

COMESA, World Bank Launch USD5bn Energy Programme

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Symbolic launch of the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) programme by World Director of Regional Integration Africa, Middle East and North Africa H.E Ms. Boutheina Guerhazi and SG Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe alongside Honourable Peter Kapala, Minister of Energy of Zambia. ASG programmes Ambassador Kadah and ASG Finance and Administration Dr Dev Haman both at the far end.

COMESA and the World Bank have launched a USD 5 Billion energy programmes dubbed the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) programme. ASCENT programme is aimed at accelerating energy access efforts in the eastern and southern African region, with a target delivery of new electricity connections for 100 million people.

The program development objective, to which participating countries and regional institutions will contribute, is to increase access to sustainable and clean energy in Eastern and Southern African countries. Access to energy includes on-grid and off-grid (DRE) electricity solutions and clean cooking.

COMESA Secretary General, Ms. Chileshe

Mpundu Kapwepwe and World Director of Regional Integration Africa, Middle East and North Africa H.E Ms. Boutheina Guerhazi launched the programme in Lusaka, Zambia on Tuesday 4 June 2024 in the presence of the Honourable Peter Kapala, Minister of Energy of Zambia.

The main beneficiaries of the ASCENT program are people, including women, in the Eastern and Southern Africa (AFE) region who will gain access to a sustainable supply of electricity and clean cooking, along with the associated benefits that accrue from having energy access.

ASCENT is conceived as a comprehensive accelerator of energy access efforts in the AFE region, aiming at the delivery of new electricity connections for 100 million people through both

grid- and Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE)-based solutions.

ASCENT will leverage the proposed International Development Association (IDA) envelope of US\$5 billion to signal the World Bank's commitment to achieving SDG7 in the Eastern and Southern Africa region and mobilize an additional US\$10 billion from development partners, governments, national utilities, private-sector and commercial funders, carbon markets, climate and other impact-oriented financiers, and philanthropic and other partners.

The Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA) is IDA financed and anticipates that up to 20 countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa (AFE) region will participate in ASCENT. IDA-eligible countries can be financed from the US\$5 *to page 2*



World Director of Regional Integration for Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa, Ms. Boutheina Guermazi and COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe discuss possible areas of collaboration in implementing regional integration projects.

Transport Corridors top the Priority list in COMESA- World Bank talks

Development of transport corridors was high on the priority list of COMESA in talks with the World Bank during a bilateral meeting conducted on June 5, 2024, in Lusaka, Zambia.

Led by the World Director of Regional Integration for Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa, Ms. Boutheina Guermazi and COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe the team discussed possible areas of collaboration in implementing regional integration projects.

The World Bank, a leading funder of projects in the COMESA region, places a significant emphasis on energy initiatives. Key projects currently under implementation include the Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility, the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation and Integration Project, and the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) Program, which was launched on June 4, 2024.

COMESA Secretary General emphasized the critical importance of sectors supporting productive integration and connectivity, particularly in developing transport corridors

and value chains. She highlighted the need for a railway master plan for COMESA and noted that COMESA is keen to leverage its convening power of Member States to facilitate regional harmonization.

Additionally, the meeting discussed potential projects such as developing a multimodal transport corridor linking road, railway, and water transport, especially on Lake Tanganyika. The review of harmonized road user charges, last conducted in 1989 and gazetted in 1991, was identified as overdue. COMESA proposed support for a new study to update these charges to meet current infrastructure needs.

Another priority project for COMESA is the development of a shipping line connecting the four island member states (Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros, and Seychelles). While the initial study has been completed, there is a need to extend it to cover additional countries within the envisioned transport corridor.

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billion ASCENT envelope. In addition, IBRD countries with energy access deficits (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, and South Africa) may participate in the Program through IBRD borrowing, and to access climate finance, carbon financing platforms and the private-sector dialogue.

In her remarks, World Director of Regional Integration Africa, Middle East and North Africa H.E Ms. Boutheina Guermazi said "ensuring access to reliable and affordable energy for all is a key element of the World Bank Regional Integration Strategy for Africa. It is essential to strengthen regional integration, giving boost to trade in goods and services, allowing digital transformation, attracting investments, and allowing faster flow of knowledge and innovations."

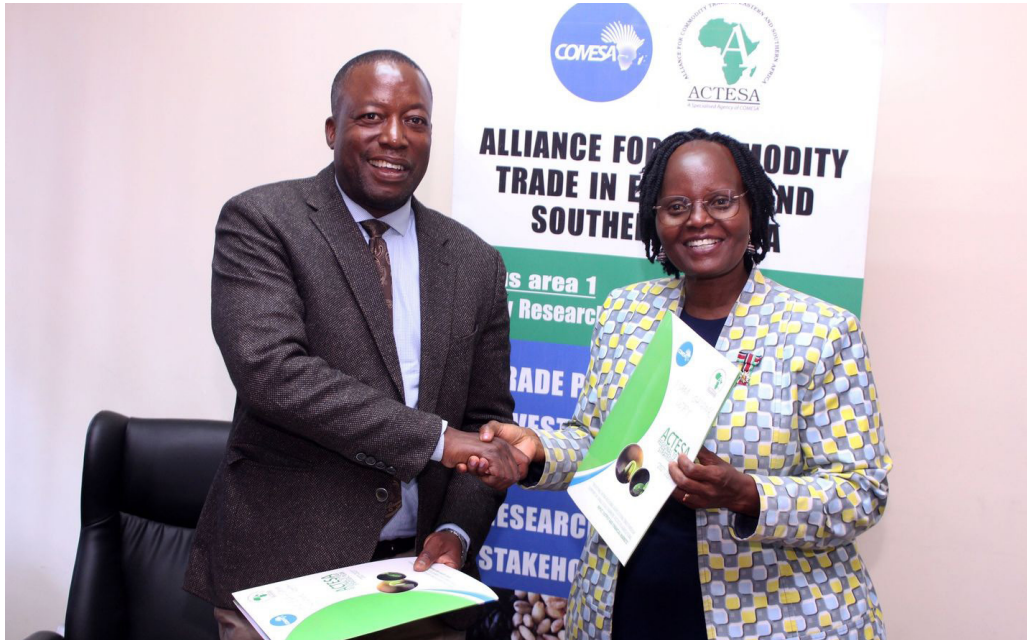
Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe in her remarks observed that financial resources are essential, but they are not sufficient on their own.

"We need a holistic approach to the energy challenge that includes support to policy and legal reforms, technical assistance, capacity building and outreach activities, among others. I am glad to note that all these aspects are embedded in the design of the ASCENT Project," she noted.

Honourable Peter Kapala, Minister of Energy of Zambia who also addressed the meeting emphasized the importance of creative financial instruments and frameworks in mobilizing required resources for sustainable energy.

"Financial instruments such as blended finance play a vital role in de-risking projects and attracting private funds," he said.

Delegations from the targeted countries attended the launch.



COMESA-ACTESA Chief Executive Officer Dr John Mukuka with ISAAA AfriCenter Director Dr Margaret Karembu after signing the MoU in Lusaka

ACTESA and ISAAA AfriCenter Sign MoU

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA AfriCenter) to implement the COMESA Biotechnology Implementation Plan (COMBIP). The MoU signed in Lusaka on 5 June 2024 outlines several areas where ISAAA AfriCenter and COMESA-ACTESA will work together which includes rolling out a communications strategy on agricultural biotechnology and biosafety to raise awareness and address misinformation through facilitating appropriate stakeholder engagement platforms.

They will also build capacity of media practitioners to objectively and accurately communicate biotechnology and biosafety to the general public. Other areas include supporting sharing of biosafety regulatory experiences among COMESA Member States by creating a one-stop source of biotech approvals and regulatory systems.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, COMESA-ACTESA Chief Executive Officer Dr John Mukuka said the institution is looking forward to the collaborative effort that the MoU brings as the two parties are ready to work together and implement the activities.

"We are happy about this collaboration because we believe that increased awareness and understanding of agricultural biotechnology and biosafety in the COMESA region is needed and a more informed public discourse is long overdue," Dr Mukuka added.

ISAAA AfriCenter Director Dr Margaret Karembu described the MoU as a significant step towards achieving the goals of COMBIP, which has taken more than ten years to be developed.

"Working together with COMESA-ACTESA, we will contribute a more productive and sustainable

agricultural sector by harnessing proven scientific tools," she said.

Through the MoU, the two institutions will identify opportunities for experiential learning about new and emerging breeding innovations for ensuring agricultural competitiveness in the region. It is also expected that strategic linkages will be formulated between the private sector and research institutions to promote investment in agricultural biotechnology development.

COMBIP was developed after the endorsement of the COMESA Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy by the Council of Ministers in 2014.

COMESA-ACTESA, is a specialised agency of COMESA which works to address staple food production and boost regional agricultural trade while ISAAA AfriCenter is a non-profit organisation that empowers stakeholders with knowledge on safe use of biotechnology for agricultural advancement.

COMWARN Structural Vulnerability Assessments Embraced by Member States



Delegates at the COMWARN SVA Consultation Workshop in Rwanda

Half of COMESA countries have successfully conducted the Regional Early Warning Structural Vulnerability Assessments which help nations in understanding both their resilience and vulnerabilities to peace and prosperity in the context of the COMWARN early warning model. This understanding has helped countries to commence the development of mitigation strategies to enhance their resilience.

Rwanda is the latest and 10th COMESA Member States to hold a National Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on the COMWARN Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) methodology in line with the guidance provided by the COMESA Policy Organs.

The Rwanda consultations were held in Kigali from 3 - 7 June 2024 during which broad-based forecasted structural vulnerability and resilience drivers were discussed in greater depth and options for building resilience explored. The unique forecasted drivers for Rwanda were drawn from the eight thematic areas for COMWARN SVAs namely Economy, Education, Environment, Governance, Health, Military, Security and Social.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, Head of the Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) Unit at COMESA Secretariat Dr Oita Etyang commended the government of Rwanda for its commitment to the COMWARN process and encouraged other countries that are yet to hold the consultations to do so.

He however was pleased to note that there has been increasing demand by Member States to host the National Multi-Stakeholder Consultations on the COMWARN SVA methodology in line with the guidance provided by the COMESA Policy Organs.

"It is encouraging that Member States have embraced the COMWARN and this is a positive stride in strengthening resilience for countries in the region as part of the broader objectives of enhancing both country-specific and regional peace and prosperity," Dr Etyang said.

At the end of the consultation, the report of the Technical Workshop was presented to the Policy Makers meeting and handed over to the government of Rwanda.

Other COMESA states that have held successful COMWARN Assessments include Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Malawi, and Burundi. Out of the ten SVA consultations, three Member States Zambia, Malawi and Kenya have volunteered to undergo the AU Country Structural Vulnerability Resilience Assessment (AU CVSRA) and the AU Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (AU CSVMS) based on the guidance by the COMESA Policy Organs to enhance synergies and avoid duplication.

The collaboration with the AU compliments the COMWARN SVA consultations by providing opportunities for countries to further conduct grassroots consultations in line with the AU CVSRA and the AU CSVMS processes to identify vulnerabilities and develop mitigations strategies.

The COMWARN SVA model has been commended by stakeholders as a home-grown solution that seeks to provide "African Solutions to African Problems".



Delegates at the Consultative Workshop held in Lusaka

Consultative Workshop on Development of an Information Management System for RAERESA

The development of an Information Management System (IMS) for the energy sector in eastern and southern Africa is underway, with regional experts meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, from 5 to 6 June 2024 to review progress.

The IMS aims to bridge the current information gap in the energy sector and establish a robust information and database management system. This system will facilitate the synchronization and harmonization of energy data collection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination among the Member States of the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA).

Upon its launch, the IMS will be hosted at the COMESA Secretariat. This centralized information and database system will allow member countries to directly input and retrieve information according to pre-defined templates. It will also enhance the capacity of regulators, participating utilities, and other relevant stakeholders within RAERESA/COMESA to upload, manage, update, and retrieve information.

This initiative is part of the African Development Bank (AfDB) funded USD\$1.5 million project on Regional Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks and Tools for Improved Electricity Regulation in the COMESA region. The project aims to promote cross-border power trading by advancing intra-regional harmonization of electricity regulations across the 12 COMESA member states, which include Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Uganda, with the addition of South Sudan.

The consultative workshop is attended by 29 regional energy stakeholders from the participating countries. They are reviewing the draft system specifications compiled by the consulting firm before the IMS can be fully developed and launched. The delegates will also consider and approve the interim IMS system architecture and specifications developed by the consulting firm.

Participants include energy ICT experts from the 12 Member States, the Eastern African Power Pool (EAPP), the Energy Regulators Association of East Africa (EREA), and the COMESA

Secretariat. RAERESA is the energy regulatory arm of COMESA.

During the opening of the workshop, RAERESA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Mohamedain Seif Elnasr, emphasized the importance of the review in shaping the consultant's report and preparing for the eventual launch of the IMS.

"I urge you to use this opportunity to share experiences and best practices," he said.

"Integration is a process, and regulation in the energy sector is new for most of our Member States, but we will get there."

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Lufunda Muzeya, Risk Manager at the Energy Regulation Board of Zambia. Zambia is the current Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Capacity, Information Exchange, Energy Statistics & Database of RAERESA.

The Project on Regional Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks and Tools for Improved Electricity Regulation in COMESA is being jointly implemented with the EREA, based in Arusha, Tanzania.

Empowering Central Bank Staff with Macro-prudential Policy Framework Skills

Over 40 delegates from 10 Central Banks in COMESA member countries have been trained on developing Macroprudential Policy frameworks (MaP). The training was intended to enhance the understanding of systemic risk, its main drivers and policies designed to mitigate it.

Conducted on 10 – 14 June 2024, the training focused on practical aspects, including governance of MaP agencies, data and infrastructure requirements for systemic risk monitoring, and experiences with MaP policies, highlighting the importance of coordinating micro- and MaP activities.

Dr Lucas Njoroge, Director of the COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) said the training imparted knowledge and tools necessary to design and implement effective macroprudential policies in their respective countries.

“Since the 2007-2009 global financial crisis, systemic risk analysis has gained prominence in many jurisdictions including in the COMESA region, especially by highlighting the limitations of micro-prudential regulation in ensuring the robustness of the entire financial system,” he stressed.

He added that the global financial crisis led to a significant shift towards macroprudential policies, instruments designed for systemic risk mitigation. He observed that the underlying theory of financial stability suggests that significant disruptions in credit and other essential financial services can adversely impact stable economic growth, further emphasizing the importance of MaP policies.

Participants from Burundi, Congo DR, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe also shared knowledge and experiences on each country's experiences on the milestones in the development and application of macroprudential policy frameworks. The COMESA Clearing House (CCH) also attended the training.

National Gender Sensitisation Workshop for Comoros



Delegates at the National Gender Sensitisation Workshop in Comoros

Comoros is the latest beneficiary of a COMESA-led National Gender Sensitisation for stakeholders on various policy frameworks covering the COMESA Treaty, Social Charter, the Gender Policy, the Gender Policy Implementation Plan and on the Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines.

This activity is meant to strengthen implementation of these policies at the Member State level through gender mainstreaming and women empowerment. The sensitization workshop was conducted on May 30 and was attended by representatives from the public, private and civil society. It provided an opportunity for the stakeholders to understand the COMESA documents and discuss the extent to which they are implementing gender mainstreaming and women empowerment initiatives as well as regional and international gender instruments.

Speaking at the workshop, Director of Gender and Social Affairs at COMESA Secretariat Mrs Beatrice Hamusonde said similar activities had been conducted in other Member States over the years. “I am hopeful that these national gender sensitisation workshops will not only strengthen your knowledge of the different gender policies and guidelines but will also increase COMESA's engagement with Member States in terms of adopting a citizen centred approach,” she said.

She added that Gender equality is undeniably important in the process of sustainable development and serves as the foundation for

effective national development policies and initiatives.

The Gender Commissioner at the Ministry of Health, Social Cohesion, Solidarity and Gender Promotion Mrs Maissara Adam Mondoha reiterated Comoros's commitment to the empowerment of women and its link to sustainable development. She assured the participants that the government would take innovative and realistic measures and actions at the national, community and regional level in line with the common ambitions enshrined in their national gender documents and the COMESA gender policy.

The COMESA Secretariat developed the range of policy framework documents which have been reviewed, endorsed by Member States through the Intergovernmental Committee and Council of Ministers. As an example, the COMESA Gender Policy provides guidance for mainstreaming gender perspectives in policies, structures, systems, programmes and activities of Member States and the secretariat for attainment of Gender Equality, Women and Youth Empowerment and Social Development.

In addition, the COMESA Gender Planning Guidelines contains suggested gender issues which are points of serious disadvantage based on gender that must be addressed in selected sectors and provides suggested interventions.



COMESA Hosts Key Workshop on Cost-Based Models for Aviation Regulators



Participants to the validation workshop on the development of cost-based models to sustain revenues for regulatory bodies

On 3 – 5 June 2024, COMESA hosted a validation workshop on the development of cost-based models to sustain revenues for regulatory bodies in the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region. Held in Mahe, Seychelles, the forum marked a crucial step towards enhancing independent and transparent aviation oversight in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards. The ICAO mandates contracting States to ensure the availability of services that facilitate international air navigation, requiring that safety, security, and economic regulators are independent of the organizations they regulate. This separation is aimed at eliminating any potential conflict of interest, ensuring all service issues remained outside regulatory control.

In many states, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had traditionally acted as both the Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) and the regulator, which led to conflicts of interest and undermined confidence in the system.

The need to separate ANSPs from regulatory functions was well-established in ICAO guidance materials. Greater financial and operational autonomy for ANSPs encouraged a business approach to service delivery, leading to improved quality and efficiency. ICAO recommended clear separation of authority and responsibility between State regulatory authorities and ANSPs, or the creation of commercial entities outside the CAA to manage service provision functions.

The primary objective of the workshop was to validate the developed cost-based models for sustaining revenues for civil aviation bodies in the region. The models would help identify viable revenue sources, ensuring that regulatory bodies were financially stable and capable of operating independently and effectively. This initiative was crucial for maintaining confidence in the aviation system and ensuring effective oversight of all services.

Nicholas Ndema, Aviation Expert at COMESA, opened the workshop by highlighting its significance. He stated, "This workshop aims to develop appropriate cost-based models to sustain revenues for regulatory bodies in the region, ensuring independence and transparency in aviation oversight. This is crucial for maintaining confidence in the aviation system and ensuring effective oversight of all services."

In his keynote address, Wilfred FockTave, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority, underscored the importance of transparent financial management. He remarked, "The development of a cost-based model will entail looking at the scope of regulatory services, ensuring recovery of operating costs, and providing transparency to stakeholders. This will help maintain a high standard of safety and security while promoting sustainable development in the aviation sector."

The workshop addressed the challenges faced by regulatory bodies in the EA-SA-IO region, particularly the reluctance to separate regulatory functions from service provision due to financial stability concerns. By presenting cost-based models, the workshop aimed to provide workable solutions for identifying sustainable revenue sources for regulatory operations.

Nine states in the region had fully separated regulatory functions from service provision, while the remaining twenty states still performed dual or triple roles, combining regulator, ANSP, and airport operator functions. The workshop's discussions focused on learning from existing models, understanding the challenges and successes, and developing suitable models that align with global best practices.

The Validation Workshop represented a significant step forward in fostering regional integration and improving the aviation sector across COMESA member states. By strengthening the regulatory and institutional capacity of civil aviation institutions, COMESA aimed to ensure effective and independent oversight, thereby enhancing the overall safety, security, and efficiency of the aviation industry.

This initiative by COMESA underscored its commitment to promoting sustainable development and economic growth across its member states through enhanced regional integration and improved aviation sector governance.



Delegates at the Applications of Data Science for Analysis of Financial Stability", training held for Central Banks from 27th – 31st May 2024, in Nairobi Kenya.

The Crucial Role of Data Science in Analyzing Financial Stability for Central Banks

The use of Data Science tools will benefit COMESA Central banks in extracting value from various data sets to improve their data handling, modelling, forecasting and interpretation particularly in assessing vulnerabilities to financial stability and their evolution over time.

Data science techniques can also support other tasks that are relevant from a financial stability perspective, including, for example, payment systems analysis, consumer risk analysis, and financial inclusion and anti-money laundering monitoring.

COMESA Monetary Institute is therefore building the capacity of analysts in the regional apex banks

on the applications of Data Science for Analysis of Financial Stability.

The latest such capacity building workshop was conducted in Nairobi Kenya on 27th – 31st May 2024 where delegates from 12 COMESA member countries' Central Banks participated. They were from Burundi, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Director Dr. Lucas Njoroge, the CMI Director said the broad objective of the training was to introduce to the regional central banks' analysts to the applications of data science for typical analytical challenges such as data handling, modelling, and

interpretation

Participants also shared knowledge and experiences on each country's experiences on the milestones in the applications of data science in analyzing financial stability. Among the participants was the Executive Secretary of the COMESA Clearing House (CCH).

Date	Activity/Event	Venue
24 – 29 June	COMESA Week in Madagascar	Madagascar
25 – 28 June	COMESA Investment Roadshow and Capacity Building Workshop	Tunisia
28 – 29 June	The 5th COMFWB Trade Fair and Business Conference	Madagascar
28 – 29 June	The 5 th COMFWB Trade Fair and Business Conference	Madagascar



Participants to the Carbon Markets Workshop at the Secretariat in Lusaka

COMESA and the African Union hold technical workshop on Carbon markets

COMESA and the African Union held a technical preparatory workshop in Lusaka, Zambia aimed to provide a platform for a wide range of stakeholders to deliberate on carbon markets in relation to climate change and to prepare key technical elements that will inform and feed into the forthcoming Africa Multi-stakeholder Conference on Carbon Market Approaches, scheduled to take place from 24-26 July 2024 at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Meeting was officially opened by Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment in Zambia represented by Mr. Ephraim Shitima Director of Climate Change Department.

The African Union Commission Director of Blue Economy and sustainable environment division was represented by Samson Ogalla while Assistant Secretary General in Charge of Administration and Finance represented the Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe.

The three-day workshop, 19 – 21 June 2024 will enhance understanding of carbon markets, their potential benefits and challenges in the African context as well as explore opportunities for developing carbon markets that are tailored to Africa's unique needs and contribute to its sustainable development objectives.

The workshop also seeks to build consensus on key issues and develop an outcome that will form the technical guiding document that will drive the Africa Multi-stakeholder Conference on Carbon Market approaches.

Participants to the workshop have been drawn from representatives from AU Member States,

Regional Economic Communities (RECs), UN institutions, Private sector entities, Civil Society organisations (CSOs) and Local communities and Indigenous people's organizations. Others include the Academia and research institutions as well as Women and youth groups.

Speaking on behalf of the Zambian PS for Green Economy and Environment, Directory Ephraim Shitima said there is a growing political commitment to using carbon markets to catalyze the transition of global economic growth into net zero pathways, keeping global warming below the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

'The establishment of carbon markets is of great importance in addressing the risks associated with climate change and this meeting needs to address some of the bottlenecks that may hinder this transition' he stated.

ASG Admin and Finance Dev Haman pointed that out that Africa, despite contributing less than 4 percent to global Greenhouse Gas emissions, remains one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change impacts.

DR Haman added that, 'To address these challenges, the continent needs substantial funding to meet its climate change goals, and about USD3 trillion is required to meet the financing gap of the continent's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2030.'

He added that despite these challenges the African continent holds immense potential to contribute to the development of carbon markets owing to its renewable energy generation potential and unique ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks.

One constructive solution will be the use of carbon markets, which cannot only help mitigate climate change but also provide the necessary investment to adapt to its impacts in Africa. Designing and managing these markets to promote credibility, transparency, integrity, and ambitious climate action is crucial, offering a dual approach to addressing the challenges. However, to meet the continent's ambitious carbon market goal, it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of the market's challenges and opportunities. This includes understanding the current state of play, trends, priorities, regulatory mechanisms, policies and legal frameworks, knowledge systems, and market deficiencies.

The African Union Commission Director of Blue Economy and sustainable environment division was represented by Samson Ogalla indicated that for African countries, trading of carbon credits presents a tremendous opportunity for economic development, job creation, access to climate finance.

Mr Ogala said that trading in Carbon Credits is a powerful driver for change that can contribute to the global fight against climate change, the realization of the Aspirations of Agenda 2063, the implementation of the Africa Climate Summit outcome and the sustainable development goals.

This he said calls for concerted efforts in aligning the priorities of the continent with the co-benefits that accrue from carbon markets as well as in setting fit-for-purpose guidelines with which countries in the continent can engage in carbon markets.



Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe receives letters of credence from Newly Appointed Permanent Rep for Rwanda to COMESA, His Excellency Emmanuel Bugingo

Rwandese Envoy Accredited to COMESA

The newly appointed High Commissioner from Rwanda to Zambia, His Excellency Emmanuel Bugingo, has been officially accredited as the Permanent Representative to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The accreditation ceremony was held today, June 18, 2024 at the COMESA Secretariat.

Mr. Bugingo presented his letters of credence to COMESA Secretary General, Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, and conveyed a message of Rwanda's continued commitment to COMESA's regional integration agenda and programs.

He highlighted that Rwanda has significantly benefited from various trade and integration programs supported by COMESA in collaboration with partners such as the European Union and the World Bank. Notably, the COMESA Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project has enabled Rwanda to establish Trade Information Desk offices at the Rusizi, Rubavu, and Bunagana borders.

"This project has also enabled us to establish Joint Border Committees (JBC) at the main borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo to facilitate cross-border trade. The implementation of the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime was also achieved through this project," said Mr. Bugingo.

He also expressed appreciation for the technical assistance provided through the

COMESA-European funded Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme (RECAMP), which has funded 122,867 Euros to assist Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with high growth potential in the horticulture and agro-processing sectors.

Upon receiving the credentials, Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe lauded the excellent working relationship between the Secretariat and the Government of Rwanda. She acknowledged Rwanda as an active and significant contributor to the growth, stability, and integration of the region.

"Rwanda's commitment to economic development, innovation, and regional cooperation has been exemplary, and we look forward to continuing this collaborative journey under your representation," said Ms. Kapwepwe.

She noted that Rwanda has benefited from various

COMESA programs, including the Simplified Trade Regime, RECAMP, and as a pilot country for the implementation of the Food Balance Sheet. Additionally, Rwanda has rolled out the COMESA Prioritization of Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Investments for Market Access initiative.

"COMESA, through ACTESA, one of its specialized agencies, in collaboration with the East African Community, launched the Regional Horticulture Accelerator Programme to accelerate the growth of the fruit and vegetable sub-sector in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Tanzania. Rwanda became the second country to launch the Accelerator Programme in May 2024," she added. The Secretary General urged the new Permanent Representative to spearhead the quick signing of the COMESA Social Charter, which has been disseminated and sensitization missions undertaken to member states, including Rwanda.

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