

MAY 2019 COMESA INFORMATION

News

1. COMESA Countries maintain high Sugar Production (2019.5.4)

Eight countries in the COMESA region have maintained their grip in sugar production with most of the raw produce being exported to the European Union, United States of America and China.

The top producer of sugar in the region is the Kingdom of Eswatini having produced over 650,000 metric tonnes (MT) followed by Egypt at 595,000 MT then Zambia with 450,000 MT. Ethiopia produced 450,000 MT, Zimbabwe 391,000 MT, Kenya is at 367,000 MT while Mauritius and Malawi produced over 355,000 and 239,000 MT respectively.

Importers of raw sugar are Israel, Russia and countries in the Southern African Development Community such as Tanzania.

Recently, COMESA through the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern Africa (ACTESA) participated in the 9th Africa Sugar Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya from 9 to 11 April 2019, where Seed Development Expert at ACTESA Dr. John Mukuka made a keynote speech on global trends in sustainable agriculture with special focus on sugar.

During the conference, it was revealed that Africa accounts for 6 percent of the global total sugar production with COMESA Member States accounting for 52 percent at 5,288, 456 metric tonnes of the total African sugar production of 10,078,61 MT.

The meeting was informed that African consumption has grown more than 70% over the past 15 years nearly double the annual growth of the rest of the world. Despite the growth, the African per capita consumption figure of 17kg remains well below that of the global average of 23 kg. Sub-saharan Africa holds the greatest potential for sugar consumption growth of any global region.

Dr. Mukuka recommended measures that COMESA region needs to put in place to increase the levels of sugar production. These include implementing models such as the out-grower schemes with flexible contracts which can be beneficial to small scale farmers, implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) as outlined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) with supply of key agricultural inputs (seeds and fertilizers) at affordable prices in a reliable manner.

2. COMESA holds coordination forum with its development partners (2019.5.6)

The second joint coordination forum of COMESA and its Development Partners began today in Lusaka, Zambia. The objective of forum is to provide a platform for regular and structured dialogue at the policy and technical levels for constructive engagement and the promotion of best practices on development cooperation matters. The Forum is open to all Development Partners and Special Representatives accredited to COMESA.

The forum provides a platform for COMESA Secretariat to present to the Development Partners potential project proposals and priority areas that require funding.

About 64% of the COMESA Development Budget is financed by Development Partners with the European Union taking the lead. Under the current multiannual financial

framework of the 11th European Union Development Fund (EDF 11) covering the period 20014 – 2020, the EDF has allocated 85 million Euros to COMESA. This is part of its regional cooperation programmes to address four key areas: trade facilitation; small scale cross border trade, regional value chains development and capacity building. The Forum also provides the Development Partners the opportunity to share information on the national programmes they are implementing in COMESA Member States.

3. COMESA Election Observer Mission To The 21st May 2019 Tripartite Elections In The Republic of Malawi Preliminary Statement (2019.5.24)

1. Introduction

-1.1 In response to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Malawi, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) deployed a short-term Mission to observe the 21st May 2019 Tripartite Elections.

5. General Observations

-5.1 The Mission noted with satisfaction the level of confidence various stakeholders including political parties, have in the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). This is partly attributed to the robust and vibrant communication strategy adopted by MEC where any issues raised by stakeholders were addressed in a satisfactory and timely manner. All stakeholders the Mission interacted with appreciated the way MEC has been transparent in handling the electoral process.

-5.2 Specifically, the establishment of the National Elections Consultative Forum (NECOF) provides a platform for discussion and consensus building on pertinent issues that relate to elections. The Mission was also informed that the Multi-Party Liaison Committees (MPLCs) were established to provide a platform for dialogue and the resolution of inter-party disputes at grassroot levels.

17. Key Preliminary Recommendations:

- i. While the Government issued a directive that employers should allow employees time to go and cast their votes, the Mission recommends that in future elections, the Government may consider declaring the voting day a public holiday as this allows voters ample time to vote;
- ii. While the Mission acknowledges the efforts made by MEC in collaboration with accredited civil society organizations in conducting voter and civic education, more effort is still needed especially in the rural areas;
- iii. The Mission noted the directive by MEC to allow specific categories of persons to vote in centers they did not register. The Mission is of the view that such a decision should be made and communicated well in advance to avoid the confusion experienced in some polling centers during voting.

4. COMESA, UNCTAD launch deal to establish regional information portals(2019.5.24)

COMESA and the United National Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) launched a Co-delegation Agreement to implement trade facilitation projects in the region.

UNCTAD secretary general Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi and his COMESA counterpart Chileshe Kapwepwe launched the Agreement at the COMESA headquarters in Lusaka.

Under the Agreement, COMESA delegates to UNCTAD the design and development of national and regional Trade Information Portals (TIPs) and the Customs Automation Regional Centre (CARC).

The two activities are worth 3 million Euros and will be funded from an 85 million Euros kitty provided by the European Union to COMESA under the 11th European Development Fund Trade Facilitation Programme, Out of this amount, 68 million Euros will be used to implement trade facilitation and small-scale cross border trade. The TIPs will facilitate easy access to essential trade information in one platform while the CARC will support technical and functional training on the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) World Platform thereby improving skills to develop and use applications. This is in addition to developing the latest ASYCUDA Applications to enhance trade facilitation systems at the national, regional and continental levels.

Upcoming Event

July 8-12 Bilateral workshops to create linkages between two or more countries(Kampala)

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

July 10-12 4th coordinators' workshop to review the yellow card instruments(Addis Ababa)