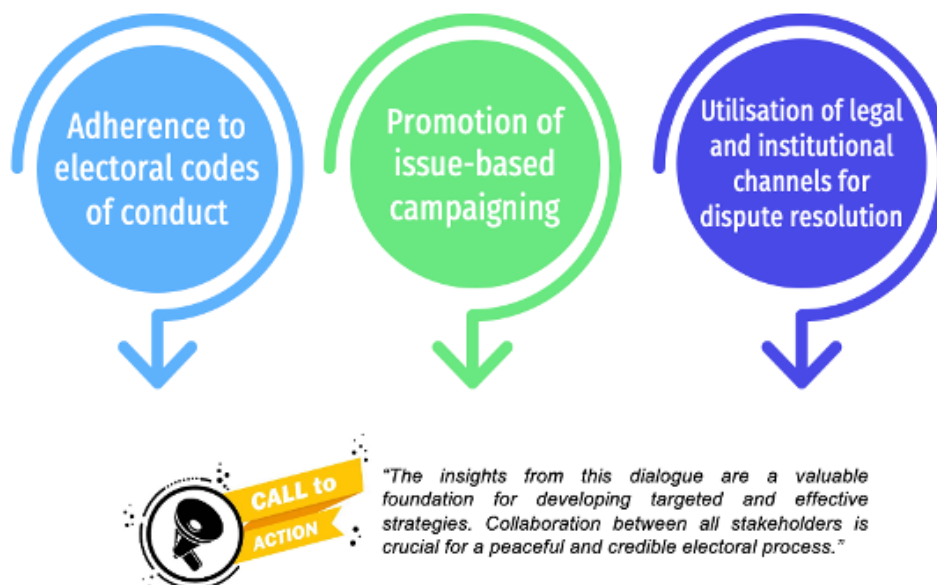




## Consensus Building for Peaceful Polls: Malawi Regional Dialogues

As part of the pre-election initiative, COMESA in partnership with the AU convened three Regional Dialogues in the Northern (Mzuzu), Southern (Blantyre), and Central (Lilongwe) regions from 25 – 27, and 29 August 2025. The forums brought together a total of 185 key electoral stakeholders and provided a platform for discussing electoral risks, identifying conflict triggers, and developing collaborative strategies for peaceful and credible elections.

Each regional dialogue culminated with the adoption of resolutions and a collective declaration of peace (common position) for the 2025 Elections. As shown below, several specific commitments were made by stakeholders, culminating into a common Call to Action:





# Malawi Conducts Peaceful Elections



Malawi Conducts Peaceful Elections



Malawi held its general elections on 16 September 2025, electing the President, Members of Parliament, and Ward Councillors. The AU-COMESA Joint Election Observation Mission, led by H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, and Amb. Mohamed Ashraf Rashed, Chair of the COMESA Committee of Elders. The joint mission deployed 76 Short-Term Observers across the country. The STOs were 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. In its preliminary statement, the Mission noted that

the elections were peaceful, transparent, and credible.

Ahead of the polls, COMESA and the AU conducted a Pre-Election Assessment Mission and supported the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) alongside International IDEA in strengthening electoral processes.

As the elections concluded, on 24 September 2025, the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) disseminated the final results of the 2025 Presidential Elections, declaring Prof. Authur Peter Mutharika President Elect of the Republic of Malawi with a total of 56.8% votes.



## AU and COMESA Join Forces Observe Seychelles' Elections

*Democracy thrives when nations open their doors to observation, transparency, and trust.*



Former Seychelles H.E Wavel Ramkalawan welcoming H.E. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili at state house ahead of the elections.

Seychelles held its General Elections from 25–27 September 2025 to elect the President and 26 Members of the National Assembly. The AU-COMESA Joint Election Observation Mission (EOM), led by H.E. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, former Prime Minister of Lesotho, deployed 35 observers drawn from 21 African countries to assess the conduct of the polls. The Mission guided by the following objectives:

Assess compliance of the 2025 electoral process with AU principles, normative frameworks and international obligations

Ascertain that the environment was conducive for peaceful and democratic elections

Evaluate the preparedness of the Electoral Commission Seychelles and other institutions

Offer recommendations for the improvement of future elections

witnessed special voting on 25 – 26 September 2025 and the voting, closing and counting at polling stations on 27 September, noting that the process was peaceful, transparent, and well-administered. Voter turnout stood at 84%, underscoring Seychelles' strong democratic participation. The elections were highly competitive, with the United Seychelles (US) and Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS) parties emerging as the main contenders. As no candidate achieved the required 50%+1 majority, a presidential run-off was held on 9–11 October 2025. On 12 October 2025, H. E. Patrick Herminie of the US party was declared the winner with 52.7% of the vote – effectively winning the run-off election.

The Mission concluded that Seychellois were able to freely exercise their constitutional rights in a credible, transparent and peaceful manner, and proffered the following recommendations:

The Mission met with key national stakeholders. Observers





Government	Election Commission Seychelles	Civil Society Organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Work with the National Assembly, the ECS and the Attorney General to ensure that amendments to the Constitution related to elections are done way ahead of elections year</li> <li>♦ Deepen public engagement and education throughout constitutional amendment processes</li> <li>♦ Strengthen policies and the electoral legal framework to address the under- representation of women, youth and PWDs in Parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Strengthen data centre/ department to ensure easy access to elections data in disaggregated forms</li> <li>♦ Extend nomination days to offer candidates and parties adequate time to work on queries on their nomination forms</li> <li>♦ Revisit boundary delimitations process which was aborted ahead of the 2025 elections</li> <li>♦ Reconsider the deployment of large numbers of polling staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Initiate programmes in the post-election environment that promote good governance, improve democratic practices and contribute to nation building</li> <li>♦ Implement initiatives to support the utilisation of recommendations made by election observer missions</li> <li>♦ Initiate programmes to mentor and build the capacities of young and new journalists to ensure a pool of competent professionals to support the electoral process</li> </ul>

## Validation of the Regional Strategy on Combating Transnational Organised Crime (CTOC), Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT)

*Can Africa's collective action outpace the evolving tactics of transnational criminals? COMESA is working to ensure just that.*



The validation of the COMESA Regional Strategy on Combating Transnational Organised Crime (CTOC), Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) was conducted on 1 - 2 September 2025 in Entebbe, Uganda. The validation was attended by Member State representatives from Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The workshop sought to enhance the capacities of Member States and other stakeholders in preventing and disrupting TOC/ML/TF and related illicit financial activities as a means of promoting peace, security and good governance in the region.

The Regional Strategy establishes priority actions for COMESA to prevent, mitigate and counter the impact of TOC both at national and regional levels. Apart from guiding COMESA's work and initiatives on CTOC, AML and CFT, the Strategy supports the review and harmonisation of national, regional and international instruments on TOC, ML and FT. The Strategy also identifies opportunities for information sharing to counter TOC, in addition to strengthening interdiction, investigations, and prosecutions for perpetrators.



# Regional Training of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) on Financial Investigations and Assets Management, Recovery and Disposal of Seized, Forfeited or Confiscated Assets

*Every recovered asset is an opportunity to strengthen governance, deliver justice, and rebuild public confidence in institutions.*



COMESA\_GPS continued its deliberate efforts to enhance the capacities of law enforcement agencies, in line with the Decision of the 19th Meeting of COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs that was held in Bujumbura, Burundi on 29 October 2024, which emphasised the importance of strengthening Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) regimes in the region. A Regional Training for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) on Financial Investigations and Asset Management, Recovery, and Disposal was convened from 28 July to 1 August 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop, requested by Madagascar and Seychelles, marked the sixth regional training of its kind since 2022.

Participants from Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and GIZ were trained

on tracking illicit financial flows and recovering assets acquired through crime. Opening the session, Mrs. Auleria Olunga, COMESA's Director of Budget and Finance, and Dr Kennedy Ogwendo, Deputy Director General of Kenya's Assets Recovery Agency, underscored the importance of "following the money" to deter criminal networks and strengthen domestic revenue. The training forms part of COMESA's broader AML/CFT programme, aligned with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards, which supports Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and LEAs across the region. Through this initiative, COMESA continues to build capacity for cross-border cooperation in combating financial crimes, thereby advancing peace, stability, and sustainable development in line with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Global Agenda.

# Sensitisation of Kenya And Uganda Cross-Border Trade Stakeholders at the Malaba Border Area of Kenya-Uganda

*Can trade be more than an exchange of goods? Can it also be an exchange of peace?  
COMESA responds with a resounding "Yes!"*



On 28 – 31 July 2025, COMESA, in collaboration with the Horn of Africa Youth Network (HoAYN), convened a sensitisation workshop at the Malaba Border Area for Kenyan-Ugandan cross-border traders. The workshop's objective was to sensitise stakeholders on the Trading for Peace Project, including the dissemination of the developed trade-facilitation tools such as the COMESA Charter on the Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Cross-border Traders, Human Rights and Entrepreneurship; the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR), and the Manual on Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

A total of 61 cross-border traders participated. Other participants included Kenyan and Ugandan government officials, and trade-related civil society organisations. The workshop explored several challenges, as outlined below:



The workshop resulted in several crucial outcomes, including; the enhancement of both capacity and collaboration between the cross-border traders and the development of ways to strengthen the Joint Border Committee. It concluded with the stakeholders proffering various actionable recommendations, directed at COMESA and the cross-border authorities, towards the enhancement of cross-border trade, peace and security at the Malaba border:

COMESA	Cross-Border Authorities
Continue sensitisation of SSCBTs and officials on the dangers of illegal trade, backed by corruption and bribery	Support the improvement of infrastructures for the provision of safe spaces for women (breastfeeding rooms and daycare facilities), a special lane for PWDs and the elderly
Integration of mental health and psychosocial support services in the COMESA Charter on the Minimum Standards for the Treatment of SSCBTs	Support the harmonisation of currencies
Support the visibility enhancement of Trade Information Desks (TIDs)	Provision of existing guidelines in the local languages
COMESA to convene cross-border trade fairs for improved market linkages and networking	Support the training of new officials on cross-border trade issues along the Malaba border area





## 4<sup>th</sup> Intergenerational Dialogue Forum – Island States Region

*"In each generation, there is this certain wisdom of the ages that gets reburied in the fleeting drivelling of modernity; then, like a diamond in the rough, it is yet again unearthed by a very small minority who not only restores it but also polishes it and presents it as something new, something highly valuable." – Criss Jami, Healology*

Following the wise words of Criss Jami, on 1 – 3 September 2025, youth in the COMESA Island States region sought to be part of the minority that actively seeks to uncover the wisdom carried by the elder generation, a resource too often overlooked. This spirit defined the 4th International Dialogue Forum, convened in Belle Mare, Mauritius, by COMESA in collaboration with numerous partners, including the African Union, the Indian Ocean Commission, Search for Common Ground, Horn of Africa Youth Network, the Institute for Security Studies, and Youth for SDGs Kenya. The Forum provided a platform to enhance

youth contributions to peace and inclusive development and to strengthen intergenerational collaboration on issues pertinent to the Island States region, such as maritime insecurity, climate change, gender-based violence and electoral instability.

The Forum engaged a total of 112 participants - including senior officials from COMESA and the AU, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports – Mauritius, youth from the Island States, the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel, the WiseYouth Network, PRIJO and civil society representatives, who, together, engaged in open dialogue to foster mutual understanding and equip youth with the knowledge needed to tackle prevailing issues.

Looking ahead to future collaboration was a central theme. Thus, the youth and elders co-created practical recommendations, depicted below, for each of the discussed thematic areas, to ensure that the Forum delivered not only conversations but tangible outcomes.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Intergenerational Dialogue...

Gender based Violence	Maritime Insecurity and climate crises	Democratic Governance	Conflict Resolution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to establish digital gender-based violence hotlines and anonymous reporting portals</li> <li>Develop proposals for funding for establishing shelters to serve GBV survivors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement colour-coded waste-triage bins, run school awareness campaigns, &amp; support monitoring of enforcement of existing maritime laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage a quota of women in politics and amplify civic education in schools and universities</li> <li>Sensitise youth through different programs to empower them to participate in politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish multi-level policy to prevent conflicts and incorporate conflict resolution techniques in schools</li> <li>Amplify training of peacekeepers to standardise and streamline conflict resolution</li> </ul>

The Forum culminated in the drafting of a Communiqué, which serves to guide long-term intergenerational collaboration between youth, policymakers, community leaders and civil society on advancing conflict prevention, democratic governance and gender justice efforts.

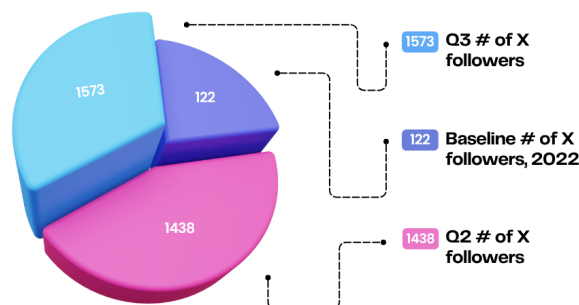
Above all, commitment defined the Forum's conclusion. Thus, the youth issued their commitments and a Call to Action to Governments, the AU, RECs/RMs, and international partners, to support their vision and stand with them in transforming the Island States into a space of peace, resilience and inclusive growth.

Youth of the Island States	Governments	AU, RECs/RMs & International Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to proactively engage to challenge and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes from an early age</li> <li>Commit to effectively engage in political participation processes to amplify our role at the decision-making table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure policies are not merely enacted but are backed with sufficient funding and rigorous monitoring mechanisms</li> <li>Invest in sustainable aquaculture and mariculture to create jobs and ensure food security</li> <li>Create dedicated Blue Investment Funds to provide grants and low-interest loans for community-led sustainable projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform "laws on paper" into tangible "protection in practice" for all individuals across these island nations</li> <li>Harmonize laws and legal frameworks to enable cross-border prosecution of IUU fishing and other crimes</li> <li>Establish a joint regional maritime surveillance and response force, pooling resources for air and sea patrols (e.g., a shared drone surveillance program)</li> </ul>

## VISIBILITY AND ONLINE PRESENCE

Embracing the power of digital storytelling has become essential in our globally connected landscape, allowing us to strengthen our outreach, celebrate achievements, and build lasting partnerships across the COMESA region. Through engaging content on the X platform, COMESA\_GPS actively spotlights key milestones, fresh initiatives, and expert insights, keeping Member States and partners both informed and inspired. This approach has driven a remarkable 9.6% growth in our X following during the third quarter of 2025, rising from 1,438 to over 1,573 engaged followers. The growing online community reflects successful, targeted advocacy that not only showcases our governance, peace, and security programmes but also encourages lively participation in policy dialogue. Building on this momentum, COMESA\_GPS is committed to deepening its digital engagement and leveraging leading social media platforms to further raise awareness and strengthen collaboration around our GPS activities.

# OF X ENGAGED FOLLOWERS IN Q3 2025



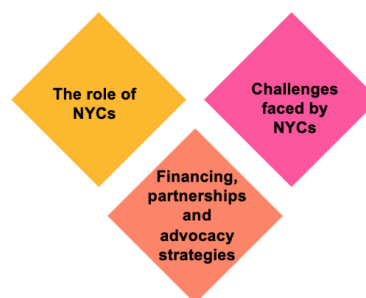


# Sensitisation of National Youth Councils on the COMESA Guidelines for Effective NYCs in the Horn of Africa Region and The Establishment of a ONE-STOP Youth Centre in Baringo, Kenya



***“Any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind” – Kofi Annan***

COMESA\_GPS continued to advance its mission of youth empowerment and capacity through the organisation of a sensitisation workshop in Baringo, Kenya, from 6 – 7 September 2025, which aimed at strengthening NYCs across the Horn of Africa region by popularising the COMESA Guidelines for the Establishment of Effective NYCs. The workshop, convened in partnership with the Horn of Africa Youth Network, brought together 27 representatives of National Youth Councils from Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya to enhance their institutional capacity, foster experience sharing and consequently promote regional development, peace and security. Through in-depth discussions and group work, hinging on aspects depicted below, participants designed model frameworks and action plans to tackle the institutional challenges facing their Councils.



Building on this momentum, COMESA\_GPS marked another milestone by launching the Baringo One-Stop Youth Centre in Kabarnet Town, Baringo County. The Launch featured the donation of 40 refurbished laptops, alongside the unveiling of several skills development facilities, including a recording studio, a well-stocked library, a training conference room, and an outdoor sports area. Partners and local leaders alike, committed to sustaining this initiative through continued funding and technical support. COMESA\_GPS, on its part, demonstrated its long-term commitment by covering a year's worth of internet subscription fees for the Centre.

With these initiatives, the Quarter neared its end on a resounding high note, delivering yet another tangible win for youth empowerment in the COMESA region.



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