

18 Countries have Launched the COMESA Seed Plan



Delegates attending the 3rd COMESA Seed Committee Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda

Eighteen COMESA Member countries have successfully launched the regional Seed Harmonisation Implementation Plan (COMSHIP). Five of them are implementing the programme supported by USAID. Three: Libya, Somalia and Tunisia are yet to launch.

Among the countries that have aligned their national seed laws and regulations with the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonization Regulations are: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The COMESA Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and

Southern Africa (ACTESA) came up with COMSHIP to expedite implementation of the harmonized regional seed regulations to enhance seed production, reliability, seed trade including increasing the competitiveness of the seed industry in the Southern and East African Region.

Addressing the delegates at the 3rd COMESA Seed Committee Meeting in Kigali on 6-7 November 2019, COMESA Seed Development Expert, Dr John Mukuka said domestication of the programme will enable farmers to access quality and improved seed which will lead to food security and poverty reduction.

“This region has the potential to

record USD\$5 billion in seed trade in the next five years compared to the current trade levels of USD\$1.4 billion,” Dr Mukuka he said.

Several challenges have however affected the domestication and implementation of the COMSHIP in the region. These include: slow rate in the utilization of the COMESA Seed Labels and Regional Certificates by seed companies and National Seed Authorities; lack of harmonized COMESA Harmonised Seed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); and mistrust and inefficiencies arising from lack of adequate and accurate information by key seed sector players has been a factor in slowing down implementation.

To address these challenges, awareness creation activities and information sharing has been conducted including training and publishing. Over 13,500 COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations have been printed and circulated, 270 delegates mostly females from 13 COMESA countries have been trained in the regional Seed programme and 3,000 information brochures distributed.

The meeting was also addressed by Deputy Director General at the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) Dr Charles Bucagu, who represented the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources Mr. Jean Claude Musabyimana.

In this statement, the PS stressed the need to improve seed trade in

the region and also congratulated COMESA as it marks 25 years anniversary since its transformation from the PTA in 1994. Celebrations to mark the anniversary are scheduled for 28 November 2019 in Lusaka, Zambia.

Regional Climate Change Resilience Framework Developed



Delegates at the Regional Resilience Framework Validation Meeting

COMESA countries are increasingly experiencing severe effects of climate change that have left in their wake, death and untold devastation in recent times. Mid this year, the region experienced cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, causing more than 1,000 deaths, infrastructure and property damage running into billions of dollars.

Now, COMESA has developed a Regional Resilience Framework to build the capacity of its members to withstand disasters occasioned by

adverse effects of climate change. Such disasters include flooding, landslides, droughts, cyclones, disease epidemics, heat waves among others.

Last week in Nairobi, Kenya, 5-6 November 2019, the draft Framework was reviewed and validated by delegates representing 17 of the 21 Member States. Subsequently, it will be presented to the COMESA Policy Organs for adoption.

Explaining the importance of the framework to the delegates, COMESA Climate Change advisor, Dr Mclay

Kanyangarara, said it will address the fragmented and haphazard approach to managing risks, shocks and stresses, which have proved to be ineffective as the magnitude of loss and damage continues to escalate.

He observed: "Resources allocated to much needed developmental projects and programmes are diverted to deal with the effects of the disasters thereby trapping many in a vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment."

In validating the framework, the delegates noted that the resilience



Framework will build the capacity of the Member States to reduce the risk of climate change disasters on the national economies.

In his statement, the African Union Commission (AUC) representative Mr. Gatkuoth Kai, said climate change disasters are not only increasing but also becoming more unpredictable.

“The effective tool of building resilience is to recognize that disasters will continue to occur but should not affect our lives hence the importance of developing and implementing the resilience framework,” Mr Kai said.

“The effective tool of building resilience is to recognize that disasters will continue to occur..”

-Mr. Gatkuoth Kai

Countries represented at the validation meeting included: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, D.R Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

During the two days, the delegates discussed the implementation

arrangements and financing opportunities for the regional resilience Framework interventions. They also recommended ways of domesticating the Framework provisions to strengthen national resilience building efforts. They also agreed on an implementation roadmap of the Framework.

In developing the Framework, COMESA cooperated with the AUC, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP Africa Region Office).

Burundi, Norway Reps Accredited to COMESA

Burundi and Norway have appointed their diplomatic representatives to COMESA. Ambassador Pascal Ruhomvyumworo is now the Permanent Representative of Burundi to COMESA while Ambassador Steinar Egil Hagen is the Special Representative of Norway to COMESA.

The two presented their letters of credence to the COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe on November 7, 2019 in Lusaka. She thanked the two countries for being partners in development for a long time.

With Norway, she cited potential areas of cooperation as trade facilitation programmes, small scale cross border trade initiative, the 50 Million African Women Speak Project, climate resilient society and sustainable development.

Other potential areas of cooperation is the COMESA Seed Harmonization Implementation Plan (COMSHIP) co-ordinated by ACTESA which is aimed at developing the COMESA Seed Industry currently at \$2 billion to increase to \$5 billion in the year 2025. Which is critical for food security and house-hold incomes for resource-poor farmers.



L-R: Amb. Steinar Egil Hagen, SG Chileshe Kapwepwe and Amb. Pascal Ruhomvyumworo

Regarding Burundi, COMESA has been supporting the country through programmes such as the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) in capacity building the National Bureau of Standards and the Burundi Revenue Authority among others.

Ambassador Ruhomvyumworo said Burundi recognizes the strength and benefits of being united and working together and committed to support the integration Agenda.

“My prayer is that during my term, I can

be instrumental in enhancing the good relationship between Burundi and other COMESA Member States and in the success of integration of Burundi in the COMESA community,” he said.

Ambassador Hagen indicated his country’s willingness to continue pursuing areas of cooperation with the COMESA Member States adding that a well-functioning business sector is a vital basis for job creation and economic growth which helps to reduce poverty and build increased state revenues.

COMESA, EAC in Joint Planning for Global Climate Change Conference



COMESA, EAC Joint Planning Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda

The COMESA and East African Community (EAC) Secretariats in partnership with the Government of Rwanda conducted a regional technical consultative workshop in Kigali last week (8-9 Nov 2019) as part of the preparations for the United Nations Climate Change Conference also known as (COP25).

The meeting comes ahead of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). Secretariats of the two Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are both beneficiaries of the European Union's ACP's Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) grant. Hence, they agreed to jointly organize a Pre-COP25 technical meeting to come up with position papers for submission to guide Africa in the negotiations during COP25 sessions.

The Pre-COP provide a platform to develop a regional policy position paper for EAC Partner States and COMESA Member States. The paper will be submitted to the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) to guide negotiations during the 25th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

sessions set for December 2019 in Madrid, Spain.

Both RECs have an observer status to the UNFCCC processes and plan to participate in the forthcoming COP25 sessions to showcase the milestones, achievements and lessons learnt from the implementation of their climate change programmes in the region.

"This consultative meeting is important because it will ensure that the interests of African countries are adequately and fairly reflected in the ongoing climate change negotiations," COMESA Climate Change Advisor Dr Mclay Kanyangarara said.

The regional consultative meeting brought together negotiators and policy makers including National Climate Change Focal Points for UNFCCC and Ministries responsible for EAC affairs and representatives from COMESA countries.

At the meeting, the importance of African countries engaging effectively in intergovernmental climate change negotiations, decision-making processes and eventual implementation of the

decisions taken was critical. The RECs have a critical role to play in supporting solutions to trans-boundary issues related to a changing climate.

During the meeting, issues of regional importance were identified with a clear road map of how to mainstream them into regional programmes and national implementation processes and opportunities for the RECs to deliver on the Paris Agreement.

Most of the EAC and COMESA Member States are fully engaged in the on-going discussions and negotiations to find a lasting and sustainable solution to the challenge of climate change. They have all ratified the Paris Agreement of 2015 and submitted their ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) given their circumstances.

The combined list of Member States that participated in the negotiations are: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eswatini, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Seychelles, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



AU, COMESA Hold Land Strategy Regional Validation Workshop



Participants to the AU validation workshop at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka

Land is an essential factor of production that is essential for Africa's development, but its governance continues to be a major concern among many African States. These concerns arise from the continuous demand for land and many competing land uses especially in areas that are endowed with minerals and other valuable natural resources.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is running an advocacy campaign to secure land tenure and improve land governance systems as prerequisites for poverty reduction, sustainable development and maintaining peace and stability on the continent.

It is for this reason, that the AUC in partnership with COMESA Secretariat conducted a regional validation workshop in Lusaka, 3 - 5 November 2019 to review and validate the draft African Union Commission land governance strategy (LGS).

The objectives of the workshop were to get the inputs of various stakeholders and secure their buy-in and ownership of the LGS. In addition, it was aimed

at creating widespread awareness on the importance of integrating land governance within the AUC initiatives and to ensure that the draft LGS serves as an authentic reference document for members of staff of the AUC and affiliated institutions.

Once validated, the Strategy will mainstream land governance within the

relevant AUC departments. It shall also guide the AUC's mandate in ensuring that Member States implement commitments in the AU agenda on land and that monitoring mechanisms are put in place to monitor Member States' compliance to the agenda on land.

Assistant Secretary in Charge of programmes Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget officially opened the meeting.



Committee on Statistical Matters meet to Review Strategy

Statistics experts from the COMESA region met in Lusaka 4 – 6 November 2019 to review of implementation of the 2017-2020 COMESA Statistics Strategy. The meeting reviewed progress on implementation of statistical programs to support the objectives of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MSTP).

Among the reports under review were: international trade statistics; price statistics and migration statistics. The meeting also considered the following reports: Strengthening Strategic Partnerships; Statistical Capacity Building; Strengthening Technologies and Systems as Enablers for the Statistical System. A progress report on the Status of Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that relate to the COMESA MTSP 2016-2020 was also presented for review.

Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of National Development Planning of the Government of Zambia, Chola Chabala officially opened the meeting, which was also addressed by COMESA Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget.



Delegates from Burundi, Eswatini, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in the review.

Meanwhile, a combined team of the Somalia Directorate of National Statistics and the Central Bank of Somalia undertook a mission to Secretariat to engage on the COMESA Statistics Strategy and to appraise Secretariat on the Somalian Statistical System. The engagement of these key stakeholders of the Somalian statistical system with COMESA Secretariat is an important component of the process

of the country's integration into the COMESA community. Mr. Ahmed Hassan Ismail, Director responsible for Statistical Production, Directorate of National Statistics and Mr. Mahdi Abdikarim, Director of Economic Research and Statistics, Central Bank of Somalia represented their respective institutions. The team met and had consultations with the COMESA Secretary General, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, Head of Divisions and Units and other professional at the Secretariat.

COMESA DIARY

	Meeting/Activity	Dates	Venue
1	COMESA Committee of Legal Affairs	12 – 14 Nov 2019	Lusaka, Zambia
2	40th Meeting of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee	13 – 15 Nov 2019	Lusaka
3	COMESA Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General	15 Nov 2019	Lusaka
4	COMESA Silver Jubilee Golf Tournament	22 Nov 2019	Lusaka
5	COMESA Silver Jubilee Football Tournament	23 Nov 2019	Lusaka
6	Retreat for COMESA Institutions	24 Nov 2019	Lusaka
7	40th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee	25 – 27 Nov 2019	Lusaka
8	COMESA 25 Years (Silver Jubilee) Celebrations	28 Nov 2019	Lusaka
9	40th Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers	29 Nov 2019	Lusaka

