

Countdown to the 23rd COMESA Summit and 30th Anniversary Celebrations

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COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe (in white) congratulates one of the winners of the COMESA @30 Golf Tournament flanked by Mr. Crusiva Hichikumba, PS for Investment and Industrialization, Zambia (R), Mary Kamari of Trade and Development Bank, and Assistant SG of COMESA Dr Dev Haman (left).

As preparations intensify for the 23rd COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Government in Bujumbura, Burundi, scheduled for October 31, 2024, Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives from COMESA member states based in Lusaka have been updated on the event's progress.

On September 27, 2024, COMESA Secretary General, Chileshe Kapwepwe, briefed the diplomats on key highlights of the Summit and urged them to liaise with their respective capitals to confirm attendance. Their participation will be crucial to ensuring the success of the Summit and its associated activities.

The briefing also covered plans for celebrating the 30th anniversary of COMESA's transformation from the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in 1994. To mark this milestone, the COMESA Secretariat

has planned a series of events, including sports tournaments and corporate social responsibility initiatives, culminating in a gala dinner on November 27, 2024.

The Summit will witness the transfer of leadership from Zambia's President, Hakainde Hichilema, to Burundi's President, Evariste Ndayishimiye. This transition will also lead to a new Bureau, comprising Burundi, Eswatini, and Zambia.

The theme for this year's summit is "Accelerating Regional Integration through the Development of Regional Value Chains in Climate Resilient Agriculture, Mining, and Tourism". In addition to the leadership handover, the Summit will focus on strengthening regional cooperation and development. Discussions will address decisions made during the 44th Meeting of the Council of Ministers, assess resolutions on peace and security,

and review the progress of COMESA's Mid-Term Strategic Plan for 2021-2025.

Key regional issues, such as the conflicts in the region, as well as terrorism and the impacts of climate change, will be at the forefront of discussions. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs will explore strategies to strengthen COMESA's peace and security initiatives, with a focus on conflict prevention and involving civil society.

The Summit will be preceded by the 17th COMESA Business Forum, a high-level platform bringing together public and private sector stakeholders to discuss solutions for driving economic growth and investment across member states. The forum aims to promote intra-African trade, establish cross-border value chains, and foster discussions among policymakers, experts,

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Delegates at the CCIA Workshop in Cairo, Egypt

Member States Endorse Revised Regional Investment Agreement

Member countries of COMESA have endorsed the revised Common Investment Agreement (CCIA). The CCIA is a COMESA investment tool aimed at creating a harmonized and conducive investment environment across the region.

The revised agreement is intended to promote a competitive investment climate, enhance cooperation among member states, and address barriers that may hinder progress. It was presented to member states for endorsement during a validation workshop held in Cairo from September 30 to 01 October 2024.

The workshop, organized by COMESA Secretariat, in collaboration with the COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA), brought together representatives from 19 Member States, including Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The primary objectives of the workshop were to present the draft of the revised CCIA, which had been reviewed and refined by UNCTAD experts, and to encourage Member States to take ownership of the Agreement. Additionally, the workshop

outlined the next steps for assisting Member States in the domestication and implementation of the CCIA.

Egyptian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Ambassador Aboubakr Mahmoud described the CCIA as a robust framework that not only amplifies investment procedures but also enhances transparency and fosters an environment of mutual trust among Member States. He added that the CCIA is a tool that empowers the region to attract foreign direct investment while also nurturing local enterprises, thus allowing the creation of joint ventures.

"Egypt, as a proud member of COMESA, is committed to advancing the objectives of the CCIA. We believe that a harmonized approach to investment will yield greater benefits for our peoples," he said.

Dr. Mohamed Kadah, COMESA Assistant Secretary General, highlighted the wide range of opportunities available within the COMESA region and across the continent.

"The region holds 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land and is rich in valuable mineral resources—comprising 16% of global uranium, 18% of gold, 26% of bauxite, 53% of diamonds,

53% of cobalt, 75% of platinum, and approximately one-third of all other mineral resources," Kadah said. "With a median age of 19.5 and 60% of the population under 25, the region has a significant comparative advantage, and the CCIA is essential for unlocking these resources."

Dr. Dahlia El Hawary, Vice President of the General Authority for Investment, said COMESA provides a platform for regional integration and is a cornerstone of Egypt's strategy to promote inclusive growth and strengthen regional cohesion.

At the same event, the COMESA Community of Practice (CoP) Online Platform was launched and is now hosted on the COMESA website. This platform is designed to facilitate the sharing of best practices to improve the business and investment environment, with a focus on value chain development.

The interactive resource will provide Member States, the private sector, and other stakeholders involved in private sector reforms with up-to-date information and tools to enhance the business and investment climate. It is anticipated that a significant number of investment stakeholders will be drawn to join and actively engage with the platform.



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and industrialists to position the region as a competitive player in global trade.

“This forum will promote intra-African trade, establish cross-border value chains, and facilitate discussions among experts, policymakers, and industrialists, ultimately aiming to transform the region into a competitive player in global trade,” emphasized Kapwepwe.

A key focus of the forum will be on enhancing value chains in agriculture, mining, and tourism. High-level ministerial discussions and expert panels will feature representatives from COMESA institutions, including the Trade and Development Bank, ZEP-RE (PTA Reinsurance Company), the African Leather and Leather Products Institute, and the COMESA Federation of Women in Business. These sessions will explore strategies and support mechanisms for fostering regional business growth.

Recommendations from the forum will form the COMESA Business Declaration, which will be presented at the Summit. Running parallel to the Business Forum will be a COMESA trade exhibition, showcasing high-quality African products and services. This exhibition will offer global traders and service providers a platform to learn, sample, source, and purchase African goods.

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Delegates at the 17th Meeting of the technical working group on Rules of Origin in Chisamba

Aligning Rules of Origin for Enhanced Intra-Regional Trade

In a step towards refining trade practices in the region and boost intra-regional trade, COMESA trade and customs experts are seized on updating the COMESA Rules of Origin, which have been in place since the establishment of the COMESA Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2000.

This initiative aims to harmonize these rules with those governing the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and to align them with global best practices in accordance with the guiding provisions of the COMESA Treaty.

On September 26 to 27, 2024, a meeting of the technical working group on Rules of Origin from the COMESA Member States was convened in Chisamba, Zambia for this purpose. Discussions centred on the proposed amendments to the Protocol and Procedures Manual on Rules of Origin made by the Trade and Customs experts at a validation workshop held at the same venue on 23 – 25 September 2024.

The proposed amendments are designed to enhance regional trade, facilitate inter-regional trade, and encourage both regional and cross-regional value addition and investment. In this review, COMESA is working closely with the World Customs Organization (WCO) under the European Union-World Customs Organization (EU-WCO) Rules of Origin Africa programme.

The meeting provided updates on the implementation of the COMESA Electronic Certificate of Origin (eCO), which is set to be launched during the upcoming 45th meeting of the Council of Ministers in November 2024. The eCO aims to streamline intra-regional trade by replacing the cumbersome manual procedures currently in use for issuing and verifying Certificates of Origin.

COMESA Assistant Secretary General in charge of programmes, Dr. Mohamed Kadah, highlighted the significance of the COMESA FTA, describing it as a central pillar of the region's efforts to establish a single market for goods and services. He noted the expansion of intra-COMESA exports and imports, which reached US\$ 14.071 billion (7.5% of global exports) and US\$ 13.693 billion (5.2% of global imports) respectively in 2023.

“Despite these achievements, studies indicate the region has the potential to achieve US\$ 100 billion in intra-COMESA trade, an aspiration that hinges on the effective implementation of Rules of Origin,” he said. “Besides, the Rules of Origin are an important vehicle to support investment, production, and value addition in the COMESA region.”

He cautioned, however, that these rules could sometimes lead to unintended outcomes if they fail to reflect the realities of a region that must balance consumer and industrial interests.

While the existing COMESA Rules of Origin have effectively supported regional integration since their inception, Ambassador Dr. Kadah noted that recent developments at both continental and regional levels, along with technological and legal changes, necessitate a thorough revision of these rules.

He added that the ongoing discussions and the proposed amendments reflect a commitment to foster a more integrated and responsive trade environment within the COMESA region.

The review of COMESA Rules of Origin is timely given that the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement for three regional economic communities entered into force on 25 July 2024. COMESA is a key player in the operationalization of this agreement.



Trade Policy Tools: the New Face of NTBs

The importance of eliminating non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) cannot be over emphasized, especially with the steady reduction of tariffs over the years. Besides, there is established evidence that NTBs are the main obstacles to free trade in the continent and beyond.

Trade experts in the COMESA region have therefore continued to monitor progress regarding the establishment of a sustainable framework for addressing NTBs. Recently, at the 4th COMESA Regional NTB Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 1 - 4 October, it was noted that most governments have reverted to imposition of measures that by and large restrict the free movement of goods and services.

These are undoubtedly NTBs disguised as trade policy tools to protect domestic economies. Resultantly, such measures dis-proportionately account for increasing portions of protectionist interventions.

As noted by the Director of Trade and Customs at COMESA, Dr Christopher Onyango during the meeting, the prevalence of reported and unreported NTBs, most of which Member States have justified as measures necessary to regulate trade, have partly been responsible for the constrained levels of intra-regional trade.

"Hence the need for the establishment of the Regional NTBs Forum which would ensure effective implementation of the COMESA FTA trade regime," he said.

Through, the COMESA Free Trade Area, intra-

COMESA exports and imports reached US\$ 14,071 billion (7.5% of global exports) and US\$ 13,693 (5.2% of global imports), respectively in 2023. However, previous studies indicate the region has the potential to realize 100 billion intra-COMESA trade.

The NTB Forum is thus part of the institutional framework provided under the COMESA Regulations on NTBs Elimination, which is a legal instrument to administer elimination of NTBs across the bloc.

So far, COMESA has been working with trading partners in tackling NTBs and boosting trade facilitation. This is done through collaboration with National Monitoring Committees and National Focal Points and with trading partners to identify specific NTBs that hinder bilateral or regional trade. This is in addition to harmonizing regulations, standards, and procedures across borders and encouraging the use of new innovations such as the Online System and the SMS tool.

Over the years COMESA has been doing well in reporting and resolution of NTBs, however in the last two years the figures for reported NTBs have declined drastically with only two out of the 16 outstanding (20%) NTBs reported in the period January – September 2024.

The type of most prevalent NTBs in COMESA has shifted from Rules of Origin to Additional Taxes and Other Charges and Transit issues. The biggest concerns now remain the un-reported NTBs, especially those related to standards and SPS measures.

COMESA Rules of Origin Under Review

COMESA, in partnership with the EU-World Customs Organization Rules of Origin Africa Programme, is reviewing COMESA Rules of Origin to make them more advanced, responsive, and business-friendly in light of regional and global developments.

Several initiatives have been introduced under the European Union Development Fund (EDF 11) Trade Facilitation Programme to support this effort. One significant advancement is the automation of the Certificate of Origin issuance system by COMESA. Following this, the organization plans to develop and launch the Customs Automation Regional Support Centre and the Regional Connectivity Platform, aimed at improving data exchange and information sharing.

These updates were presented during the 10th meeting of the COMESA Heads of Customs, which was held virtually on October 10, 2024. The discussions emphasized the importance of fully embracing digital solutions to expedite the clearance of goods across borders.

"Digitalization is a global agenda, and it is incumbent on us as Customs Officials to embrace this new agenda, including its advanced digital tools, big data, cloud computing, machine learning and ultimately artificial intelligence," said Dr. Mohamed Kadah, COMESA Assistant Secretary General for Programmes, in a statement delivered by Dr. Christopher Onyango, Director of Trade and Customs.

Dr. Kadah further stressed the importance of keeping pace with digital developments in customs operations, particularly for valuation, tariff classification, and non-intrusive inspection systems that rely on pattern recognition and advanced imagery for object identification.

Currently, information sharing and data exchange among COMESA customs administrations are still in their early stages. However, there is tremendous potential for collaboration, pooling information resources, and enhancing enforcement systems. The meeting concluded that trade facilitation can thrive through collective efforts to leverage modern tools, data mining, and AI for risk management and other critical processes.



Fresh Initiatives to Tackle ICT Access and E-Waste Management

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) experts and stakeholders from Eastern and Southern Africa gathered in Matsapha, Eswatini, from September 24 to 26, 2024, to validate a comprehensive study on authorization, universal access, and e-waste management.

The study was conducted under the Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT Sector (EGEE-ICT) Programme, a European Union funded programme for Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region. The study examined current ICT policies, regulatory practices, and principles regarding market authorization, universal access, and e-waste management. The initiative aimed to enhance access to quality and affordable ICT services. This improvement heavily depends on the structure and behavior of the ICT market—specifically, identifying the key players and defining their roles and responsibilities.

Additionally, as environmental sustainability becomes a growing priority in development projects, contemporary ICT frameworks are increasingly incorporating e-waste management

to address the sector's ecological impact. With these goals in mind, the EGEE-ICT Programme conducted the study to pave the way for the development of relevant policy and regulatory frameworks, which are essential tools for creating a robust ICT market.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Phesheya Dube, Principal Secretary of Eswatini's Ministry of ICT, emphasized that accessibility and affordability of ICT services are key to leveraging digital solutions for e-services, particularly in remote and disadvantaged areas.

"In rural areas, where isolation and poor infrastructure services are common, access to telecommunications can play an important role in enhancing social and economic development," he stated.

He noted that the issue of e-waste management is a growing concern in Africa, with the continent generating 2.9 million metric tons of electronic waste in 2022, equating to about 2.5 kilograms per capita, the lowest regional rate globally.

"We need to act and have candid discussions

on e-waste management," said Dube. "I am glad that the study handles aspects of E-waste. As we give authorisation and licenses for ICT services, we need to ensure that aspects of E-waste management are considered."

COMESA Director of Infrastructure, Dr. Benard Dzawanda, called for continuous stakeholders' engagement, especially during the subsequent development of policies and regulations for authorization, universal access, and e-waste management.

Once the policy and regulatory frameworks are developed and adopted, they will be domesticated into national and regional frameworks. This will be followed by implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure long-term success.

Advancing the Agriculture Biotechnology and Biosafety Practices Across COMESA

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, a specialized Agency of COMESA and ISAAA AfriCenter organized a pivotal meeting focusing on advancing biotechnology and biosafety across the region. The gathering, held on September 18 and 19 in Lusaka, Zambia brought together key stakeholders with the goal of enhancing understanding of biotechnology and biosafety among Member States, fostering informed decision-making and robust policy development.

In the meeting, participants shared valuable insights into existing biosafety regulations, highlighting successes and identifying areas that require improvement for better harmonization. This exchange of knowledge proved essential in pinpointing regulatory gaps and ensuring that all countries are aligned in their approaches to managing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

A significant focus was placed on the current state of global and regional trade in genetically modified commodities. Discussions revealed trends that underscore the growing acceptance of GM crops worldwide, presenting an opportunity for Member States to adapt their national policies and trade strategies accordingly. The potential for increased market access, with a special focus on livestock feeds, raw materials and emergency food aid access were recognized as critical benefits of embracing biotechnology in agriculture.

Collaboration emerged as a key theme, with strong support for establishing a platform for ongoing dialogue among Member States. This platform would facilitate shared decision-making and foster mutual recognition of regulatory standards. The importance of creating centralized information repositories to streamline processes and enhance transparency was also emphasized, ensuring that all stakeholders can easily access vital information. Ultimately, the meeting laid a solid foundation for advancing biotechnology and biosafety in the region. By prioritizing understanding, reviewing regulations, assessing trade dynamics, and addressing harmonization challenges, participants are poised to create a safer and more innovative agricultural landscape.

The commitment to collaboration and shared learning is a promising step toward enhancing food security and improving livelihoods across the region, ensuring that biotechnology can be harnessed responsibly for the benefit of all.

Enhancing Airspace Efficiency: The Role of Civil-Military Cooperation in Global Aviation

The aviation sector plays a vital role in the global economy, serving as the only rapid worldwide transportation network essential for international business. It drives economic growth, creates jobs, and facilitates global trade and tourism. In 2016, the aviation industry's total economic impact reached USD 2.7 trillion, accounting for 3.6% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP).

One of the strategies promoted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to enhance air transport efficiency is improving air navigation services. This involves increasing capacity and improving the safety of airspace users.

Today, the two primary airspace users are civil and military entities. Effective management of this shared resource relies on civil-military cooperation and coordination, ensuring both sectors can operate safely and efficiently. This collaboration allows civil aviation to thrive while supporting the safe operation of military flights.

In many countries, the joint management of airspace has demonstrated significant benefits. By handling airspace in a dynamic and equitable manner, nations can optimize airspace use, allowing for more efficient responses to natural disasters, quicker deployment of resources during emergencies, and enhanced safety for both civil and military operations. These benefits extend to financial savings, environmental improvements, and increased safety.

In this context, civil-military cooperation enhances the global aviation network's capacity, flexibility, efficiency, safety, and security. Establishing such cooperation at the national level is a strategic priority that supports the implementation of the Global Air Navigation Plan, which is critical for

creating a seamless air navigation system. This is why military aviation authorities must actively participate in shaping State aviation strategies.

Recognizing this, the Support to Air Transport Sector Development (SATSD) programme has been conducting workshops aimed at improving civil-military cooperation in air navigation across Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as the Indian Ocean region.

The SATSD program, funded by the European Union with an €8 million budget, supports air transport sector development across Member States of COMESA, the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The most recent forum took place in Arusha, Tanzania, from 25-27 September 2024, under the theme "Safe and Optimal Use of Airspace by Both Civil and Military Organizations". The event gathered participants from civil aviation authorities, military authorities, and military liaison officers from East African Community Partner States, alongside representatives from the African Civil Aviation Commission.

The workshop addressed challenges that hinder civil-military cooperation at both national and regional levels and highlighted its benefits in improving air navigation efficiency. Participants were equipped with the tools and frameworks necessary to establish or enhance cooperation among aviation stakeholders. This workshop laid the foundation for developing and implementing flexible airspace management systems in the EA-SA-IO region.

COMESA Monetary Institute Reviews Climate Impact on Central Banks

The COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) convened the 21st meeting of the Monetary and Exchange Rate Policies (MERP) Sub-Committee in Nairobi, Kenya, from 21st to 22nd September 2024. The meeting aimed to review the activities undertaken by the CMI under the MERP Sub-Committee in 2024 and to outline a work plan for 2025.

Prior to this, a validation workshop was held at the same venue from 19th to 20th September 2024, focusing on country studies conducted by staff from COMESA member central banks. These studies explored the "Macroeconomic Impact of Climate Change and the Role of Central Banks."

The workshop report highlighted key findings, noting that climate change shocks drive inflationary pressures, hinder economic growth, and disrupt bank's balance sheets, particularly through an increase in non-performing loans (NPLs).

The meeting further identified common policy recommendations, including: the need for central banks to integrate climate shocks into their monetary policy

frameworks and the introduction of proactive green financial policies and regulations, such as green lending, greening central bank portfolios, and providing interest subsidies for green loan-supported projects.

Further recommendations were intensifying banking and prudential supervision; offering support to financial institutions facing challenges due to climate shocks and encouraging governments to integrate climate change considerations and nationally determined contributions (NDCs) into public finance management, development planning, and budgetary cycles.

The MERP Sub-Committee meeting also reviewed training activities and other initiatives conducted by the CMI, preparing a comprehensive work plan for 2025, which will guide future efforts.

Delegates from thirteen COMESA member central banks participated, including those from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



Young climate leaders and advocates, policy makers, and civil society organisations from across the region during the Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) on climate change.

COMESA Host Regional Conference on Youth and Climate Security

COMESA in collaboration with a coalition of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), hosted a Regional Conference on Youth and Climate Security under the theme "Shaping Financial Climate Resilience for Child and Youth-led Adaptation and Mitigation."

Coordinated by the COMESA Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) programme, the event was focused on empowering young leaders in the Southern Africa region to enhance financial resilience in the face of climate change, fostering adaptation and mitigation strategies that are child and youth led.

This 3-day international gathering, was held at the Mulungushi International Conference centre in Lusaka from 24 – 26 September 2024 and was aligned with the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Conference of the Parties (COP).

Among the delegates were 400 policymakers, youth activists, environmental experts, and

stakeholders from across the region. Participants engaged in dialogues, workshops, and presentations aimed at shaping actionable strategies for climate resilience.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Head of the GPS programme, Dr Oita Etyang called on youths to utilize the space provided by COMESA to realize their full potential.

"The future belongs to young people so they will set the agenda of today and tomorrow, but this agenda needs to be set meaningfully because COMESA can only provide the platform for youth engagement, but the solutions ultimately lie with the youth," he noted.

United Nations Development Programme UNDP Resident Representative James Wakiaga who spoke on behalf of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Beatrice Mutali, said that children suffer the most from climate change, as disasters lead to food insecurity and malnourishment which often leads to early marriage and trauma.

"Action to protect children and to achieve climate resilience is needed. This conference is an opportunity to craft creative solutions and to foster intergenerational collaboration," he said.

Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY) Chairperson Nawa Silishebo stated that Southern Africa's future lies in the hands of young people because they too are affected by climate change.

The youth leader said that despite this disproportionate impact, children and youth are often overlooked in countries' environmental negotiations and policymaking, including those related to climate change.

"We need to protect children and youth from the effects of climate change. We need to act now," Silishebo added.



Members of the Programme Steering Committee for EGEE-ICT meeting in Lusaka, Zambia

Enhancing ICT Governance in Africa

The fifth meeting of the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) for the Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in ICT (EGEE-ICT) was conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, on October 3, 2024. This two-day event aimed to strengthen ICT governance and foster a conducive environment for digital development across Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and the Indian Ocean regions.

The meeting brought together representatives from Member States, Regional Economic Communities—including the East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)—as well as various ICT associations like ARICEA, CRASA, EACO, SATA, and SAPOA. Officials from the Zambian Government and the European Union Delegation, which funds the programme, attended.

Opening the meeting Dr. Mohamed Kadah, COMESA Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Programmes, underscored the pivotal role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in driving development and regional integration.

In his statement presented by Dr. Bernard Dzawanda, Director of Infrastructure and

Logistics, Kadah highlighted COMESA's strategic commitment to digital transformation, emphasizing the importance of establishing an enabling environment, advancing policy and regulatory frameworks, improving digital infrastructure, and addressing cybersecurity.

He further stressed the significance of affordable ICT services, noting their potential to spur economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance governance, and promote environmental sustainability. ICT, he added, is key in addressing pressing challenges such as climate vulnerability, gender inequality, and health emergencies.

However, Africa remains behind the global average in internet usage. According to the International Telecommunication Union's 2023 report, only 37% of Africa's population uses the internet, compared to the global average of 67%. Ambassador Kadah pointed out that only 25% of Africans have access to the internet, compared to 57% globally.

"Deliberate efforts are needed to make ICT services more affordable and accessible to all," Ambassador Kadah emphasized.

The EGEE-ICT programme is in its fifth year of implementation.



COMESA@30 Golf tournament proceedings. Follow link for all photos <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBNo9E>

COMESA@30 Golf Tournament: Celebrating Milestones and Future Aspirations

In celebration of its 30th anniversary, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) hosted a spectacular Golf Tournament at Lusaka Golf Club on October 11, 2024. The event drew 128 participants, creating an exciting atmosphere filled with camaraderie and competition, as players came together to honor COMESA's remarkable journey in advancing regional integration. The winning team was awarded solar equipment, a meaningful nod to COMESA's enduring commitment to sustainable development and climate action.

During the prize-giving ceremony, Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe reflected on COMESA's tremendous growth over the years, evolving from the Preferential Trade Area to a thriving Common Market. She emphasized how the tournament provided a special opportunity to unite key stakeholders who have played an integral part in the organization's path to success.

"This event symbolizes COMESA's unwavering dedication to building strong partnerships with regional and international partners, all in the pursuit of economic growth and sustainable development," said Secretary General Kapwepwe. She added that proceeds from the tournament would support cancer treatment and care at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, as well as a regional tree-planting initiative, further underscoring COMESA's community-driven focus.

Zambia's Minister of Commerce and Trade, Hon. Chipoka Mulenga, also praised COMESA's instrumental role in fostering trade, investment, and job creation across Member States. Represented by Permanent Secretary for Investment and Industrialization Mr. Crusiva Hichikumba, the Minister acknowledged the organization's impact on food security and economic resilience, noting, "This anniversary is a shining testament to the resilience, unity, and shared vision of our member countries."

The COMESA@30 Golf Tournament was not just a celebration of past accomplishments, but a forward-looking event, marking a renewed commitment to collaboration and progress in the years ahead. With each milestone, COMESA continues to lead the way in shaping a prosperous future for the region.



COMESA DAIRY

Date	Activity	Venue
14 – 16 Oct	Information Management System (IMS) in the energy sector - Training and Validation workshop	Lusaka
28 – 30 Oct	Validation Workshop for Policies and Regulations for Private Sector Investment in ICT Infrastructure Development - EGEE-ICT programme	Livingstone, Zambia
28 -29 Oct	The 17th COMESA Business Forum	Burundi
29 Oct	The 19th Meeting of COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs	Burundi
31 Oct	The 23rd COMESA Summit	Burundi
2 – 8 Nov	Annual COMESA Monetary Cooperation Meetings	Eswatini
5 – 7 Nov	The 46th Administration & Budgetary Committee	Lusaka
19 -21 Nov	Validation workshop for the final draft Policy advocacy for competition and operationalisation of joint competition rules and regulations in the aviation sector	Lusaka
25 – 26 Nov	The 45th Inter -Governmental Committee Meeting	Lusaka
27 Nov	COMESA @30 Anniversary Gala Dinner	Lusaka
28 Nov	The 45th COMESA Council of Ministers Meeting	Lusaka