

APRIL 2019 COMESA INFORMATION

News

1. Trade Policy and Export Strategy for Zambia launched(2019.4.5)

The Zambian government has launched the National Trade Policy and Export Strategy. The main objective of the Policy is to turn Zambia into a net exporter and improve competitiveness. The policy covers trade in goods and services and has various interventions and is aligned to the Seventh National Development Plan and aims to achieve sustainable development.

The development of the national Trade Policy and Export Strategy was developed with funding from COMESA's Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) with support from the European Union Commission.

The Export Strategy aims for a structurally transformed economy, by addressing export competitiveness and value addition as well as inclusive and sustainable development. It covers trade in goods and services, with clear indicators that aim to increase services export by 15 percent annually.

The trade policy which is currently being offered as a course at the University of Zambia shall pivot Zambia towards becoming a net exporter and a competitive economy to take full advantage of various trade agreements.

2. COMESA maintains high confidence from development partners as it turns 25 this year(2019.4.5)

COMESA Secretariat has received a combined development aid amounting to USD 299 million from the development partners to support different COMESA programmes as it marks 25 years of its existence this year.

According to COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe, the trust was earned after the Secretariat passed the 4 and 7 pillars Assessment of the European Union (EU) in 2005 and 2015 respectively.

Qualification under the pillar assessment allows the organization to use its own financial and procurement procedures in the utilization of funds received from development partners.

Ms. Kapwepwe explained that COMESA has since 1994 strived to improve its procedures and processes on a continuous basis to comply with international norms, standards and practices. It is the first regional economic community to qualify for this status.

The leading financier to COMESA is the European Union. Others are the USAID, Africa Development Bank and DFID and others. COMESA marks 25 years on 8th December, 2019 since it was established as a successor to the Preferential Trade Area (PTA).

3. COMESA court showcases its new digital system at the commonwealth lawyers conference(2019.4.9)

The Commonwealth Law Conference opened in Livingstone Zambia, today with the COMESA Court of Justice showcasing its new digital court system. The Conference

brings together over 500 lawyers from more than 40 Commonwealth countries out of which nine are COMESA Member States.

The one-week conference was opened by His Excellency President Edgar Lungu of Zambia.

Anchored under the theme “The Rule of Law in Retreat? Challenges for the Modern Commonwealth”, the forum provides the COMESA Court of Justice a platform to market its services to the legal professionals in attendance and to showcase its new digital evidence management system – CaseLines Evidence Management System.

The Court introduced the Caselines System early this year thus eliminating the need for paper in court by introducing an entirely digital platform with tools which allow the creation and presentation of a fully digital bundle including multi-media evidence.

4. COMESA launches online regional Seed label Verification System(2019.4.26)

COMESA has become the first regional trading bloc to launch an online seed label verification system in Africa and globally. The system will assist the region eliminate cases of fake seed and boost trade in quality and improved certified seed.

The region has scored another first by introducing COMESA Regional Certificates to be issued by National Seed Authorities and this is also expected to boost seed trade in 21 countries.

Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) is implementing this program through COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP). It is a region-wide initiative meant to harmonize trade in certified seed by having one common label and certification system. For every seed package that will have a COMESA sticker, it means the source of that seed has been documented and can be tracked by the receiving end.

Assistant Secretary General for Programmed Amb. Dr. Kipyego Cheluget says COMESA will work with National Seed Authorities to ensure that fake seed is eradicated from the market.

5. Zambian govt holds sensitization meeting on the tfta(2019.4.26)

The Zambian government recently held a sensitization meeting with stakeholders on the Copperbelt mainly from the Chambers of Commerce and the private sector on the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA). The meeting was held ahead of Zambia’s pending ratification of the TFTA Agreement.

The Sensitization was facilitated by the Department of Foreign Trade in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry.

Speaking at the event, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Mrs Kayula Siame, who was represented by Chief Economist, Mr. Paul Mumba said once effected, the TFTA will spur a new web of opportunities in Zambia and beyond.

She said local exporters will be afforded an opportunity to competitively grow their international market and consumers will equally get a broader scope of products.

“I urge the private sector to take advantage of the trade space that Government has created through the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry and the opportunities that the TFTA will bring,” Mrs Kayula said.

At the same event, COMESA Director of Trade and Customs Dr. Francis Mangeni called on the private sector to actively participate in trade deliberations.

“Quite a number of countries have involved the private sector in their negotiation delegations, Zambia must consider doing the same, as it will ease dissemination of information,” Dr Mangeni added.

6. COMESA hands over coordination chair of regional Program to EAC” (2019.4.30)

The 6th meeting of the Chief Executives of the Duly Mandated Regional Organizations (DMROs’) was held at the COMESA Brussels Liaison Office in April, 2019. The meeting was chaired by Secretary General of COMESA Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe. It was attended by the DMRO chief executives and technical experts representing COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOC and SADC. This was followed by the joint EU-DMROs High Level group meeting that took place on 30th April, 2019, where COMESA has been Co-Chairing with the EU.

At these meetings, Ms. Kapwepwe handed over the inter-DMRO committee chairmanship and Co-Chairmanship of the Joint EU-DMROs High Level Group to the Secretary General of the East Africa Community (EAC), Mr. Liberat Mfumukeko.

7. EU and RECS sign financing addendum to Regional Program(2019.4.30)

The EU Commission and the Chief Executives of the five DMRO’s of the Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean (ES-SA-IO) have signed an addendum to the Regional Indicative Program (RIP).

The signing ceremony took place in Brussels where the five DMROs participated to review. Among others, the status of the implementation of the 11th EDF RIP which was signed with EU in 2015.

The RIP aid supports the Eastern Africa, Southern and the Indian Ocean in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 to 10 of Annex IV to the partnership agreements between member s of the ACP group states on the one part and the EC and its Member States on the other.

A mid-term Review (MTR) for RIP was undertaken in 2017, following the new European Consensus on Development which recalibrated the development policy of the EU in coherence with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development.

Upcoming Event

June 3 – 5, 2019 Regional training workshop on the online ntb system(Lusaka)

July 17-21 COMESA International Trade Fair & High Level Business Summit (Nairobi)