

THE 5th MEETING OF THE TRIPARTITE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (TCM)

Venue: Virtual, via zoom, on 29/03/2023

Statement by Ambassador of the European Union to Zambia and Special Representative to COMESA Mr. Jacek Jankowski.

Participants:

- **The Secretary General of COMESA, H.E. Mrs Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe**
- **The Executive Secretary of SADC, H.E. Mr Elias M. Magosi**
- **The Secretary General of EAC, H.E. Mr. Peter Mathuki**
- **European Union Delegation to Tanzania/EAC and Botswana/SADC**
- **Coordinating Ministers from the EAC, COMESA and SADC**

Scene setter

The Secretariat of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa invited the European Union Delegation to Zambia and COMESA to participate to the 5th meeting of the tripartite council of Ministers to take place virtually on the 29th March 2023. The EU provides financial support in advancing the tripartite agenda, specifically the Tripartite Transport and Trade Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) under the infrastructure development pillar. As a result of the EU support, several instruments, including seven transport facilitation instruments will be presented to the Council of Ministers for adoption. The EAC, COMESA and SADC is building block towards Africa's continental integration. Indeed, one of the general objectives of the Tripartite FTA is to “enhance the regional and continental integration processes” (**Tripartite Agreement** -article 4 (c)).

Key Remarks

- **The Secretary General of COMESA, H.E. Mrs Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe**
 - **The Executive Secretary of SADC, H.E. Mr Elias M. Magosi**
 - **The Secretary General of EAC, H.E. Mr. Peter Mathuki**
 - **Honourable Ministers**
 - **Distinguished Senior Government officials**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen**
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- It is my pleasure and honour to address the Fifth Meeting of the Tripartite Council of Ministers to take stock of the progress made towards the operationalization of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA).

- I also take this opportunity to recognise the efforts made so far towards achieving this important goal aimed at encouraging trade and strengthening regional and continental integration. The potential of the TFTA to increase trade, economic growth, job creation and integration across the tripartite region is enormous and would greatly help increase intra-Africa trade which is estimated at around 17%.
- The EU stands ready to share lessons from our own process of economic integration, and with our new Global Gateway Strategy, we have demonstrated that we are ready to support massive infrastructural investment in Africa. One of the flagship programmes under the Global Gateway is the development of strategic corridors through the provision of quality connective infrastructure. The Strategic Corridors are transport systems that facilitate **sustainable, efficient, smart, resilient, fair, affordable, secure and safe mobility and trade within Africa**, as well as **between Africa and Europe**. The corridors are crucial to unlocking regional economic integration as fostered by the tripartite region.
- The lack of an integrated and liberalised road transport market in the East and Southern African (EA-SA) region has been identified as one of the major obstacles to trade as it causes severe delays and increased transport costs. In order to address these challenges, the EU is supporting a programme which aims to address these challenges through the implementation of harmonised road transport policies, laws, regulations, systems and standards that affect drivers, loads, vehicles and road infrastructure in the countries of the EA-SA region. The following are the focus areas of the programme:
 1. Harmonised Vehicle Load Management;
 2. Harmonised Vehicle Regulations and Standards;
 3. Integrated Transport Registers and Information Platform and System;
 4. Efficiency of Regional Transport Corridors.

The total EU contribution to the action is **Euro 18 million**.

His Excellences,

Distinguished participants,

- The implementation of the programmes has not been without challenges including but not limited to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We therefore take this opportunity to recognise the effort and resilience demonstrated in ensuring that the implementation of the action continues despite the challenges.
- We are elated to note that through the support of the EU towards the Tripartite Transport and Trade Facilitation programme (TTTFP), seven transport facilitation instruments will be presented for adoption in this session.
- However, beyond ratifying the instruments, there is need for each member state to domesticate the model laws that will hopefully be adopted.
- The EU remains committed to working with the tripartite to actualize the implementation of the Free trade Area. The TFA is a great opportunity to foster increased trade, create sustainable jobs and generate lasting growth which we hope all the member States will take full advantage of.

Thank You!