



**COMESA - INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES**  
COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA



# COMESA

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European Union

Growing Together



1994 - 2019

for Prosperity



# *“Growing Together, for Prosperity”*





# FOREWORD



Twenty-five years ago, the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa was ratified in Lilongwe, Malawi, paving the way for the transformation of the previously known Preferential Trade Area to the Common Market on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994. The establishment of PTA in 1981, and its transformation into COMESA, was in conformity with the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL) of the Organization of African Unity (currently the African Union). Both objectives envisaged an evolutionary process in the economic integration of the continent; a process in which regional economic communities would constitute building blocks for the creation of an African Economic Community. As we mark 25 years since the creation of COMESA, we reflect on the journey we have covered and ask how closely we have followed the vision of the founders of the PTA and COMESA. What is clear, it that the gains of growing together has contributed massively to the robust GDP growth that our region has registered, which is now on average 8.0 percent. Over the last 25 years, COMESA's has implemented a range of programmes that are designed to move the regional bloc to a fully integrated, internationally competitive and unified single economic space within which goods, services, capital and labour are able to move freely across national frontiers. Thus, the programme of cooperation aims to achieve the removal of all physical, technical, fiscal and monetary barriers to intra-regional trade and commercial exchanges. We recognized early enough that in order to spur economic growth of this region, there was urgent need to improve trade facilitation measures if the region was to become regionally and even globally competitive. We are now proud to state that COMESA is leading in the development of trade facilitation programmes aimed at reducing the cost of doing business. We have developed innovative trade facilitation tools that are transforming the nature of doing business and we have built some of the finest institutions in the world. Looking ahead, continental integration is now a near reality, building on the strong base that we have set in COMESA.

This book traces the origins of COMESA and provides snapshots of the milestones of our 25 journey of integration. I invite you to join us and walk the journey with us.

Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe  
Secretary General , **COMESA**  
November 2019

# OUR VISION

To be a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for all its people ready to merge into an African Economic Community.

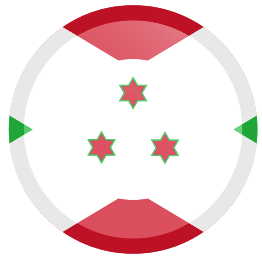
# OUR MISSION

To endeavour to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Member States through increased co-operation and integration in all fields of development particularly trade, customs and monetary affairs, transport, communication and information, technology, industry and energy, environment, and natural resources.

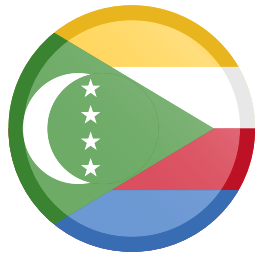


# COMESA

MEMBER STATES



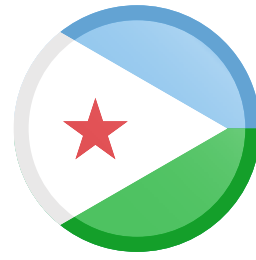
Republic of Burundi



Union of the Comoros



Democratic Republic of Congo



Republic of Djibouti



Arab Republic of Egypt



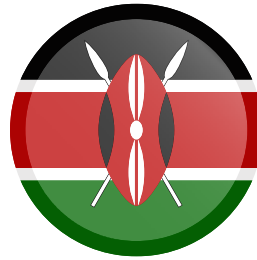
State of Eritrea



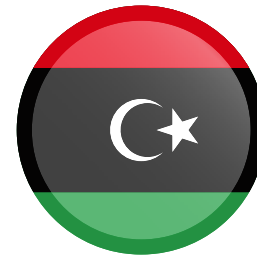
Kingdom of Eswatini



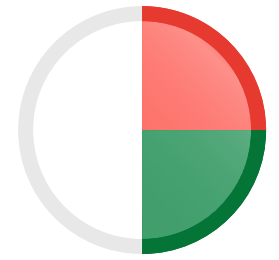
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



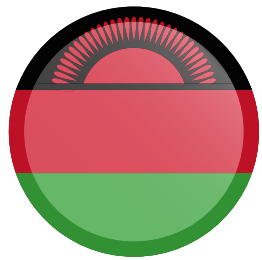
Republic of Kenya



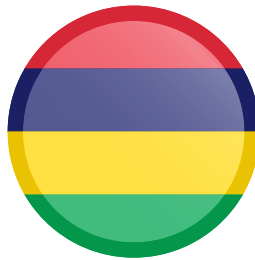
State of Libya



Republic of Madagascar



Republic of Malawi



Republic of Mauritius



Republic of Rwanda



Republic of Seychelles



Federal Republic of Somalia



Republic of Sudan



Republic of Tunisia



Republic of Uganda



Republic of Zambia



Republic of Zimbabwe

# COMESA

## AT A GLANCE

Member States	21
Population	560 million
Gross Domestic Product	One Trillion dollars (2018)
Landmass	11.8 million Km <sup>2</sup>
Average regional GDP growth	8%

**COMESA** was formed on December 8, 1994 by means of a premeditated transition from its precursor—the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of Eastern and Southern Africa. The foundation laid by the PTA for the regional integration programmes is being pursued by its successor COMESA to date, including the establishment of current COMESA institutions.

The concept of economic integration in Africa, which goes back to the early 1960s after most African countries gained their independence, was fueled by the size of the countries' individual markets, which were too small to support meaningful and accelerated economic development, and heavy reliance on trade with the colonial countries.

#### **Historical Milestones**

- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) becomes the champion for regional integration and proposes the division of Africa into regions for economic development (Matthews, 2003).
- A ministerial meeting convened in Lusaka, Zambia in 1965 considers and evaluates proposals for the establishment of sub-regional economic bloc.
- At the first meeting of the Interim Ministerial Council in Addis Ababa in May 1966, the Terms of Association to govern the interim arrangements before the signing of the formal Treaty are adopted and signed by 10 states, namely: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Zambia.



The first meeting of the Authority of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa States taking place in Lusaka, Zambia 16 -17 December 1982.

### **LUSAKA DECLARATION**

The first extra-ordinary meeting of the Ministers of Trade, Finance and Planning was held in Lusaka in March 1978. The Ministers adopted 'Lusaka Declaration of Intent and Commitment to the Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa' and created an Inter-Governmental Negotiating Team to develop the Treaty for the establishment of the PTA.

### **Lagos Plan of Action**

The second extra-ordinary session of OAU Heads of State and Government, and the first ever OAU economic summit convened in Lagos, Nigeria. The 'Lagos Plan of Action (LPA)', which was followed by the 'Final Act of Lagos', enjoined all independent African countries to take all necessary steps towards strengthening existing sub-regional economic cooperation groupings, and establish new ones as necessary, and thereby covering the continent, sub-region by sub-region.

### **Establishment of PTA**

The talks culminated in a Heads of State and Government summit convened in Lusaka in December 1981. It was at this summit that the Treaty establishing the PTA was signed by nine states, namely: Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia; it was subsequently ratified according to its provisions in 1982.



# THE TRANSITION: FROM **PTA** TO **COMESA**

The PTA Treaty envisaged its transformation into a common market in a span of 10 years. In conformity with the LPA and the subsequent Abuja Treaty of 1991, the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was signed on November in Kampala, Uganda and ratified in 1994. The transition of the PTA into COMESA was not so much a change of philosophy but rather its evolution with a view to increase its functional efficiency.





1994 - 2019

Growing together for prosperity

## ABOUT COMESA

COMESA is based on the concept of multispeed variable geometry development by which two or more Member States can agree to accelerate the implementation of specific provisions of a Treaty while allowing others to join later. This differs slightly from the PTA, which emphasized decision by consensus, meaning that programmes were pegged on the slowest moving Member States. The Treaty establishing COMESA provides for enforceability of its protocols and outlines circumstances within which sanctions may be instituted against members. Member States are duty-bound to abide by common decisions. Given that COMESA morphed from the PTA, its objectives are broadly similar, albeit with slight modifications.

# OBJECTIVES OF COMESA

- To attain the sustainable growth and development of Member States by promoting a more balanced & harmonious development of their production and marketing structures.
- To promote joint development in all fields of economic activity and the combined adoption of macro-economic policies and programmes to raise the standard of living of its peoples and to foster closer relations among its Member States.
- To co-operate in the creation of an enabling environment for foreign, cross border and domestic investment, including the joint promotion of research and the adaptation of science and technology for development.
- To co-operate in the promotion of peace, security and stability between the Member States in order to enhance economic development in the region.
- To co-operate in strengthening relations between the Common Market and the rest of the world and the adoption of common positions in international for a.
- To contribute towards the establishment, progress and the realization of the objectives of the African Economic Community.

(Source: COMESA Treaty Article 3)

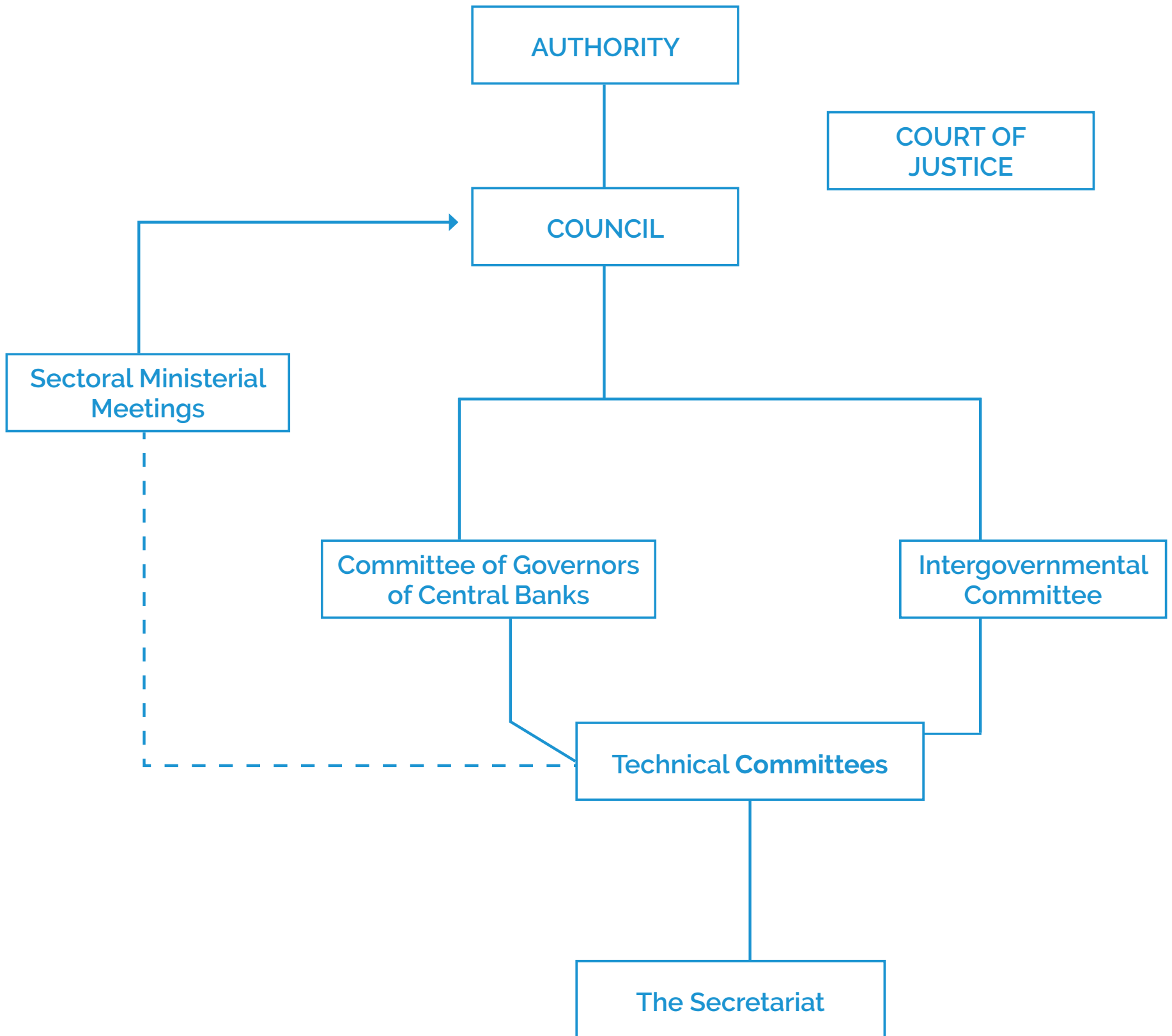








STRUCTURE OF  
**COMESA**





### – The COMESA Heads of State and Government

This is also known as the COMESA Authority and is made up of the 21 Heads of State and Government of Member States. It is the supreme Policy Organ and is responsible for the general policy, direction and control of the performance of COMESA's executive functions. The Authority is concerned with the strategic trajectory of the region as well as the bloc's achievement of its aims. Decisions and directives of the Heads of State are by consensus and are binding on all subordinate institutions, except the Court of Justice.







Heads of State and First ladies attending the 2014 Summit in D R Congo





Council of Ministers Meeting, 2015, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## – The Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers is COMESA's second highest policy organ. It comprises ministers designated by the Member States. The Council is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of COMESA in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. It also takes policy decisions on COMESA programmes and activities, including the monitoring and reviewing of its financial and administrative management. As provided for in the Treaty, Council decisions are made by consensus, failing which they are made by a two-thirds majority of the Council members.



Khartoum, Sudan

### – COMESA Court of Justice

The COMESA Court of Justice is the organization's judicial organ. Established on the adoption of the Treaty in 1994, the Court is comprised of two Divisions—the Lower Division, known as the Court of First Instance and the upper Division called the Appellate Division. The Court of Justice is charged with settling disputes arising between COMESA's Member States, the Secretary General, individuals and corporates. It adjudicates and arbitrates on, among other matters, unfair trade practices, interpretation of Treaty (protocols and other legislative acts) and ensures that Member States uniformly implement and comply with agreed decisions. Decisions of the Court on the interpretation of the provisions of the COMESA Treaty have precedence over decisions of national courts and are binding on all COMESA Member States. Through landmark judgements, the Court has built investors' confidence in the COMESA region.





Ministers of Finance, Governors of Central Banks & COMESA Secretariat Staff meeting, October 2019, Washington DC

### – Committee of Governors of Central Banks

The Committee of the Heads of Central Banks is the apex organ regarding monetary linkages in the region and monitors the implementation of regional monetary and financial cooperation programmes. It consists of governors of the monetary authorities designated for that purpose by the Member States. The Committee is responsible for the development of programmes and action plans in the field of finance and monetary co-operation among other roles.





### – The Intergovernmental Committee

The Intergovernmental Committee brings together Permanent/Principal Secretaries drawn from coordinating ministries and other relevant departments and ministries to discuss and review the implementation of regional integration programmes and activities. They make policy recommendations to the Council of Ministers for decision making.





Trade and Customs Committee Meeting, 2018, Kenya

### – Technical Committees

Currently, there are 13 Technical Committees on: Administrative and Budgetary Matters; Agriculture; Comprehensive Information Systems; Energy; Finance and Monetary Affairs; Industry; Labour; Human Resources and Social and Cultural Affairs; Legal Affairs; Natural Resources and the Environment; Tourism and Wildlife; Statistical Matters; Trade and Customs; and Transport and Communications. The committees are responsible for most of the preparatory work that precedes agreements. They are also responsible for the comprehensive implementation and monitoring of programmes and making recommendations to the Council.





Former President of Malawi and Secretary General of COMESA  
H.E. Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika, meeting with Secretariat staff, Lilongwe, 2011

### – The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the executive arm of the Common Market. It provides technical support and advisory services to the Member States in the implementation of the Treaty. To this end, it undertakes research and studies as a basis for implementing the decisions adopted by the policy organs. COMESA Secretariat headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. It is headed by a Secretary General who is appointed by the Authority.









# PROFILE OF COMESA

COMESA is the largest economic community in Africa, with a combined population of around 560 million people, and a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of One Trillion USD (2018). Over time, membership has grown from the original 16 founder states in 1993 to the current 21 countries. The latest to join are Tunisia (2018) and Somalia (re-admitted in 2018). COMESA is leading in the development of trade facilitation programmes aimed at reducing the cost of doing business. Beyond trade liberalization and facilitation, which are the flagship programmes, COMESA is about structural transformation of economies, re-engineering them to become integrated.

# COMESA

## INSTITUTIONS

An integral component of the COMESA success narrative has been its institutions. These are needs-based and respond to very specific niches in the region. In addition to providing expertise in specific areas, the institutions are involved in skills development and extensive market research that allows them to link evidence to their decision-making processes. To support the integration program, COMESA has established financial institutions to provide not just the much needed credit (the Trade and Development Bank), but also to provide insurance for non-commercial risks (the African Trade Insurance Agency), re-insurance (ZEP-Re (PTA) Reinsurance Company) and to facilitate international payments (the Regional Payment and Settlement System), and to underpin competition in the region (the COMESA Competition Commission).

Trade and  
Development  
Bank

PTA  
Reinsurance  
Company  
(ZEP-RE)

African Trade  
Insurance  
Agency

COMESA  
Competition  
Commission

Africa Leather  
and Leather  
Products  
Institute (ALLPI)

COMESA  
Monetary  
Institute

COMESA  
Regional  
Investment  
Agency

Federation  
of National  
Associations  
of Women  
in Business  
(FEMCOM)

COMESA  
Clearing House

COMESA  
Business  
Council





## – Trade and Development Bank

Established in 1985, the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB), formerly the PTA Bank, is a multilateral, treaty-based development financial institution. The Bank's mandate is to finance and foster trade, regional economic integration and sustainable development, through trade finance, project and infrastructure finance, asset management and business advisory services. It was established using share capital from COMESA Member States and has evolved into an autonomous COMESA-based financial institution, with non-COMESA shareholders such as Mozambique, Tanzania and South Sudan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Belarus, and shareholders from several African institutional investors, notably the African Development Bank (ADB), African Pension Funds and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).

The TDB has grown strongly over the years to become an investment-grade modern multilateral bank, with international governance and risk management standards. *Fitch Ratings* raised the Bank's rating from BB+ to BB+ [Stable] in October 2018; reflecting the Bank's improved performance and capitalization. The shareholder base has gone up from 19 to 33; with new Member States including Eswatini, Mozambique, South Sudan, and Belarus in Eastern Europe. Additionally, the Bank has attracted new development partners such as China EXIM Bank, KfW (Germany), European Investment Bank, AFD (France), CDC (UK), and USAID.

(<https://www.tdbgroup.org/>)

## – PTA Reinsurance Company (ZEP-RE)

Created on November 21, 1990 in Mbabane, Eswatini, it is a regional organization entrusted with promoting trade, development and integration within the region through insurance and reinsurance business. ZEP-RE commenced writing business in January 1993. It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and operates eight regional and country offices in the following states: D.R. Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Ivory Coast.

- ZEP-RE's shareholding has grown from USD 5 million to USD 230 million with total assets of USD 385 million.
- Operating markets expanded from the initial five to 55 countries within and outside the African continent servicing over 500 companies.
- Cumulatively the company has underwritten over USD 1 billion in premiums and paid out over USD 600 million in claims during the period of its existence.
- Over 90% of the Company's investment portfolio of USD 285 million is invested in the region.
- ZEP-RE has also established an Academy aimed at developing and building the skills and technical capacity of insurance personnel in the region.
- Rated B++ by AM Best, the second highest rating by an indigenous African reinsurer on the continent. The Company also holds a claims paying ability rating of AA+ from Global Credit Ratings (the second highest rating attainment on the GCR scale).



# OUR STORY IS A COMESA STORY; ONE WITH GROWTH\* IN LEAPS & BOUNDS

The Eastern and Southern African **Trade & Development Bank** was designed to underwrite the fortunes of the countries that make up this remarkable part of the world. As we celebrate our own anniversary, we're proud of our heritage within the corridors of the-then Preferential Trade Area (PTA) these 35 years ago.

Over the past 3 decades - despite the challenges - we can attest to a region that's on the move and on the right path. And with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and *Agenda 2063*, we're all on a bullish trajectory for **growth & development**.

Premised on a sentient wisdom garnered over the decades, we're energized and on a mission to address seminal issues such as access to affordable finance. To sustainably finance Africa's infrastructural development, to boost intra-African trade, and to strengthen this region's financial services sector, our energies will be infused into intermediating global and regional capital into the region.

**Ultimately, we support COMESA's mission by enabling sovereigns & entrepreneurs to finance their respective endeavors. What remains, hence, is for funding partners, investors & stakeholders alike to leverage our capacity, capabilities & unique institutional framework.**



\* THE TRADE & DEVELOPMENT BANK IS AN INVESTMENT GRADE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION





TRADE & DEVELOPMENT BANK

ANNIVERSARY  
**35** YEARS

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE  
35 YEARS OF **INTEGRATING &**  
**ADVANCING** THE REGION

[WWW.TDBGROUP.ORG](http://WWW.TDBGROUP.ORG)



## – African Trade Insurance Agency

The African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) is a Pan African institution that provides commercial and political risk insurance to companies, investors, and lenders interested in doing business in Africa. It was launched in 2001 and was initially tailored to address the lack of political risk cover by developing a leveraged political risk insurance scheme covering export and import transactions into, within and from the African region. It has since diversified its product offering to cover credit insurance. Its head office is in Nairobi, Kenya.

<http://www.ati-aca.org/>



## – COMESA Competition Commission

The COMESA Competition Commission (the "Commission") was established in 2004 and commenced its operations on the 14th of January 2013. The Commission is a regional body corporate established under Article 6 of the COMESA Competition Regulations (the "Regulations") and is headquartered in Lilongwe, Malawi.

The Commission is responsible, among other things, for promoting competition and enhancing the welfare of consumers in the Common Market. The main functions of the Commission are to prohibit, monitor and investigate anti-competitive business practices, control mergers and other forms of acquisitions in the Common Market and mediate disputes between the Member States concerning anti-competitive conduct. The COMESA Competition Commission is the first regional competition authority in Africa and the second in the world, after the European Competition Authority.

- The Commission has assessed over 200 mergers with a Common Market turnover representation of over USD 90 billion since its inception.
- The top five (5) COMESA Member States most affected by these mergers include Kenya, Zambia, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Uganda, in descending order.
- The most active economic sectors within which mergers have taken place have been the energy, agriculture, banking and financial services, construction, insurance and Information and Communication Technology sectors.
- In the area of restrictive business practices, the Commission has assessed more than 20 regional distribution agreements in which the parties were advised to remove anti-competitive clauses.
- The Commission implements capacity building and technical assistance programs in Member States.

<https://www.comesacompetition.org/>



# ATI: DE-RISKING AFRICA- KEY TO BOOSTING INVESTMENT FLOWS



John Lentaigne, ATI's Acting CEO with the Minister of Finance of Benin, Romuald Wadagni



The African Trade Insurance Agency (“ATI”) has been guaranteeing cross-border trade and investments since 2001 when it was founded by COMESA and the World Bank. With an outstanding portfolio now exceeding US\$6 billion, ATI has grown to become one of Africa's largest Development Finance Institutions.

In a conversation at ATI's Nairobi headquarters, ATI's Acting CEO, John Lentaigne discussed the evolution of the company.

### **What exactly does ATI do?**

ATI guarantees trade and investment flows. We also guarantee debt and exports so we help exporters grow to overseas markets, while international companies looking to invest in Africa are predominantly concerned with mitigating country risk. Without ATI's risk mitigation tools, these investment and trade transactions often wouldn't happen.

### **What are some of the risks investors face and how does ATI come in?**

The prevalent risk faced by investors is country risk. For example, non-payment risk by government or state owned actors, or the risk of unilateral breach of contract. These risks impact investors' ability and willingness to invest.

The other major risk is in the corporate sector, in particular the risk of non-payment or non-performance by corporations. In both instances, whether government or private sector risk, our guarantees say that if the contracted counterparty doesn't perform, ATI will guarantee the performance under that contract.

### **What should countries or companies do if they want to increase investment flows?**

International credit ratings are important. Not all countries have credit ratings and that's why we encourage countries to publish their ratings as it sends a strong signal to international investors.

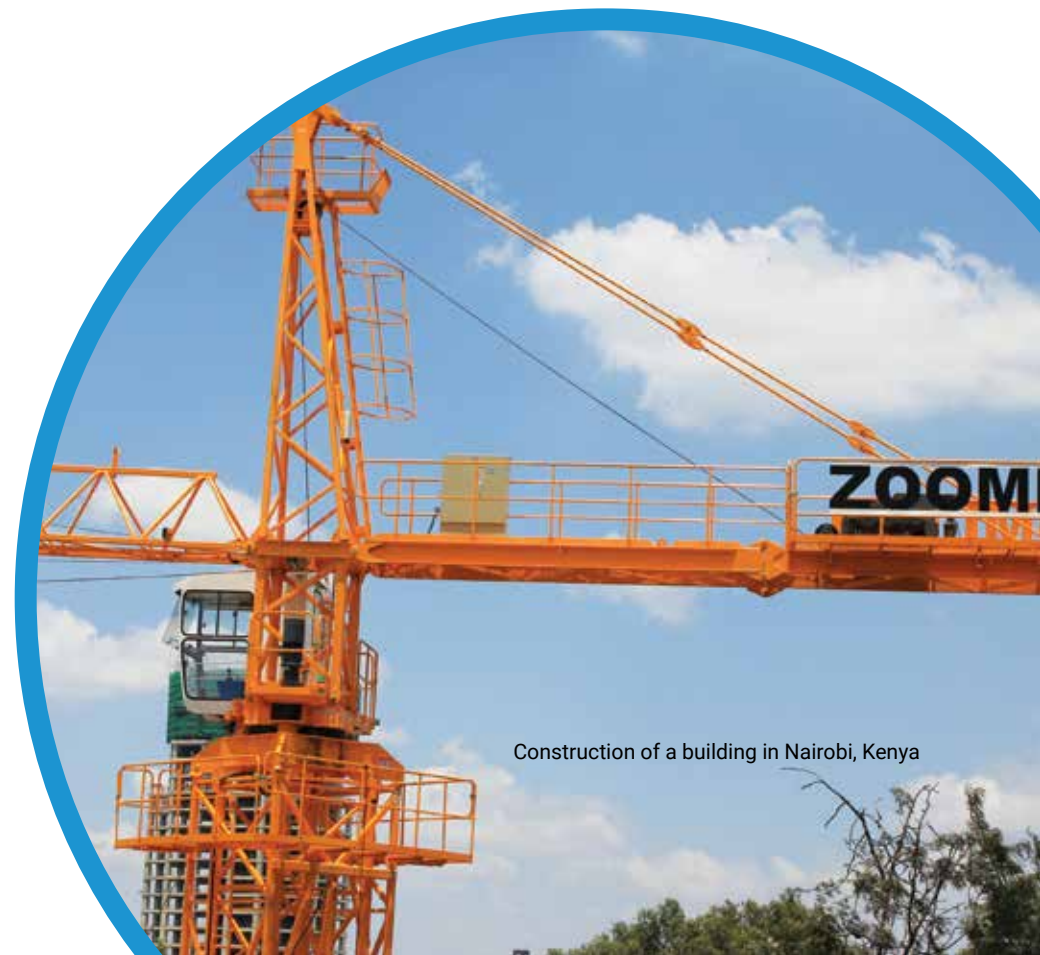
### **What risks do governments face if they deal with investors without involving a de-risking institution?**

If the government deals with external investors without working with risk mitigation institutions, the risk premium will still be applied - and most likely, the risk will still be mitigated - but probably without the government's knowledge.

But by working with a risk mitigation institution like ATI, when approaching the markets, it's possible to lower the country's risk premium.

### **What gives ATI an edge?**

ATI is an African institution – and our shareholders and staff are predominantly African. We have six offices across the continent which will increase to eight next year. This gives us a knowledge of African markets that our competitors don't have. We're also a preferred creditor in our member states, which means that governments by law have to prioritize ATI-insured sovereign projects. This is how we are able to lower risk premiums.



Construction of a building in Nairobi, Kenya



### – Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI)

The Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) is a COMESA institution headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with a mandate to facilitate the development of the leather sector in Africa in general and in the COMESA region. The institution was established in 1990 as COMESA Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI) with the aim of promoting productivity, competitiveness, trade and regional integration in the leather industry. The institute was rebranded in 2017 to Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI). In conjunction with the European Union, the institute has commissioned several Design Studios in the Member States and is deliberately driving education campaigns through academies to increase the density of leather skills in the region.

## – COMESA Monetary Institute

The COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) was established in 2009. Its principal focus is to achieve regional macroeconomic stability and ultimately attain a monetary union (and single currency) via a phased approach. The CMI undertakes capacity building and research activities to improve macroeconomic management and financial stability in the region with the aim of enhancing the COMESA Monetary Integration Programme. The impact of these has been demonstrated by the high-quality research produced by participants in the training/workshops and presented in the CMI Annual Research Forums. The Institute produces manuals for these activities and publishes books on its research activities.





### – COMESA Regional Investment Agency

In 1998, the COMESA Authority declared the regional bloc a 'Common Investment Area' and further decided to establish a Regional Investment Agency with the task of implementing the COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA). The COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA) was launched in 2006 with the objective of making COMESA one of the major destinations for regional and international investors while simultaneously enhancing national investment. The establishment of a CCIA was particularly useful, as national markets in most Member States are too small to attract investment on their own. Some of the benefits that the 'COMESA investor and other foreign investors would receive under the Agreement are national and most favoured nation treatment. RIA undertakes activities in investment promotion, facilitation and advocacy. COMESA RIA has been instrumental in co-organizing (with Egypt) the annual Africa Forum, one of the biggest meeting of business and government leaders in Africa. The COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA) is based in Cairo, Egypt.



## – Federation of National Associations of Women in Business (FEMCOM)

The Federation of National Associations of Women in Business (FEMCOM) in eastern and southern Africa was established in July 1993 with the endorsement of the COMESA Authority. FEMCOM develops entrepreneurship in the COMESA region and beyond by means of programmes that promote, encourage and serve the needs of women and their businesses, working in collaboration with relevant partners. Headquartered in Lilongwe, Malawi, it has national chapters in the 21 COMESA Member States. FEMCOM is building on the success of the Cassava/Textiles/Garments Cluster Project to expand the project in Member States including Kenya, Malawi and Zambia where its upscaling the Cassava Cluster Project to increase production of starch for the local market.



FEMCOM supported Cassava Cluster project in Busia, Kenya





## – COMESA Clearing House

The COMESA Clearing House (CCH) was established in 1984 as the PTA Clearing House. The Clearing House introduced the Regional Payment and Settlement System (REPSS) which was designed to allow Member States to transfer funds more efficiently and effectively within the region. The aim of the payment system is to stimulate economic growth through increased intra-regional trade and a capacity to enable importers and exporters to settle and receive payment for goods and services through an efficient and cost-effective platform. The system is operational in nine Member States, namely; Central Banks of DR Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Eswatini, Uganda and Zambia with other Member States expected to join. With the use of REPSS, intra-COMESA trade, which rose from \$9 billion in 2007 to over \$16 billion in 2017, is expected to grow even higher. The COMESA Clearing House is based in Zimbabwe.

## – COMESA Business Council

The COMESA Business Council (CBC) is a business member organization and a private sector institution of COMESA. Established in 2005, CBC began its operations as a Secretariat in 2010. CBC is the recognized regional apex body of the private sector and business community in the COMESA region whose mission is to promote competitive and interconnected industries to actively participate in regional and global markets through advocacy, business facilitation and enterprise development. Among the key achievements of the CBC is the developed an online business and market intelligence platform called Biznet that support services such as business linkages, sourcing, business or trade flow analysis for regional and international companies. Other CBC initiative includes the CBC Local Sourcing pilot project on building the capacity of SMEs to integrate them into the supply chains of larger businesses in the region and convening of the High- Level Dialogue and Business Summit – COMESA Source 21.

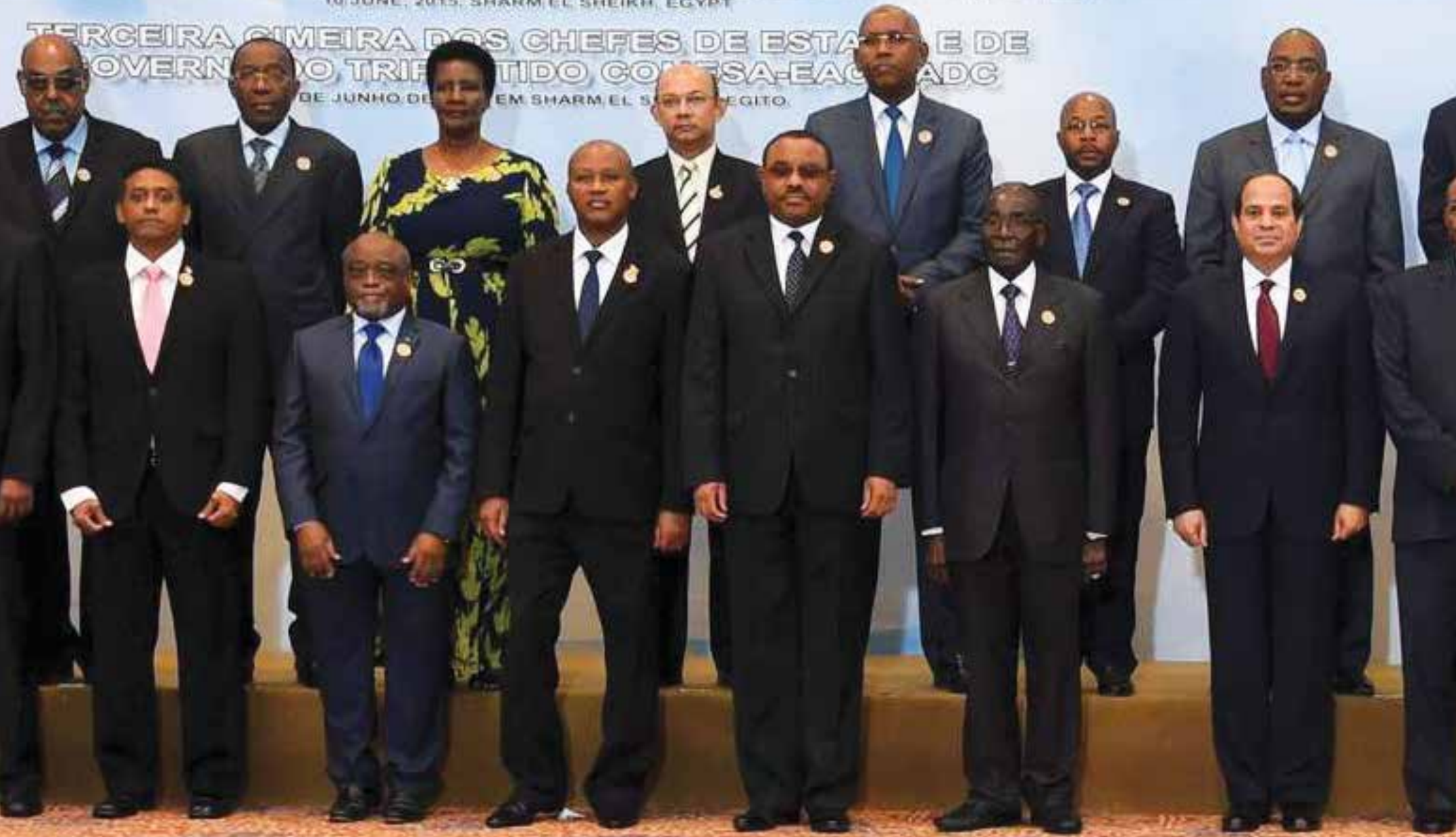






THIRD, TRIPARTITE SUMMIT OF THE  
COMESA-EAC-SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT  
10 JUNE, 2015, SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT

TERCEIRA CIMEIRA DOS CHEFES DE ESTADO E DE  
GOVERNAMENTO, TRIPARTIDO COMESA-EAC-SADC  
DE JUNHO DE 2015, EM SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGITO.







# COMESA PROGRAMMES & MILESTONES

COMESA's focal areas of integration are: trade in goods and services, including payments and settlement arrangements; investment promotion and industrialization; infrastructure development; and peace and security. Various programmes have been developed to support the attainment of the goals under these key pillars. They include trade liberalization, trade facilitation, financial and monetary systems, agriculture, gender and social affairs, climate change adaptation and mitigation and peace and security programmes.



# TRADE FACILITATION

The trade facilitation instruments in COMESA include the following: the COMESA Customs Document (which collapsed and simplified a total of 27 documents into one), the Simplified Trade Regime for small scale cross-border traders, Yellow Card, the Regional Customs Transit Guarantee scheme, Advance Cargo Information System, Harmonized Road Transit Charges, Regional Carrier's Licence, Transit Plates, Harmonized Axle Loading and Maximum Vehicle Dimensions, Common Statistical Rules, ASYCUDA, simple and flexible rules of origin and a Protocol on Rules of Origin, online and standing mechanisms for reporting and removing Non-Tariff Barriers, Competition Regulations administered by the COMESA Competition Commission, the Fifth Freedom for regional air travel (to liberalize the skies), One-Stop-Border-Posts, COMESA Regulations on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, programs on formulation of regional Technical Standards, e-governance programs, and the COMESA Protocol on Transit Procedures.

COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICAN STATES

*31<sup>st</sup> October, 2000*



**FTA LAUNCH**

**COMESA FTA: ENHANCING INVESTMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS**

### **– The COMESA Free Trade Area**

The overall framework for COMESA trade facilitation programs is the Free Trade Area, which started operating on November 1, 2000, as a rule-based duty-free, quota-free, exemption-free regime with a clear prohibition of non-tariff barriers. The COMESA FTA has been a resounding success. As a crucial market integration pillar, it is an effective tool in catalyzing trade among Member States and is responsible for the meteoritic rise of inter-COMESA Members' trade. COMESA is now scaling up the FTA to a Digital Free Trade Area (DFTA), which empowers traders to participate in cross-border trade using ICT as a tool to minimize physical barriers. The DFTA has three thrusts, namely eTrade, eLogistics and eLegislation.





## – Simplified Trade Regime

COMESA launched the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) in 2010. The STR is a cross-border trade regime for small-scale traders importing and/or exporting goods worth US\$2,000 or less, which are on the common list of eligible products negotiated and agreed by two neighbouring countries. The STR aims to formalize informal cross-border trade (ICBT) by putting in place instruments and mechanisms tailored to the trading requirements of small-scale traders. The STR reduces costs for small scale traders and increases the speed of crossing the border by the use of a simplified Certificate of Origin and a Simplified Customs Document (SCD) as well as simplified customs clearance procedures. As of December 2018, eight COMESA Member States were implementing the STR, namely: Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



## – Removal of Non-Tariff Barriers

In 2008, COMESA created an online system to track persistent trends of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB). Thanks to the online reporting system, a success rate of at least 90% of reported barriers has been achieved in the region. Short Messaging Service (SMS) has been developed to complement the online reporting system which allows economic operators to report NTBs instantly using their mobile phones. By 2018, 98% of NTBs reported since 2008 had been resolved. These covered: liberalisation of import licensing, removal of foreign exchange restrictions, taxes on foreign exchange, import and export quotas, road blocks, easing of Customs formalities, extending times border posts are open, creation of one-stop-border-posts, among others.





## – One Stop Border Post

The One Stop Border Post is part of the initiatives under the COMESA Coordinated Border Management (CMB). The CBM focuses on the management by the agencies in relation to policies and strategies, which should be coordinated including: Co-location and sharing of regulatory facilities, Single Window Environment, and One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs). COMESA adopted OSBPs as part of its corridor strategy to address congestion at border stations along major traffic corridors to complement other transit instruments and cross border transport facilitation programmes. The OSBPs play a critical role in improving border station performance within the corridor framework through significant reduction in delays at the border and savings on truck costs. Chirundu One Stop Border Post was launched in December 2009 through a Bilateral Agreement between Zimbabwe and Zambia. It is the first functioning OSBP in Africa. A common control zone was created at Chirundu for border agencies to share facilities with the aim of eliminating duplication of procedures.





## – COMESA Carrier's License

The COMESA Carrier's License allows commercial goods vehicles to be issued, with one license, which is valid throughout the region so that the vehicles can operate in all Member States. This means that vehicles can pick up back-loads in other countries which make more efficient use of the region's transport fleet to reduce the cost of trade. The license was introduced in 1991 and is currently operational in 11 countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Eswatini, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).



## – The Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme – RCTG – CARNET

COMESA Member States agreed to introduce a Regional Customs Bond Guarantee Scheme to address the difficulties experienced by transport operators, freight forwarders and clearing agents and at the same time to offer Customs Administrations a secure regional system of control replacing the nationally executed practices and procedures. At the same time, it helps protect the revenue of each State through which goods are carried. The RCTG is a customs transit regime designed to facilitate the movement of goods under customs seals in the COMESA region and to provide the required customs security and guarantee to the transit countries. Implementation of the Scheme, popularly known as the RCTG CARNET, commenced in 2012. It is operational in five countries, namely: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. By end of 2018, a total of 661 Regional (RCTG) Bonds with guarantees amounting to USD 380 million were executed by clearing and forwarding companies and 323,973 Carnets were issued for the movement of goods in the region. Among the benefits are reducing the cost of collaterals charged by Sureties and agents, simplifying clearing process for transit goods, reducing delays as border points and minimizing revenue leakage.





# COMESA CARTE JAUNE - YELLOW CARD



ISSUED ON DÉLIVRÉE LE	07-12-2017	POLICY NO N° DE LA POLICE	DMMPH0013051984	Y/C NO N° DE CJ	ZM704201
REGISTRATION NO N°D'IMATRICULATION	ALK 2911	ENGINE NO N° DU MOTEUR	EJ2034578SJ8	CHASSIS NO N° DU CHÂSSIS	CSCDFH445NE
VEHICLE TYPE TYPE DE VÉHICULE	Car	MAKE MAQUE	SUBARU, FORESTER	USE USAGE	Private
VALID FROM VALABLE DU	07-12-2017	VALID TO VALABLE AU	07-01-2018	COUNTRIES COVERED PAYS APPLICABLES	ER, ZW, ET, CD
INSURED ASSURÉ	John Evans			ADDRESS ADRESSE	P.O. Box 308 Lusaka, Zambia 10101
INSURER ASSUREUR	ZSIC General Insurance Premium House			ADDRESS ADRESSE	PO Box 31933, Lusaka 10101 N/A

## – The COMESA Yellow Card

The COMESA Yellow Card Insurance Scheme is a regional motor vehicle insurance system that provides cover and compensation for medical expenses resulting from road traffic accidents caused by visiting motorists. The liability cover offered under this scheme is limited to the statute provisions on road traffic third party liability award limits of the country being visited and/or in which an accident occurs. The COMESA Yellow Card was established in 1986. Over 200 companies in the region are participating in the scheme. The scheme is operational in 13 COMESA Member States to date, namely: Burundi, DR Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and one non-COMESA Member State; Tanzania. The Digital Yellow Card is so far being accessed by 166 insurance companies, over 566 branches and an average of 2,500 users daily in the region. By 2018, over 192,000 digital Yellow Cards were issued to travelling motorists, generating a total annual premium income of US\$10 Million. Over 1,000 claims for road accidents victims caused by visiting motorists were handled. ([www.ycmis.comesa.int](http://www.ycmis.comesa.int))



# INVESTMENTS, INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE



## – COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA)

The Investment Agreement for COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA), was adopted in May 2007. The CCIA an instrumental tool that the COMESA Secretariat anticipates will ensure a stable investment environment that promote and protect cross border investments. It aims at harmonizing investment policies, regulations and legislation as well as creating institution to facilitate intra-REC trade. For instance, expanding the number of bilateral Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements, initiating negotiation and arbitration mechanisms for investment disputes, harmonizing all company registration procedures, and also developing capacity-building programs for COMESA investors.





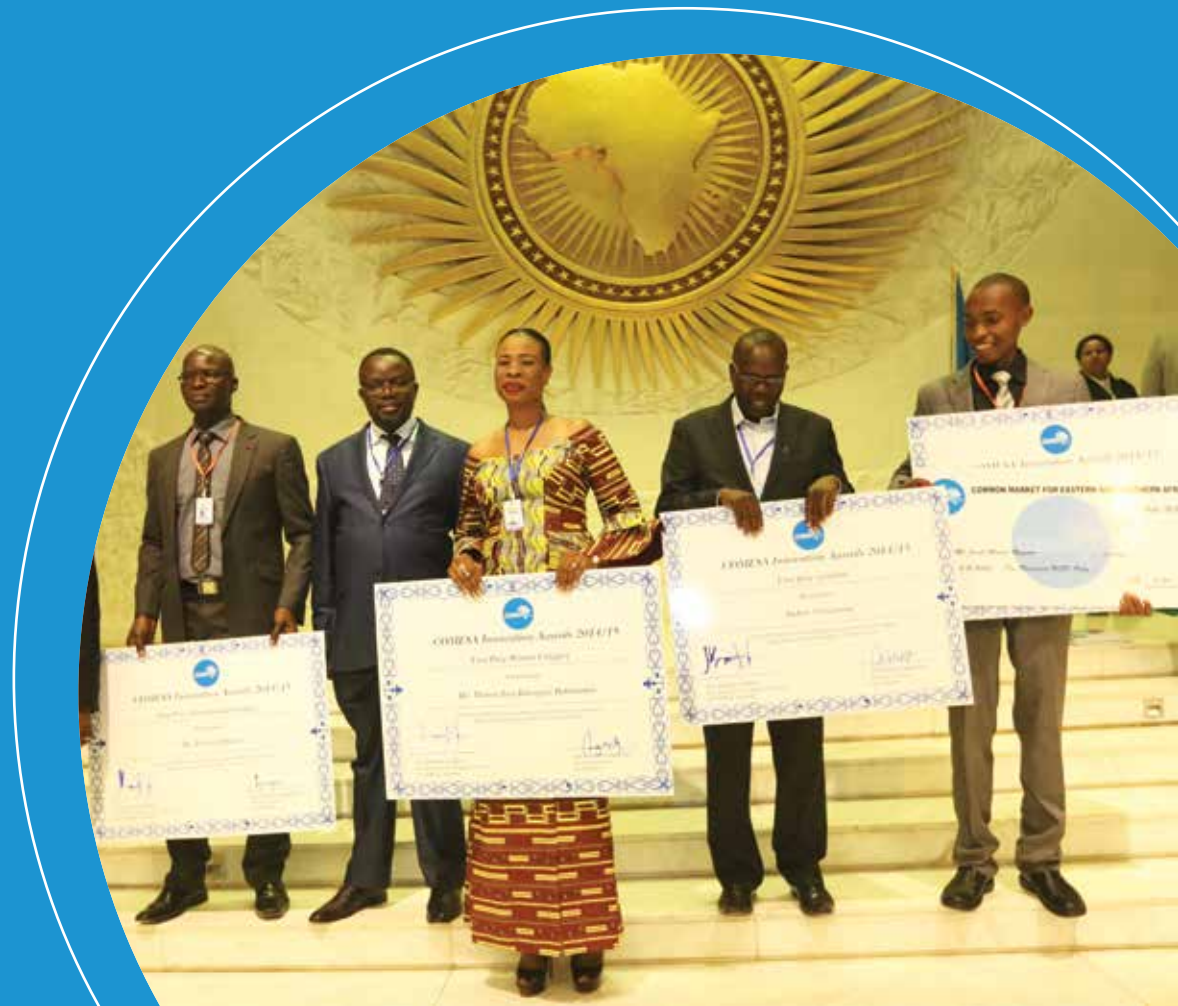
## – COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP)

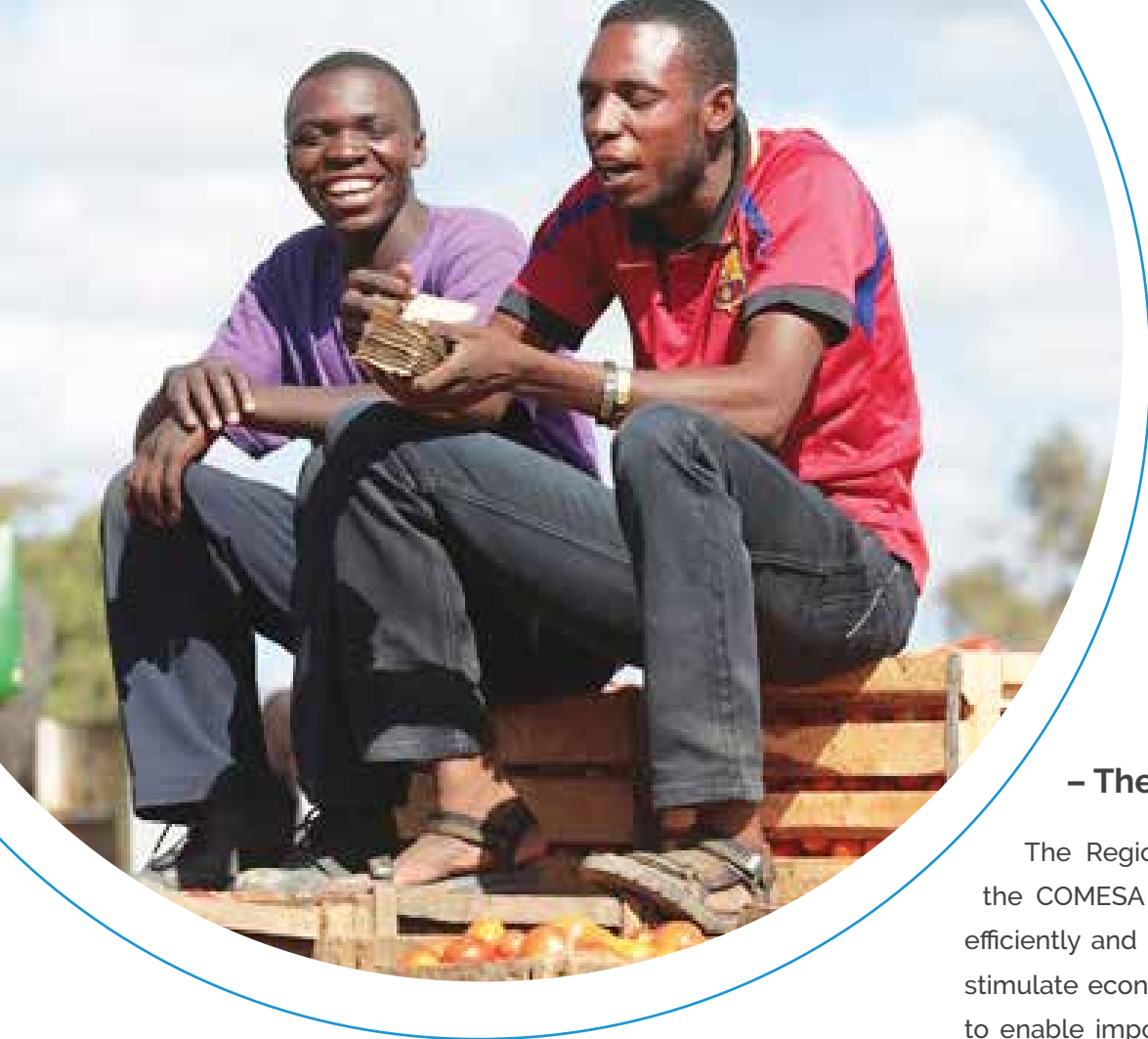
COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP) is a COMESA programme that promotes agriculture through commodity trade. The programme is implemented by the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), which is a specialized agency of COMESA. The overall goal of COMSHIP is to implement COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations leading to increased seed production, reliability, trade and competitiveness of the seed industry in the COMESA region. Seven COMESA Member States namely; Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe have completely aligned their national seed laws to the COMESA Seed System while Djibouti, Eritrea, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Sudan and Eswatini are advancing steadily in domesticating the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonization Regulations. The remaining COMESA Member States are in the process of align and domesticating the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonization Regulations.



## – COMESA Innovation Award Scheme

The COMESA Innovation Award was mooted during the 31<sup>st</sup> COMESA Council of Ministers Meeting held in November 2013 in Kampala, Uganda. The aim of the COMESA Innovation Award is to recognize and celebrate individuals and institutions that have used science, technology and innovation for practical applications to further the COMESA regional integration agenda and significantly improve the quality of life of the people in the region through the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). It is envisaged that SMEs would serve as the vehicle for harnessing existing technologies and using them to enhance industrial production and commerce. The SMEs would need to be technology-based and possess high potential for growth. With seed capital of USD 10,000, provided by COMESA, the award winners have transformed their innovative ideas into commercially viable products and established highly productive enterprises.





# MONETARY HARMONIZATION PROGRAMME

## – The Regional Payment and Settlement System (REPSS)

The Regional Payment and Settlement System (REPSS) was designed by the COMESA Clearing House to allow Member States to transfer funds more efficiently and effectively within the region. The aim of the payment system is to stimulate economic growth through increased intra-regional trade and a capacity to enable importers and exporters to settle and receive payment for goods and services through an efficient and cost-effective platform. The REPSS is a Multilateral Netting System with End-of-Day Settlement in a single currency. The system allows for settlement in a multicurrency environment (USD, Euro or any other specified currency). Local banks access the payment system through their respective Central Banks. Any participating bank is, therefore, able to make payments to, and receive payments from, any other participating bank. The linkages through Central Banks avoid the complex payment chains that may sometimes occur in correspondent bank arrangements. The system operates through member countries Central Banks and their corresponding banking systems.

REPSS guarantees prompt payment for exports as well as other transfers. It further eliminates mistrust among traders as there is Central Bank involvement. REPSS currently transacts in seven international currencies including the USD, Euro, Japanese Yen, British Pound, Swiss Franc, Chinese Renminbi and the Indian Rupee.

# FREE MOVEMENT

## - COMESA Protocols on the Eventual Elimination of Visa Requirements and Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence

The Protocol relating to the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visa Requirements within COMESA (the Visa Protocol) was adopted and signed by the Authority of Heads of State and Government in 1984. The liberalization of the movement of persons is intended to facilitate the movement of business persons within COMESA. The protocol is premised on two key elements; a ninety-day visa free regime and access to visa on arrival. Countries like Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Swaziland, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are to a large extent implementing the Protocol; providing ninety-day visa access and access to visa on arrival to at least half of the COMESA Member States. Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles have totally waived visa requirements for all COMESA citizens. In 2013, Zambia being the seat of the COMESA Secretariat, waived visas and visa fees for all COMESA citizens on official business. The Visa Protocol recognizes that two or more Member States can maintain existing bilateral or multilateral arrangements (or enter into new ones) among themselves in respect of free movement of persons which provide for more favourable treatment for their nationals than are provided for in the protocol. These measures are encouraged, and this is already the case for the East African Community and various bilateral agreements.

The COMESA Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, the Right of Establishment and Residence was adopted in 2001 by the COMESA Authority of Heads and States and is in the process of being signed and ratified. The Free Movement Protocol was developed with the vision towards the operationalization of the COMESA Common Market and its objective is to remove all restrictions to the free movement of persons, labour, and services and provide for the right of establishment and right of residence.







# PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY

In order to attain the vision of becoming a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community, COMESA accords infrastructure its rightful role in regional integration programming. The development of adequate and efficient infrastructure is underlined in the COMESA Treaty and reinforced through various decisions of the Authority. COMESA infrastructure pillar evolves around three strategic areas; development of key priority physical infrastructure in transport network (road, rail, water and air), energy and ICT; policy and regulatory harmonization and facilitation.



## – Liberalization of the Skies

COMESA is working with the relevant authorities and the region's airlines on a programme to remove air traffic controls. The aim is to eventually remove all air traffic controls except for those concerned with safety. Increased competition within regional routes will reduce the cost of air travel and transport and foster greater regional trade. A detailed policy on air transport has been adopted by the COMESA Heads of State and Government. The policy takes into account the Yamoussoukro Declaration on Air Transport in Africa. The policy has been adopted in collaboration with SADC and EAC to cover the whole Eastern and Southern Africa region. Air Transport Competition Regulations have been developed jointly by the EAC, COMESA and SADC Ministers responsible for air transport. In 2014, COMESA Secretariat secured approximately US \$10 million from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to establish a single, seamless airspace in the sub-region. This is intended to reduce air transport costs and increase tourism, trade and regional social economic integration.





## – Cape to Cairo Electricity Corridor

COMESA is implementing the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya (ZTK) electricity interconnector which links the East African Power Pool (EAPP) and the South African Power Pool (SAPP). The ZTK seeks to connect power systems of the three countries by constructing a high-voltage power line from Zambia through Tanzania to Kenya spanning a distance of about 2,300 km at an estimated cost of USD 1.2 billion. It will realize the Cape to Cairo Electricity highway. It will also pave the way for the establishment of a regional energy market. The main objectives of the project are to promote electricity trade, enhanced security of power supply and faster regional integration. The ZTK is a Tripartite Priority project of COMESA, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) as well as the Programme for Infrastructure, Development in Africa/Africa Union Development Agency (PIDA/AUDA) and the Africa Power Vision. The ZTK links Zambia-Tanzania and Kenya (ZTK) power grids. To kickstart the project, 4.4 million Euros was provided under the 10th European Development Fund through an Implementation Agreement signed in 2011 between COMESA and the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Water Development of the Republic of Zambia.





## – COMESA Virtual Trade Facilitation System (CVTFS)

The CVTFS is an electronic trade facilitation initiative developed to monitor consignments along different transport corridors across the region. It integrates other COMESA instruments on one online platform, including The Yellow Card (third party motor vehicle insurance); Regional Customs Bond Guarantee System, (RCTG); Transit Data Transfer Module; Carrier License for road freight operators; Harmonized Axle Load, and (Gross Vehicle Mass Limits which includes the COMESA Certificate of Overload Control); and the Customs Declaration Document.

The CVTFS makes use of software that helps interpret all the information on a seal, fitted on the cargo, and transmits to a dashboard the container details, the vehicle details, and any other relevant details which appear on a centralized server which can be monitored from anywhere in real-time. The system is currently in use in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and D R Congo. Other Member states that have so far adopted the use of CVTFS include Ethiopia, Djibouti, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania.



# FINANCIAL & MONETARY SYSTEMS

COMESA has adopted a phased Monetary Co-operation Programme which aims at establishing a common monetary area for greater monetary stability and sustained economic development. The ultimate objective of the programme is to establish a monetary union. The COMESA Monetary Institute (CMI) undertakes all technical activities to enhance the Monetary Cooperation Programme.

## – The COMESA Fund

The COMESA Fund protocol was adopted in 2002 for co-operation, compensation and development of the bloc. The protocol includes two windows, a special facility referred to as the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF) and the COMESA Infrastructure Fund (CIF).

### COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF)

The CAF provides adjustment support to eligible Member States as they implement the COMESA regional integration programmes. Envisaged as a grant funded mechanism, the CAF programme has supported a total of 16 Member States between 2008 and 2018 for revenue loss and economic and social costs of adjustment.

### COMESA Infrastructure Fund (CIF)

The COMESA Infrastructure Fund (CIF) is one of the two of the COMESA Fund protocols that was adopted in 2002. The Fund is managed by the Trade and Development Bank (formerly PTA Bank).







# GENDER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Secretariat has a fully-fledged Gender and Social Affairs Division since 2009 to enhance its gender mainstreaming support to Member States and Secretariat, Advocacy on Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Social Development. The COMESA Gender Policy provides measures on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in policy and practice in all sectors.

## – Women Economic Empowerment Fund

The idea for the establishment of the COMESA Women Economic Empowerment Fund (WEEF) was conceived at the COMESA First Ladies Round Table Meeting in Djibouti in 2006. It was endorsed during the Heads of State and Government Summit in Kinshasa, DRC in February 2014. The WEEF initial base fund was US Dollar 73.43 million.





Madagascar signing the COMESA Social Charter

## – COMESA Social Charter

The COMESA Social Charter was endorsed by Heads of States and Government in Kinshasa in February 2014. The Charter contains fundamental Social Rights that ensures that the social dimension of regional development is not neglected in the work of COMESA for the realization of the full regional integration aimed at improved living standards of women, men, youth and children.



## – COMESA Youth Programme

The COMESA Youth Programme was adopted in 2015 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The goal of the Youth Programme is to empower young people in the COMESA region by promoting the creation of decent and productive work opportunities for youth in the private sector, and by enhancing youth's political participation, civic engagement and active involvement in the regional integration process.





# PEACE AND SECURITY

The COMESA Treaty recognizes under Article 163 on Scope of Cooperation, that peace and security are fundamental prerequisites to social and economic development and vital to the achievement of regional economic integration objectives of the Common Market. Subsequently, COMESA has established a three-tier structure composed of a Committee of Officials, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Heads of State and Government at the top to address issues of peace and security. This structure is complemented by the Committee of Elders, in consultation with other stakeholders in the region including the business community, civil society organizations and parliamentarians. COMESA addresses issues of peace and security in co-ordination with the African Union and other sub-regional organizations to avoid duplication of efforts. The focus areas are: Conflict prevention, Conflict Management, Post conflict reconstruction implemented in countries emerging from conflict; Security (Anti Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism legislation and programmes) and Support for Democracy and Governance through election observation programs. The "Trading for Peace programme", at the border areas of the Great Lakes region which is designed to use trade and investment as a mechanism for peace and stability is also implemented at the border areas.

# REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL & MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

## - The Tripartite Free Trade Area

The Tripartite is an inter-regional co-operation and integration arrangement amongst 27 countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The decision to establish the COMESA–EAC–SADC Tripartite was informed by the overlapping membership of the Member States to the three Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The aim of the Tripartite is to create a single market through the amalgamation of the COMESA and SADC Free Trade Areas and the EAC Customs Union. The Tripartite adopted a developmental approach and is anchored on three complementary pillars: market integration; industrial development and infrastructure development. During their Summit in 2008, the Heads of State of the three RECs decided that to establish a single Free Trade Area for the 27 countries. Negotiations for the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area were launched in 2011. A Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) Agreement was signed on 10 June 2015 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. By July 2019, 22 countries had signed the Agreement and five countries ratified the Agreement. Fourteen ratifications are required for the TFTA Agreement to enter into force and implementation of the Agreement. Overall, it exposes the three trading blocs to a combined market of over 700 million consumers in 27 countries with a collective GDP of over USD 1.4 trillion as at 2017 (COMESA, 2018).



Signing the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement,  
June 2015, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt



# CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMESA AUTHORITY

1. 2018 – Date H.E. President Andry Rajoelina - Madagascar
2. 2016 – 2018 H.E. President Hery Rajaonarimampianina - Madagascar
3. 2015 – 2016 H.E. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn - Ethiopia
4. 2014 – 2015 H.E. President Joseph Kabila Kabange - DR Congo
5. 2012 – 2014 H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni - Uganda
6. 2011 – 2012 H.E. President Prof. Bingu Wa Mutharika - Malawi
7. 2010 – 2011 His Majesty King Mswati III - Kingdom of Eswatini (Formerly Swaziland)
8. 2009 – 2010 H.E. President Robert Gabriel Mugabe - Zimbabwe
9. 2007 – 2009 H.E. President Mwai Kibaki - Kenya
10. 2006 – 2007 H.E. President Ismail Omar Guelleh - Djibouti
11. 2005 – 2006 H.E. President Paul Kagame - Rwanda
12. 2004 – 2005 H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni – Uganda
13. 2003 – 2004 H.E. President Omar Al Bashir - Sudan
14. 2002 - 2003 H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi - Ethiopia
15. 2001 – 2002 H.E. President Hosni Mubarak – Egypt
16. 2000 – 2001 H.E. President Sir Anerood Jugnauth – Mauritius
17. 1999 – 2000 H.E. President Daniel Arap Moi – Kenya
18. 1997 – 1999 H.E. President Dr. Frederick Chiluba – Zambia
19. 1994 – 1997 H.E. President Dr Bakili Muluzi - Malawi



A section of former Chairpersons of the Authority:  
(L-R) President Ismail Omar Guelleh, Pres. Omar Al Bashir, Pres. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Pres. Levy Mwanawasa, (Zambia),  
Pres. Daniel Arap Moi, Pres. Robert Mugabe, PM Meles Zenawi, Pres. Paul Kagame, Pres. Pierre Buyoya (Burundi)

# SECRETARIES GENERAL OF COMESA & THE PTA



**H.E. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe**  
2018 – to date



**H.E. Sindiso Ngwenya**  
2008 – 2018



**H.E. Erastus J. O. Mwencha**  
1998 – 2008



**H.E. Prof. Bingu Wa Mutharika**  
1991 – 1997



**H.E. Prof Bax Dale Nomvette**  
1984 – 1990



**H.E. Mr. Semyano Kiingi**  
1983 - 1984





# COMESA MEDIA AWARDS SCHEME

The COMESA Media Awards Scheme was launched at the 13th Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Governments in Zimbabwe in 2009. The objective of the Awards is to promote reporting of COMESA regional integration activities and recognize journalists whose works contribute to the integration agenda. The awards are open for published and broadcast works in the fields of print, radio, television, and online media. The competition is open to individual journalists and not media institutions or organizations. Over the past 10 years, over 20 journalists from a cross-section of Member States have been recognized and awarded during the Heads of State and Government Summits.

# SEYCHELLES: AN OTHER-WORLDLY EXPERIENCE!

By Mr. Glynn Burridge: Author/freelance copywriter/Seychelles Tourism Board Consultant

World-famous for the legendary beauty of its 115 islands, Seychelles is a country of contrasts and striking natural splendour, rolling from mist-clad granite peaks through virgin forests down to a sapphire ocean. Such was the sight that met the first intrepid travellers to its shores as early as the 8th century A.D.—and perhaps even before that—and by and large it is one that greets them still. Reassuringly, in a world that is changing rapidly, the Seychelles Islands have remained wonderfully untouched.

The secret of Seychelles appeal as a holiday destination and as an archipelago ranked among the most beautiful on the planet lies in these contrasts between the towering, lushly-vegetated granite islands and the shimmering, silver-sanded coral isles, sand cays and atolls of its remoter Outer Isles. However, perhaps Seychelles' greatest attribute of all is the amazing degree of diversity it displays across the broadest spectrum.

Since the earliest days of settlement in the mid-eighteenth century by a prophetic assortment of '15 whites, five Malabar Indians, seven Africans and a Negress', Seychelles has remained a melting pot of humanity with intertwining ethnic strains from the four corners of the planet. At different times in its history these shores have been visited and often settled by Arab seafarers, African slaves, Europeans, Indians, Chinese and other representatives from almost every country on earth.

The genuine, naturally evolving, multi-ethnic roots of Seychellois society is what, today, provides it with its homogeneity and with the striking degree of harmony it enjoys in an increasingly troubled world. It has also, over many years given rise to a great diversity of cuisine where the refined culinary arts of the old French kitchen have fused with the piquant flavours of the East in the form of many varieties of curry as well as popular Chinese rice dishes featuring stir-fried vegetables and noodles with steamed fish. Everywhere Seychelles is deeply impregnated by this same miscellany – so clearly evident in the culture, architecture, Seychellois Creole language (Kreol)

and music & dance, all of which give proof of the many and considerable influences which have been brought to bear from different parts of the world.

Since some 150 million years, when Seychelles first broke free from the giant landmass of Gondwana, the islands have been sanctuaries for some of the most remarkable species of flora & fauna on Earth. Once again, its diversity is such that, even with its limited landmass, Seychelles boasts two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the legendary Vallée de Mai, home of the mysterious Coco-de-Mer, and Aldabra, the world's largest raised coral atoll.

Safe inside the boundaries of their secure, island worlds, the spectacular assortment of endemic and indigenous species is difficult to grasp. Nowhere else on earth will you find the Jellyfish Tree, the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher, the world's smallest frog, heaviest land tortoise, the Indian Ocean's only flightless bird as well as some of the most spectacular seabird colonies in the world boasting 13 species and 17 subspecies that occur here and only here, making the islands an Alladin's cave for naturalists, ornithologists and eco-tourists.

Beneath the waves, it is much the same story where the exciting contrasts between the granite and coral reefs with their dizzying displays of reef fish, turtle, ray, shark and pelagics beckon to novice and experienced divers alike in places where as many as 800 different species have been spotted on a single dive!

The Seychelles Islands are unique time capsules and a great many have slumbered in splendid isolation since the dawn of time. Here, diversity, authenticity and purity are the watchwords of island worlds wondrously unchanged over many years whose many attributes have become the ingredients of the vacation of a lifetime and an experience of Nature that is nonpareil.



# The Seychelles islands...

where the fun never stops



Photo: Torsten Dickmann



The Seychelles Islands



@visitseychelles

[www.seychelles.travel](http://www.seychelles.travel)



the seychelles islands  
another world





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KNOWLEDGE PARTNER



Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat

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