

MARCH 2019 COMESA INFORMATION

1. Digitization of trade facilitation tools to reduce corruption risks (March 4, 2019)

COMESA secretary general Chileshe Kapwepwe says implementing the trade facilitation tools such as the digital free trade area, simplification and automation of documents and processes will address some of risks that provide space for corrupt practices in the COMESA region.

Addressing over 60 enterprises in Zambia that participated in an Anti-corruption Compliance Training organized by the COMESA Business Council, on 27th to 28th February, 2019 in Lusaka, Ms. Kapwepwe observed that the vice was not just a national problem, but a regional challenge as well. She cited trade facilitation as one area where corruption is often reported specifically at the border points thus posing significant impediment to trade and investment.

She underlined the need to incorporate the private sector in the fight against corruption noting that the sector is often forgotten when measures to combat the vice are put in place. The COMESA Business Integrity project, which COMESA CBC was rolling out to Member States, was private sector-focused thus presenting the best approach towards combating the vice.

2. Building the capacity of monetary authorities to forecast inflation (March 19, 2019)

With a number of countries in the COMESA region gradually moving to inflation targeting monetary policy framework, the need to upgrade the skills of monetary authorities to forecast inflation with a high degree of accuracy becoming critical. Contemporary monetary policy formulation requires information and forecasts on the interaction between sectors and variable in the economy which can be better understood through Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium (DSGE) Model which have richer micro-foundation that captures economic relationships than other comparable models. DSG model is a method in macroeconomic that attempts to explain economic experiences, such as economic growth and business cycles and the effects of the economic policy through economic models based on applied general equilibrium theory and microeconomic principles.

Based on instructions by the 39th Meeting of Bureau of COMESA Committee of Governors of Central Banks that was held on 4th December 2018 in Djibouti, the COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) organized a training titled “DSGE Modelling and Time Series Analysis” in March in Nairobi, Kenya.

The objectives of the training were to enhance the capacity for monetary policy formulation and implementation using DSGE models in member Central Banks, It was also intended to enable CMI to fulfil its mandate of monetary policy coordination at a regional level, which is a prerequisite for higher degree of monetary integration. Delegates from nine Central Banks of COMESA Member States namely: Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended the training.

3. Egyptian delegation seek investments in COMESA (March 21, 2019)

A delegation of Egyptian investors visited the COMESA Secretariat to explore investment opportunities in various sectors of the economies in the region.

The delegation comprising 35 members led by chairman of the African Cooperation Committee of the Federation of Egyptian Industries Sherif El Gabaly met Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe on 20th March 2019 to express their interest to invest in the region's investment portfolios.

The Secretary General indicated that the COMESA region is open for investment from stakeholders within the African continent and beyond especially that the region has in place mechanisms and policies that are conducive for investments.

4. Insurance Experts discuss Digital Yellow Card implementation (March 28, 2019)

The third meeting of the IT Committee of the Digital Yellow Card Scheme met in Lusaka, Zambia, from 28th to 29th March 2019. The meeting focused on progress regarding the status of implementation of the Digital Yellow Card; the consolidation and enhancement of the Digital system and implementation of the second phase which deals with mobile applications.

This meeting follows the October 2018 Council of Bureaux meeting held in Livingstone, Zambia which made a number of decisions to fully roll-out and consolidate the operations of the Digital Yellow Card.

The COMESA Digital yellow Card scheme is in line with one of COMESA's Strategic objectives which is to strengthen Market integration, through the seamless flow of goods, services, capital, people and the right to establish and reside within the COMESA region. This ensures trade facilitation through simplification and harmonization of documents thereby lowering the cost of cross border trade through removal of trade barriers.

(Source: <https://www.comesa.int/>)