

Rwanda Launches Regional Program to Enhance Horticulture Sector



Delegates at the launch of the CEHA Rwanda National Chapter in Kigali

A regional program to boost the horticulture industry in five countries in eastern and southern Africa has been launched in Rwanda. The COMESA, East African Community (EAC) Horticulture Accelerator (CEHA) Programme aims to accelerate the growth of the fruit and vegetable sub-sector in these regions.

CEHA initially focuses on three priority value chains: avocado, onion, and Irish potatoes. These specific value chains face agronomic, logistical, and regulatory challenges that are common to many other fruit and vegetable crops. Rwanda is the second country to launch the CEHA programme, following Kenya.

The programme is being implemented through the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA ACTESA), a specialized arm of the 21-member COMESA bloc. The CEHA program, created in 2022 through a collaboration of public and private

sector partners, aims to better coordinate policy, value chain development programs, financing, and research and development. In the short term, the priority value chains are avocado, onion, and Irish potato in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

At the launch of the CEHA Rwanda National Chapter in Kigali on May 23, 2024, ACTESA Chief Executive Officer Dr. John Mukuka announced that the program will facilitate the modernization of regional horticulture value chains across East Africa. This will be achieved by leveraging Rwanda's comparative advantages, infrastructure, and technology. The priority crops, selected in 2022 through surveys, were based on production capacity, impact potential, market growth, value chain competitiveness, alignment with government priorities, and the degree of development partner investment.

"CEHA is a game changer, as its strategic

priorities have been identified by stakeholders at the national level, who will then drive these priorities at the regional level," he said. "With this bottom-up structure, everyone from the public and private sectors is expected to participate and enhance the development of the horticulture sector in the region."

CEHA recognizes the critical role of women in the horticulture value chain and aims to empower them as key drivers of progress. This will be done by enhancing their access to resources, knowledge, and market opportunities, thereby unlocking new pathways to economic empowerment and gender equality.

At the national level, the CEHA program will establish strategic horticultural production and processing clusters with agribusiness incubators throughout five targeted countries, based on their unique comparative and competitive advantages.

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COMESA, Malawi Sign Euro 900,000 Sub-Delegation Agreement

Funds to be used for construction of the Mchinji Cross-Border Market



The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat, and the Government of Malawi, have signed a Euro 900,000 sub-delegation agreement to construct a cross-border market in Mchinji District, 20km from the Mchinji / Mwami One Stop Border Post.

COMESA Secretary General, Ms. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe and the Minister of Trade and Industry, Hon. Sosten Gwengwe, signed the agreement in a virtual event, on May 23, 2024.

The traders' market which is located in Mchinji District in Malawi, is funded by the European Union, under the 11 European Development Fund (EDF), Small Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI). The SSCBTI supports the provision of gender sensitive basic infrastructure for use by small scale cross border traders.

The infrastructure to be constructed will include a market shelter, breastfeeding shelter, warehouse, shops, office block and public ablution block for the market. The provision of this market infrastructure is expected to boost formal small-scale cross-border trade flows between Malawi and Zambia. This will lead to higher revenue collection for governments, increased security and higher income for the small-scale cross-border traders.

The availability of border market infrastructure will increase the connection between traders and customers and lead to reduced losses, especially in perishable stock, according to

an assessment carried out by consulting firm, IMANI Development in May 2017. The assessment was conducted at the following border posts; Kasumbalesa (DRC and Zambia), Chirundu (Zambia and Zimbabwe), Nakonde/ Tunduma (Zambia and Tanzania), Mwami/ Mchinji (Zambia and Malawi) and Moyale (Ethiopia and Kenya). The assessment identified basic workspace infrastructure at the border as a major requirement of small-scale traders.

In his remarks, Minister Gwengwe, applauded the Secretariat and the European Union for the support that has been given to the Government of Malawi. He promised to ensure that through this support, a well-designed structure will be built, through the selection of an appropriate construction firm to ensure that the market meets the needs of traders in Mchinji.

In her remarks, Ms. Kapwepwe noted: "The modalities of implementation of the sub-delegated activities provides an opportunity for Malawi to maximize the benefits of small-scale cross border trade with Zambia and other members of COMESA. This development comes at an opportune time for Malawi and will complement the increased trade expected at Mwami-Mchinji One Stop Border Post."

The parties to this agreement look forward to close collaboration of all stakeholders and ensure the swift implementation and completion of the project.

Rwanda launches CEHA...



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It will also strengthen supply chains within these clusters through farmer organizations and digitalization, using processors and/or farmer organizations as entry points to provide financing, technical assistance, and mutually beneficial contracts with farmers, in collaboration with input suppliers.

Speaking at the launch, Mr. Tony Kajangwe, Director in the Ministry of Commerce, appreciated the selection of Rwanda for the CEHA project, noting that the country's horticulture industry will now receive the much-needed support to expand.

Partners from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), led by Country Manager Mr. Jean Paul Ndagijimana, and the USAID Kungahara Wagura Amasoko Project, represented by Ms. Titianne Donde, pledged their support to local farmers and the CEHA program.

ACTESA aims to transform the regional horticultural industry, currently valued at USD 4 billion, with the goal of doubling or tripling this value within the next 10 years. CEHA will provide opportunities, especially for landowners with access to less than one hectare of land. High-value fruits and vegetables are considered by agriculture experts to be consistently more profitable than cereals and other common staple crops. Moreover, the demand for these products is increasing in both domestic and export markets.



Delegates attending the 13th Annual General Meeting of the RAERESA

Thermal Power Dominates in COMESA Region at 76%

Thermal power dominates power generation in the COMESA region, accounting for more than 76 percent with hydro energy at 24 percent. This is out of the total installed power generation capacity estimated at 100,000 megawatts.

This was part of the updates presented at the 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA) that took place in Cairo, Egypt on 15 – 16 May 2024.

The overall share of renewable energy has increased from 1 per cent to 6 per cent in the last eight years mainly due to policy and regulatory reforms undertaken in the Member States. Notwithstanding the improvements, the regional energy infrastructure is critically inadequate due to insufficient investment in the energy sector, unreliability, and inefficiency of existing energy infrastructure, as elaborated by COMESA Assistant Secretary General in charge of programmes, Dr Mohamed Kadah, when he addressed the meeting.

To tackle these challenges, Dr. Kadah urged energy sector stakeholders—governments, multilateral and bilateral development and financial institutions, private sector entities, and academia—to collaborate in financing the energy infrastructure deficit in the COMESA region.

Dr. Kadah highlighted persistent market design issues that hinder the development and efficient operation of the energy sector. These issues include non-cost reflective tariffs and the need to enhance the capacities of regulatory agencies to

respond to current challenges. He emphasized the importance of opening the market to private sector participation, especially in renewable energy.

“The energy challenges the region is facing should equally be seen as opportunities for additional power generation on a regional scale and building regional power interconnectors to facilitate trade in power from surplus to deficit countries,” Dr Kadah said.

Dr. Kadah stressed the importance of prioritizing the development of regional energy infrastructure necessary to achieve economies of scale, citing the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya power interconnector which is under implementation in the region. This project will interconnect the Southern African Power Pool with the Eastern African Power Pool and the realize the Cape to Cairo electricity corridor.

Executive Chairman of the Egyptian Electric Utility and Consumer Protection Regulatory Agency, (EgyptERA), Eng. Dr. Mohamed Musa Omran said effective regulation is a key enabler of an improved business environment for private sector.

“Countries that managed to transition to better equilibria for their electricity sector, are characterized by better regulatory frameworks (including adequate tariff setting, enforcement of penalties, and appropriate energy dispatching rules), lower generation costs, lower theft ratios government subsidies, and investment levels that are large enough to guarantee an electricity supply that is commensurate with peak electricity demand,” Dr Omran emphasized.

Alternate Chairperson of the RAERESA, Dr. John Mutua, who is the Director, Technical Regulation at the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA), Kenya stressed the need for harmonized regulatory framework to stimulate investments in power production and transmission especially in solar, wind, geothermal, bioenergy, of which COMESA has expansive potential.

He said, “It has been established that in some countries, the vertically integrated power utilities are carrying out power generation, transmission, distribution, and retail supply functions, while in some countries, the generation, transmission and distribution functions have been unbundled but are still under government control.”

Currently, COMESA is implementing the Regional Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks and Tools for Improved Electricity Regulation project funded through a \$1.5 million grant from the African Development Bank.

Delegates from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Djibouti, Tunisia, and Libya participated in the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The primary agenda of the meeting was to receive progress reports from the RAERESA Portfolio Committees, which include Harmonization of Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Renewable Energy, Environment and Energy Efficiency, as well as Capacity Building, Information Exchange, Energy Statistics, and Database Management.

Empowering States to Fight Financial Crime and Terrorism



Participants at the Regional training for Financial Intelligence Units on strategic and operational effectiveness and financial intelligence held in Kenya 13 – 17 May 2024

More than 30 officers from Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) in seven COMESA Member States completed a one-week training in Nairobi, Kenya, focused on strategic and operational effectiveness in financial intelligence. Held on 13 - 17 May 2024, the training is part of the COMESA Secretariat's efforts to combat Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) and disrupt criminal networks in the region.

The training was organized in response to Member States' requests to enhance the capabilities of their FIU officials. The goal is to enhance their ability to conduct effective inspections of reporting entities, monitor financial transactions, and detect predicate offenses.

"This is a common demand across our Member States, so we grouped the countries together to deliver the training. This ensures broad benefits and

provides a platform for sharing experiences," said Dr. Oita Etyang, Head of the COMESA Governance, Peace, and Security programme.

Participants from Eritrea, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Zambia were trained in strategic and operational analysis and financial intelligence. The training highlighted the region's progress in complying with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards, including the supervision of reporting entities and the detection and reporting of suspicious transactions.

During the training, delegates exchanged experiences on enhancing information sharing and technical cooperation, especially considering the transnational nature of money laundering and terrorist financing.

A similar training session is planned for later this

year, targeting officials from Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

In addition to building the capacity of FIUs, the COMESA Secretariat has supported Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) with training sessions in 2022 and 2023. These sessions focused on investigating, detecting, and prosecuting financial crimes, including IFFs and money laundering, to recover illicit wealth. Further support has been provided to strengthen anti-money laundering laws in accordance with global FATF standards.

These initiatives are supported under the fourth African Union African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA IV) Program, funded by the European Union.



COMESA Secretariat through the Governance Peace and Security Unit participating in the 47th Eastern and Southern Africa Anti Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) Task Force of Senior Officials Meeting that was held from 5 - 12 April 2024 in Lubango, Huila, Angola.



Diverse stakeholders from the private and public sector attending the launch of the eight month project in Harare.

Zimbabwe Initiates Comprehensive Audits on Energy, Water, and Hydrofluorocarbon

The Government of Zimbabwe, with support from the COMESA Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), has launched a comprehensive energy, water, and hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) audits project. This initiative aims to facilitate energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy sources.

Launched on May 21, 2024, in Harare, the project seeks to expand the implementation of energy, water, and HFC audits across private companies and public sector institutions in Zimbabwe. The initiative is designed to promote sustainability

and environmental stewardship.

The project will conduct comprehensive audits of energy, water, and HFC usage within various sectors, identifying opportunities for significant improvements in efficiency and sustainability.

According to Mr. Washington Zhakata, Director of Climate Change Management in the Ministry of Environment, Climate, and Wildlife, these audits will enhance energy efficiency in both private and public sectors, promote the adoption of renewable energy sources, reduce carbon emissions, and lessen environmental impact.

Additionally, the project aims to improve water conservation practices and minimize the use of HFCs, which are potent greenhouse gases.

“This project also aims to upscale the rollout of detailed energy, water, and HFC use-efficiency audits,” said Mr. Zhakata. “Our industry, commercial, and domestic consumers face a deficit of energy and water resources to meet their demands. The prevailing power deficit is leading to unmet demand”

The launch provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the project's goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

COMESA Climate Change Programme Manager Ms. Edith Tihawa thanked the Government of Zimbabwe for nominating the COMESA Secretariat as their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC-P) through UNOPS for the funding provided. She assured the attendees of COMESA's commitment to successfully implementing the project.

Additionally, she expressed optimism that the grant will assist in providing critical data to inform the implementation of the country's long-term low-emission development strategy and its revised NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Zimbabwe is a party to this framework, as well as to the Paris Agreement and the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer.



Over 50 Grade 12 pupils from Twalumba Secondary School in Barlastone, Lusaka, conducted a study tour of COMESA Secretariat on May 13, 2024. The tour aimed at helping students learn about COMESA's programs and regional integration activities.



The COMESA and CSVR team after signing the MoU in Lusaka

COMESA Signs MoU with Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

COMESA Secretariat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr). The aim is to cooperate in promoting and fostering sustainable peace, truth, reconciliation, stability and transnational justice in the COMESA region. The two will cooperate with Member States in violence prevention, reconciliation and transitional justice.

The MoU also provides for capacity building for African Union Member States, the COMESA Committee of Elders, Civil Society Organisations, Community Based Organisations, youth and women. Election observers will also be trained on transnational justice, mental health, psychosocial support services and management of elections in conflict-induced countries.

Speaking during the brief ceremony held at the COMESA headquarters in Lusaka on 6 May 2024, Dr Dev Haman, Assistant Secretary General in charge of administration and finance acknowledged the need for extensive collaboration in order to achieve sustainable

peace and security on the continent. He emphasised the need for both COMESA and the CSVr to pinpoint specific activities to focus on extensively, rather than attempting to work on a larger number of activities at once. This he said would help achieve results efficiently, effectively and at a faster rate.

He also emphasized the need to work on identifying the root causes of violence and for regional bodies to partner in effectively addressing violence and resolving conflicts at the grassroots level in a timely manner.

CSVr Executive Director Annah Moyo-Kupeta expressed gratitude to COMESA for its positive response to the signing of the MOU and for its willingness to partner in areas of common interest.

She emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration to achieve a greater impact across the continent in a bid to achieve the "ideal" state of affairs, peaceful, violence and conflict-free societies.

"As CSVr, we have an active, growing engagement with regional bodies, such as COMESA and the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) as a technical partner to ensure enhanced synergy and resources such as expertise and funds for the undertaking of violence prevention activities across the continent.

The MoU also allows for supporting election management bodies in the region, support to the COMESA inter-parliamentary forum, mainstreaming gender and youth participation in democracy, governance and development initiatives among many other areas.



Upgrading the Tunduma/Nakonde One Stop Border Post



The newly installed cargo Smart Gates at Tunduma OSBP

A team from COMESA Secretariat and the Ministry of Industry and Trade in Tanzania conducted a three-day supervision mission at Tunduma One Stop Border Post (OSBP) in Tanzania on 14 - 17 May 2024. Its objective was to follow up on implementation of activities for upgrading the Nakonde/Tunduma OSBP. The project is funded by the European Union, under the 11 EDF Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) and Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiatives (SSCBTI).

The mission reviewed the progress, discussed pending activities and challenges taking note that its implementation period expires on 30 December 2024. The meeting also developed an implementation plan and agreed on strategies to fast track the remaining implementation of project activities within the timelines of the Trade Facilitation Programme.

In 2021, COMESA signed a Euros 2.7million sub delegation agreement with the Government of Tanzania for the upgrading of Nakonde/Tunduma border facility between Zambia and Tanzania. The border clears nearly 70% of the cargo from the port of Dar es Salaam, with about 500 trucks crossing the border daily.

So far, seven projects have been funded and implemented including the installation of Smart Gates system, installation of Mini Lab equipment and construction of warehouse and verification shade. Supply and commissioning of 150kw solar has been done as well as the supply and the

installation of CCTV and access controls, ICT equipment and construction of Majengo small scale trader market.

The contractors handed over the report of the CCTV installation to COMESA Secretariat, signifying successful completion of the project. The CCTV project was worth 145,000 euros.

The upgrading of the Tunduma OSBP will enhance the smooth running of the facility, reduce the waiting time that truckers and traders spend at the border. To ensure seamless trade facilitation,

through COMESA, similar support has been provided to the Nakonde border on the Zambian side under the respective EDF programmes.

Tunduma/Nakonde are among the six borders in COMESA which are being upgraded through the 11 EDF Trade Facilitation Project and Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative.

COMESA team comprised EDF Project Manager, Mshuka Kamwela, CBT Expert Tasara Muzorori, EDF Programme Officer, Mwiinga Mwiinga and PR Assistant, Phil Kambafwile.



A joint supervision team from COMESA, Ministry of Industry & Trade in Tanzania and Projects Manager at Tunduma OSBP



The Capacity Building workshop of officials based at Kipushi border

Strengthening Capacities of Small-Scale Cross Border Trades at DRC-Zambia Border

Over 60 small-scale cross border traders, border management and other government officials from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia at the Kipushi border post participated in a five-day capacity building forum to establish formalised networks at the entry point.

The forum, held on May 13 – 17 2024, is part of COMESA's commitment towards enhancing peace and cross border trade in the Great Lakes region and beyond. It was organised by the COMESA Secretariat through the Trading for Peace Project being implemented by the Governance Peace and Security (GPS) Unit.

Following a recent policy directive by COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the GPS Unit convened a joint DRC-Zambia workshop at the Kipushi border to establish a formalised structure of a joint border committee to facilitate cross-border engagement and cooperation.

Key discussions centered on the understanding and implementation of the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime programme, the Charter on the Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders, improved ways of conducting conflict prevention, analysis and resolution. The delegates also discussed the challenges faced by small-scale cross-border traders when conducting cross-border trade at Kipushi.

Speaking on behalf of COMESA Secretariat, Conflict Early Warning Expert in the GPS Unit Mr Raymond Kitevu reiterated the organisation's commitment and support to peace building efforts in the region as it was an assured way of deepening trade and development in the region.

He expressed gratitude to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs for their guidance and the development partners such as the World Bank for the continued support to the peace building efforts in the region. "As COMESA, we are here to support peace building efforts and initiatives because without peace there cannot be any trade to talk about. Our thanks go to the cooperating partners who also believe in this resolve," Mr Kitevu said.

Following the training, a Joint Border Committee was established and a plan for the way forward developed. This includes the need for the Secretariat to continue conducting capacity building initiatives and efforts be expedited to operationalise the Committee.

The delegates also noted that the Governments of DRC and Zambia have finalised bilateral talks on implementing the STR and the Agreement is awaiting signing by Ministers responsible for Trade from the two countries.

Launched in 2007, the Trading for Peace Project is being implemented in the Great Lakes region covering the DRC and its eastern neighbours

Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. It is currently being funded by the EU-APSA programme.

Meanwhile, a four-member team from the World Bank conducted a supervision mission at the COMESA Secretariat on May 27-29, 2024 on the implementation of the implementation of the Great Lakes Trade Facilitation and Integration Programme (GLTFIP). The GLTFIP is a six-year, World Bank-funded project implemented by the governments of Burundi and the DR Congo, as well as COMESA.

Led by Task Team Leader Dr Magueye Dia, the team discussed with the COMESA officials, the progress of the project, the challenges faced so far and the way forward.

It is part of the wider World Bank Great Lakes Initiative, which aims to assist countries in the Great Lakes Region to reduce poverty and promote common prosperity by targeting some of the most vulnerable groups in the border regions of the DR Congo and neighbouring countries.



COMESA Leads Efforts to Transform Uganda's Leather Sector



Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe (L) admires one of the leather products produced at the incubation Centre in Kampala

Uganda's leather sector is poised for significant growth as COMESA pledges to support the industry with modern equipment, leading to more efficient production of high-quality leather and leather products.

Early this month, Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe visited a leather incubation centre in Kampala, established with the support of the Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) at the Management Training and Advisory Centre. This leather incubation centre is a hub of innovation and skill development, playing a crucial role in nurturing local talent and promoting sustainable practices within the leather industry.

Kapwepwe's visit highlighted COMESA's

commitment to revitalizing and expanding Uganda's leather sector, emphasizing its vast potential. She underscored the importance of such centres in transforming raw materials into high-quality finished products, thereby significantly enhancing the value of Uganda's leather exports.

"Uganda has a huge number of cattle, and the hides and skins from these animals should not go to waste. Instead, we should use them to boost the leather sector by adding value to these raw materials from places like this," she stated.

COMESA's initiatives aim to provide technical support, market access, and financial resources to leather producers, ensuring their competitiveness on the international stage.

A critical challenge for Uganda's leather industry has been the lack of modern technology and training. Kapwepwe promised to engage ALLPI to build capacity and assess equipment needs at the centre.

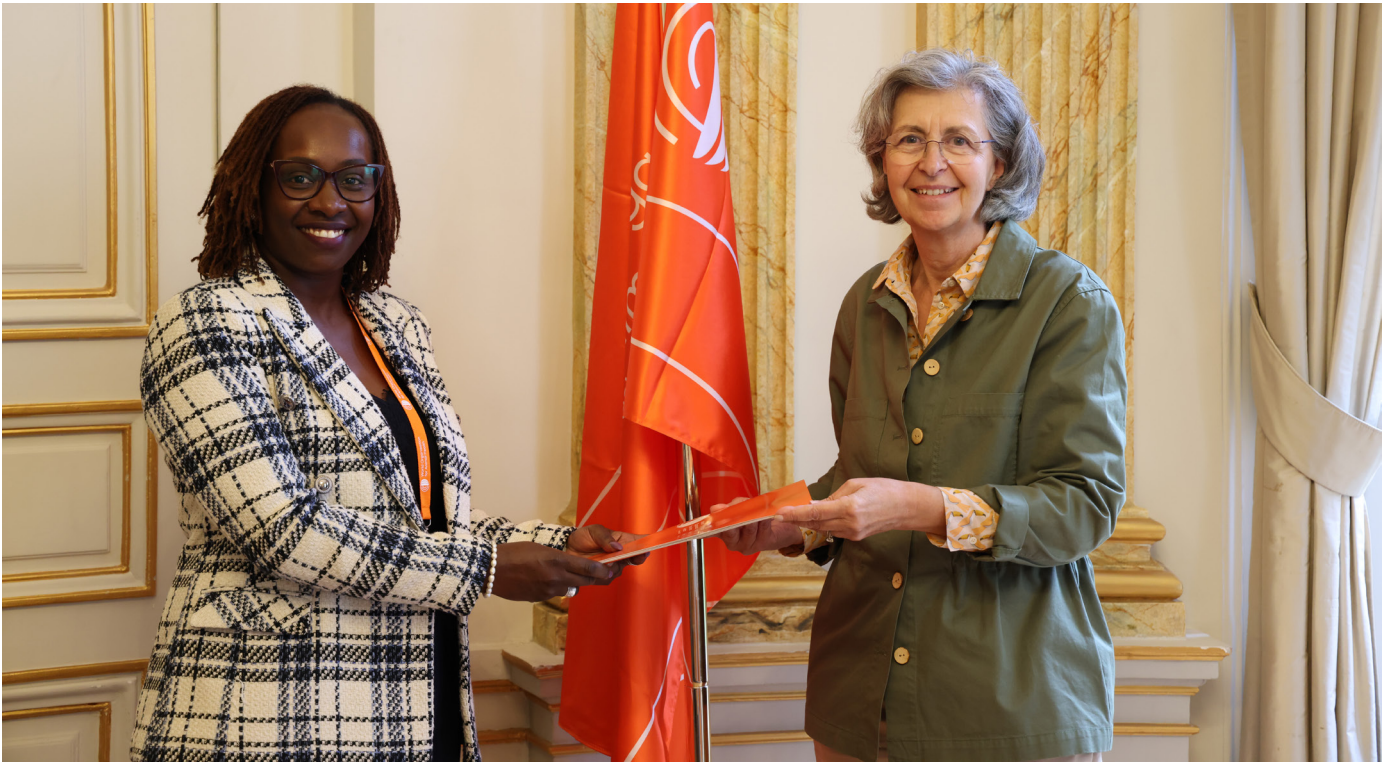
These initiatives are designed to equip local artisans and entrepreneurs with the skills needed to produce world-class leather goods using state-of-the-art equipment. Similar facilities have been established in Malawi and Sudan.

The visit presented an opportunity to showcase success stories from the incubation centre, with several local entrepreneurs sharing their experiences and demonstrating how COMESA's support has enabled them to innovate and grow their businesses.

ALLPI is one of COMESA's specialized institutions.

COMESA DIARY

Date	Activity/Event	Venue
03 – 05 June	Validation workshop for Developing cost-based models to sustain revenues for regulatory bodies in the Member States (SATSD)	Seychelles
04 June	Launch of the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) programme	Zambia
24 – 29 June	COMESA Week in Madagascar	Madagascar
28 – 29 June	The 5 th COMFWB Trade Fair and Business Conference	Madagascar



COMESA Director of Agriculture and Industry, Ms. Providence Mavubi (L) and World Organisation for Animal Health Director General, Dr Monique Eloit signing MoU on collaboration in tackling animal diseases.

COMESA, WOAHA sign MoU on Animal Diseases

COMESA and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate and harmonise the control of Transboundary Animal Diseases and to ensure resilience to disease-related risks and shocks. The MoU will also allow for the design and implementation of epidemiological surveillance, disease reporting and animal health information systems.

Other areas will include support to existing WOAHA reference laboratories and collaborating centres in the COMESA region. They will work together to develop regional guidelines for trade in animals and animal products with WOAHA supporting COMESA Member States on the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) Annex 7 of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement Protocol on Trade in Goods.

The MoU was signed in Paris, France on 29 May 2024 by WOAHA Director General Dr Monique Eloit and COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, who was represented by the Director of Agriculture and Industry Mrs Providence Mavubi.

The MoU was signed during the 91st general session and celebration of the 100th year of the establishment of the World Organization for

Animal Health. The MoU is based on the need for mutual cooperation in areas of common interest in pursuing their respective mandates and strategic objectives of contribution towards economic prosperity, health and wellbeing of human, animal and the environment.

At the signing, Dr Eloit noted that the increasing level of trade in animal and animal products, movement of people and goods and the complexity of diseases highlighted the importance of inter-regional cooperation in the area of Sanitary and phytosanitary.

"Having an MoU signed will facilitate better collaboration, coordination, knowledge-sharing and expertise around control and eradication of Transboundary Animal Diseases in the region" said Dr. Eloit.

In her remarks, Ms. Mavubi hailed the agreement adding that the areas of cooperation outlined in the MoU are very pertinent, critical and timely as they seek to address the key challenges that COMESA Member States continue to face. This is especially on the SPS and certification of products of animal origin that are being traded among COMESA Member States and across the world.

"The renewal of the partnership through signing of this MoU with WOAHA will ensure further commitment in strengthening and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in the area of SPS for the benefit of the COMESA citizens," she added.

Pursuant to the MoU, WOAHA has committed to provide services around higher education, research and knowledge sharing in the area of aquatic and terrestrial animal health and zoonotic diseases. COMESA will also leverage WOAHA's expertise on animal health and production to strengthen veterinary services, laboratory diagnostic capacities and vaccine and pharmaceutical production.

WOAHA will also provide Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) evaluation and advisory services on veterinary legislation, animal health regulations including supporting animal health policy and strategy development at regional and Member States level. As part of the MoU, COMESA will promote PVS and engagement with the policy makers and private sector, for better veterinary and public health services through COMESA technical and Ministerial Forums.