

## COMESA University programme rolls-out this September



Experts from the academia that participated in the review of teaching modules workshops in Lusaka

Admission of the pioneer students of the COMESA Virtual University of Regional Integration is set to begin in September 2017. The students will be admitted for a Masters of Regional Integration (MRI) at the Kenyatta University of Kenya which is one of the 22 universities in COMESA that will provide the host institution of the programme.

The COMESA virtual university was mooted by the Council of Ministers. This was in recognition of the importance of capacity building for regional integration in Government, the private sector and academia by inculcating the dimension of regional integration in learning in higher institutions.

The idea was that with a good perspective on regional integration, the quality and expedition of the formulation and implementation of regional integration initiatives would be greatly improved.

The decision to launch the Masters programme was approved in October 2016 during the 19th Heads of State Summit held in Madagascar.

Last week 20 subject experts drawn from the academia met in Lusaka, Zambia for five days reviewing 29 learning modules that have been developed for the programme. The modules include 10 core units and 19 electives. The review workshop

was organized by COMESA with support from the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

Prof. Nelson Wawire of Kenyatta University informed the meeting that a syllabus that was developed earlier by the 22 universities was ready awaiting approval, by his University Senate. Kenyatta University was selected to host the virtual university owing to its already established digital learning platform. The other universities will launch the programme as soon as they are ready.

The COMESA Director of Trade and Custom Dr Francis Mangeni said the review of the modules was the last preparatory step before the commencement of the programme.

"This region will not be the same again as we shall now have a special cadre of professionals specially trained on regional integration to move forward the integration agenda," Dr Mangeni said.

He added that the MRI was a professional course designed for officials in government, private sector and the academia dealing with trade, integration and cooperation issues.

Speaking at the same forum the Manager, Operations, Eastern and Southern Africa Department

(ACBF) Dr. Roger Atindehou described the initiative as innovative and timely for the COMESA and the African continent "which the ACBF is proud to be involved in."

At the conclusion of the workshop, Friday 17 March 2017, Assistant Secretary General Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget said the Masters programmes will impart knowledge and inspire the youths to face the challenges of integration.

"Achieving a dream of creating the COMESA Virtual University will help solve some of the problems most regional economic groupings are currently facing."

He said regional integration calls for people to work together to achieve their desired goals in various aspects of life such as trade, peace and security.

He concluded: "working in isolation doesn't yield meaningful development."

### Collaborating Universities

1. Cairo University, Egypt
2. Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya,
3. Centre for Studies and Research of Djibouti,
4. College of Business and Economics, Eritrea,
5. Institut Supérieur de Gestion des Entreprises (ISGE) of Burundi,
6. International University of Seychelles,
7. Kenyatta University, Kenya,
8. Kyambogo University, Uganda,
9. Maasai Mara University, Kenya,
10. Makerere University, Uganda,
11. Open University of Mauritius,
12. University of Technology, Mauritius,
13. Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi,
14. University of Antananarivo, Madagascar,
15. University of Burundi,
16. University of Kinshasa ,
17. University of Malawi,
18. University of Mauritius,
19. University of Nairobi,
20. University of Swaziland ,
21. University of Zambia and
22. University of Zimbabwe.

# COMESA, FIATA sign MoU to improve trade logistics



Mr Basil Pieterse of FIATA (R) and Secretary General Sindiso Ngwenya signing the MoU in Lusaka

COMESA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) to improve the management of trade logistics in the region.

Under the MoU, the two organizations will optimize their respective strengths to facilitate trade and improve the supply chains and delivery and management of goods and services through more efficient, safer and sustainable logistics.

In a brief ceremony at the COMESA headquarters in Lusaka, Wednesday 15 March 2017, the Senior Vice President of FIATA Mr Basil Pieterse and Secretary

General Sindiso Ngwenya signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.

"The focus of this cooperation will be on work programs that will identify priorities and define actions for the joint implementation of projects and activities of common interest," Mr. Ngwenya said. He said this will be achieved by arranging necessary logistical and coordinating mechanisms and creating procedures for periodic review of the applicable implementation arrangements of projects.

The areas of collaboration stipulated in the MOU include; FIATA's support to the efforts of COMESA's

Free Trade Area implementation as well as the negotiations for the Continental Free Trade Area within the field of freight and logistics services. FIATA will provide input on key policy items through the African Association members.

Further, FIATA will assist in developing the Regional Logistics Harmonized Standards in particular the border crossing procedures in COMESA. The two organizations will engage in information sharing and promoting new joint initiatives to raise awareness to public and private stakeholders on issues related to trade logistics.

It was agreed that FIATA would make recommendations to COMESA on key investments pertaining to the improvement of the free flow of goods and services, development of infrastructure projects and promoting trade facilitation in specific COMESA countries

"The signing of the MoU is the right step in creating borderless economies needed to support a single market," Mr Pieterse said.

FIATA is a non-governmental organization representing the freight forwarding and logistics service providers' industry covering approximately 40,000 forwarding and logistics firms. It employs around eight to ten million people in over 150 countries.

## Mauritius to sign the tripartite protocol

Mauritius Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, has assured that his country will sign the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) protocol that brings together COMESA, Eastern Africa Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

He was speaking during the official opening of The Mauritius-COMESA National Business Dialogue on Friday 17 March 2017, in Port Louis. The dialogue was organized jointly by the COMESA Business Council (CBC) and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and

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Industry (MCCI) under the theme: "Exploring the COMESA Market - Bringing Business to the Table."

The Minister said his country believes that the establishment of the TFTA, which was approved by COMESA Heads of State in June 2015, as a "win-win" partnership. Hence his Ministry will study the details of the Agreement and related documents, in particular those concerning rules of origin, in preparation for the signing.

The Minister also said that Mauritius would also ask that the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) be a party to the tripartite protocol.

Director of Trade, Customs and Monetary Affairs at the COMESA Secretariat, Dr Francis Mangeni had earlier raised the issue on the need for Mauritius to sign the tripartite agreement.

“We sincerely hope that Mauritius will sign it as the country has been a leader in the preliminary negotiations leading to the development of this tripartite free trade agreement, both in terms of rules of origin, access to markets, the dispute settlement mechanism among others,” Dr. Mangeni said.

Minister Lutchmeenaraidoo reaffirmed his belief in regional economic integration, pointing out that Mauritius was supporting various initiatives taken by the continent’s political and economic bodies.

“Africa has become a must”, he said, referring to the actions taken by the Mauritian authorities and private sector organizations to establish win-win partnerships with other African countries.

President of the MCCI Mr. Azim Currimjee said his organization was keen to promote regional cooperation and to encourage the private sector in Mauritius to expand its business space. Mr Currimjee who is also the Vice Chair of the CBC said despite the growth in intra-COMESA trade (from USD 3 billion in 2000 to USD 20.9 billion in 2015) the level of trade is still low due to several factors including the existence of non-tariff barriers.

The dialogue forms part of a series of activities conducted by the CBC to sensitize members of the business community on a number of issues and developments taking place at regional level.

The objective of the forum was to increase awareness and to engage on the constraints in doing business within the COMESA region. This business dialogue also allowed business operators to explore avenues for national platforms of engagement between the public and private sectors to thereby facilitate trade and economic integration in the region. (With excerpts from LE MAURICIEN)

## Six COMESA states set to benefit from climate change funding

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Regional forum on Climate Change

A regional forum that aims at strengthening the relationship between the Ministries of Agriculture and the Green Climate Fund’s National Designated Authorities (GCF NDAs) for improved access to climate funding for projects in the agriculture sectors began in Zambia, Tuesday March 21, 2017

The forum will focus on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Resource mobilization. The NDCs are commitments that were made by all the countries that are party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce their emissions of Greenhouse gases which are the primary cause of climate change.

The two days forum was opened by Assistant Secretary General of COMESA Ambassador Kipyego Cheluget. It is expected to come up with concrete action plans for follow up activities on NDCs and GCF readiness to access climate finance in the six participating countries. These are Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The forum follows the pledge made by developed countries to support efforts by developing countries through an ambitious \$100 billion annual contribution to be managed by the Green Climate Fund.

The representatives from the GCF and other international Financing institutions will give guidance to the participants on how to prepare bankable proposals. It is anticipated that at the end of the forum the participants will have refined their proposals taking into account the discussions and advice given during the forum to be able to successfully submit the proposals.

In order to address adaptation and mitigation needs of the region and the continent as a whole, Ambassador Cheluget said, COMESA was cognizant

of the urgent need for access to adequate climate finance.

“Without adequate finance, our member States and our very continent, cannot afford to successfully adapt and mitigate climate change”, he said.

He urged the Member States to adopt best practices and lessons from the forum and share them with the remaining Member States so as to achieve regional impact on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

“With the presence of the International Financing Institutions such as AfDB, GCF and World Bank, it is my sincere hope that the participating countries will take this opportunity to explore areas of possible bilateral/multilateral partnership and requirements and modalities for accessing available climate finance”, Ambassador Cheluget said.

The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Dr. Joyce Miti, said her organization will adopt its first corporate strategy on Climate Change, which was developed through a consultative process with FAO’s Member Nations throughout 2016.

“FAO was accredited to the Green Climate Fund in 2016 as a grant-implementing entity for medium sized projects of up to \$ 250 million, and can also act as a delivery partner for GCF Readiness Funds”, she said.

She informed the meeting that FAO Director General would sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC to formalize the institutional partnership during the International Day of Forests on 20th March 2017 in Rome.

# Initial steps towards preparation of the 20th Summit

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The Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly H.E. Pascal Nyabenda (fifth from Left) meeting with COMESA team in Bujumbura led by the Acting Director of Human Resources and Administration Mrs Martha Elimu (4th left).

COMESA Secretariat has taken the first preparatory steps towards the hosting of the 20th Heads of State and Government Summit in Burundi in October this year.

A team of eight COMESA Secretariat officials led by the acting Director of Human Resources and Administration Mrs Martha Elimu was in Bujumbura from Friday 17 March 2017 to meet with government officials and assess the suitable venues for the Summit and other related logistics.

The team met with key government officials including the Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly H.E Pascal Nyabenda, the Chief of Protocol in the office of the President Ambassador Zephirin Manirakiza, the Director of Commerce at the Ministry of Trade Mr Sebastien Nzimana and representatives of the private sector.

The offer to host the COMESA Summit was made by His Excellency President Pierre Nkurunziza in September 2016 during a meeting with the Secretary General of COMESA Sindiso Ngwenya. In October 2016, at the 19th COMESA Summit in Madagascar, Burundi was elected Vice-Chair of COMESA Authority of the Heads of State, thus endorsing the country as the next host and

subsequent chair.

The Speaker reaffirmed his government's commitment to host, the COMESA Summit for the first time.

Ambassador Manirakiza said: "We are very happy that you are here to kick start this process of Burundi hosting the COMESA annual meetings and we assure you of our commitment and dedication to ensure that the meetings are held without any flaws."

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Head of COMESA delegation expressed satisfaction with Burundi's commitment to host the Summit in October this year.

"We are confident that your government is already engaged to ensure that a successful paperless Summit and Policy Organs meetings are held on the agreed dates," Mrs Elimu said.

Both teams visited potential venues for the Summit and discussed key issues pertinent in hosting the Summit such as meeting venues, accommodation, security, transport and the Host Agreement.

Madagascar is the current chair of COMESA and will hand over to Burundi during the 20th Summit.

The summit brings together Heads of States and Governments, Ministers and high level government officials, the private sector who also participate in the COMESA Business Forum, development partners, First Ladies, members of the diplomatic community and regional and international organizations among others. Burundi has been an active member of COMESA and joined the Free Trade Area in 2004.