

## COMESA signs agreement with ACTESA

COMESA and the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) on March 1, 2010 signed an agreement on the implementation of agricultural programmes in the region.

COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya and ACTESA CEO, Dr. Cris Muyunda signed the agreement at the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia, meant to map out regional initiatives in agriculture, trade and investment.

These include development of regional agricultural policies; promotion of investment in agriculture; promotion of trade in agro commodity products and development of production and marketing structures; development of the agricultural, livestock, pastoral and fisheries sectors and consultation with the private sector and civil society organisations on agricultural development matters especially agro commodities trade.

Speaking during the ceremony, Mr. Ngwenya said ACTESA is a practical agency meant to realise the provisions of the COMESA Treaty that had not yet been implemented.

"COMESA is happy that ACTESA is doing all the practical things we have not been able to do and it is the realistic vehicle for realizing the CAADP vision,"



he said.

Mr. Ngwenya said the COMESA region had great potential in staple crops and was happy that ACTESA was an entity that would focus on linking small scale farmers to markets. He also noted the potential benefits that biotechnology could bring to the region.

He further said that there would be a process of discussions to make ACTESA an agency serving the tripartite regional economic grouping comprising COMESA, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and East African Community.

Mr. Ngwenya thanked the partners and stakeholders that supported and continue to support ACTESA.

Dr. Muyunda said the focus of ACTESA would be on achieving results.

"Now our focus is on the ground. Currently farmers have low production levels, low participation in markets and low incomes," he said. "As an alliance we will be innovative and we will target results in agricultural outreach, trade increase and productivity increase."

Dr. Muyunda said ACTESA would practically implement and scale up successful models in market development, market expansion and food security enhancement.

# Swaziland signs CAADP Compact to reduce Hunger and Poverty

2



*Mr Stephen Karangizi signing the compact with Prime Minister Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini*

The Kingdom of Swaziland has signed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Compact becoming the fourth COMESA country to do so. The signing ceremony took place on 4th March 2010 at the Convention Center in Ezulwini Swaziland after the CAADP Roundtable meeting held on 3rd March. Several high profiled local and international dignitaries witnessed the signing ceremony.

COMESA Assistant Secretary General Mr Stephen Karangizi, World Food Programme Deputy Executive Director Ms Sheila Sisulu, African Union Commission Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture Dr Akinbamijo Yemi, UN Resident Co-ordinator in Swaziland Mr Timothy Bandora joined the Prime Minister Dr Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, Minister of Finance Majozi Sithole and Minister of Economic Planning and Development His Royal Highness Prince Hlangusemphi to sign the CAADP Compact. Other signatories to the Compact were representatives of the civil society, private sector, farmers' union and development partners.

CAADP was endorsed by the African Union Assembly in 2003 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was mandated to oversee its implementation. CAADP was established to mainly improve food and nutrition security and raise

incomes in Africa's largely agrarian economies. It is a 'made-in-Africa' solution to food security and poverty reduction.

At the Swaziland CAADP Compact signing, His Excellency the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Dr Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini said the fact that his Government had signed the compact re-affirms its commitment to developing the agriculture sector and sustainably reducing hunger in the Kingdom. He added that the goals of CAADP are in harmony with the National Development Strategy (NDS) which was crafted in 1997 to guide the strategic socio-economic development of the country over a 25-year period. The CAADP process will further enhance the implementation of the poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme in Swaziland.

In emphasizing the importance of the Compact, Prime Minister Dlamini added "It is also the right moment to give our assurance that this document will not gather dust on the shelves but will be used to put together viable plans, mobilize the necessary resources and monitor the progress in the Kingdom's agricultural development,"

"We are aware that the signing is not the end of the process but the beginning. It is at this point that the real work commences to finalize the CAADP Investment programme,"

The Swazi Premier reiterated that agriculture remains the backbone of most African economies and there is increasingly the need to diversify in crop production, develop agri-business and add value to primary produce. "And along with the need to achieve greater food security is the requirement to create jobs to improve the standard of human welfare," Prime Minister Dlamini said.

The Swaziland Compact highlights a number of priority investment areas, which key stakeholders in the Kingdom's agriculture development agenda have carefully selected, as having the capacity to bring about a marked growth in the agriculture sector, increase food and nutrition security and contribute to the overall national social and economic advancement.

COMESA Assistant Secretary General, Mr Stephen Karangizi, commended the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland for signing the CAADP compact which he described as a driver for agricultural growth and economic development.

"We are pleased to be part of this significant occasion which signifies the culmination of the longer process undertaken by the Government to develop the policies, strategies and investment options to significantly improve the agricultural performance and achieve the CAADP targets in the Kingdom," Mr Karangizi noted.

The Assistant Secretary General further assured the Government and stakeholders of COMESA's continued support in the post compact phase to ensure that the Kingdom maintains the momentum in translating the identified investment options into a concrete investment plan, with detailed and fully costed programmes. COMESA will also facilitate the mobilization of the necessary resources for effective implementation of the investment plan.

In addition, he revealed that several other COMESA countries are lined up to sign the CAADP Compact in the next few months. This is expected to fast track the implementation of CAADP in the region.

Mr Karangizi pledged COMESA Secretariat's continued allegiance to CAADP and its objective of alleviating poverty in the region through formulation of comprehensive and sound agricultural policies and strategies, which will lead to increased agricultural growth, food production as well as expansion of national and regional markets, including the development of infrastructure.

African Union Commission Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture Dr Akinbamijo Yemi noted that principles of CAADP were in line with the current AU Chairperson's (President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi) statement that Africa must be food secure and hunger free by 2015. He added that the AU will continue to work tirelessly to support efforts of reducing hunger and poverty in Africa through implementation of CAADP.

WFP Deputy Executive Director, Madam Sheila Sisulu, reaffirmed her organisations' commitment to fighting hunger not only in the COMESA region but on the entire African continent. She further said "as long as people were hungry, development would be very difficult to attain,".

Development Partners were represented by US Embassy Deputy Chief Ms Sarah Morrisson who urged African Governments to turn rhetoric into action and speedily implement what had been agreed in the CAADP compacts.

Other speakers at the signing ceremony included representatives of the Civil Society, Farmers' Union and the Private Sector. They all reiterated their willingness and commitment to work hand in hand with the Government and other partners to contribute to the achievement of the national goals and objectives as formulated in the CAADP compact document

## French Development Agency (AFD) explores cooperation with COMESA



Agence Française de Développement (AFD), a French bi-lateral development finance institution established in 1941 that works on behalf of the French government whose mission is to finance development according to France's Overseas Development Assistance policies, this week sent a delegation to COMESA to explore possible areas of cooperation. AFD has offices in more than 50 countries world wide. Within the COMESA region, AFD has offices in Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya and Madagascar.

The delegation was led by Mr Etienne Woiltellier, Director of the Angola Branch of AFD. It was received at COMESA by Dr Francis Mangeni, who was at that time the Officer in Charge of COMESA

Dr Mangeni briefed the delegation on the overall functioning of COMESA, COMESA programmes as well as the tripartite arrangements between COMESA-EAC and SADC.

During the meeting Mr Woiltellier revealed that, In 2007, AFD committed over €3.5 billion to more than 60 developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Mediterranean Basin, the Middle East, South America, and

the French Overseas Territories. In 2008, AFD committed €4.5 billions to financing projects in countries in which it intervenes, including € 1.5 billions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

AFD's activities are aimed at reducing poverty and inequalities, promoting sustainable economic growth, and protecting "Global Public Goods" of benefit to all humanity. Protecting Global Public Goods includes the fight against climate change and pandemics; the preservation of biodiversity; the promotion of social and environmental responsibility; as well as aid to countries weakened by strife, war and natural disasters.

In the view of the above, AFD expressed interest in cooperating with COMESA in different areas particularly in agriculture promotion. The institution was particularly interested in working with the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), it also expressed interest in supporting Agriculture research institutes, climate change programmes, natural resources and forestry. The two parties will agree on specific deliverables in the near future.



# Women in COMESA region commended for their hard work

4

The Director of Gender and Social Affairs at the COMESA Secretariat Mrs Emiliana Tembo has called for the public's commendation of women in the COMESA region from the different sectors of life for their hard work in managing to put food on the table in the majority of households and contributing to the socio-economic development of the region. She made this call ahead of the International Women's Day commemoration which takes place on 8th March 2010.

"Women in the region and beyond have been doing a lot for the survival of mankind. I commend the women for their contribution and we all should commend them. Women are hard working and they need to be encouraged to continue on this path because there can never be economic and social development if women are not involved," Mrs Tembo told e-comesa in an interview in Lusaka.

The Director however urged women to always strive for the best in whatever they are doing by not expecting things on silver platter and not easily giving up.

"Women should strive for the best in whatever they are doing and they should be resourceful by demanding services from

local government offices and Ministries of Trade and Gender in order to be linked up to lending institutions to help them in their business and other activities because it their right,"

She has appealed to member States to implement the COMESA Gender Policy Which was adopted by the COMESA Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2002.

Meanwhile, the Director of Gender has appealed to women not to tolerate any form of violence against them.

"Don't be silent about it. If there is violence in your homes, offices, communities please speak up. The tendency of women keeping quiet keeps them in a shell and it affects their growth and development. Let us take action now," Mrs Tembo added.

The Gender and Social Affairs Division at the COMESA Secretariat has been actively involved in various programmes of uplifting women's welfare in the region.

In the area of tourism, the Division is pushing for a multi sectorial HIV/AIDS programme to be launched this year. The programme will look at how best tourism can enhance the participation of women in the context of

regional integration. This can involve adding value to the handcrafts which women sell in most tourism towns. The programme will also map out ways of integrating HIV/AIDS sensitization into all COMESA programmes.

Studies have shown that the participation of women in trade is low in the region. Most women are involved in small scale trade compared to men who trade on a larger scale.

In 2009, Ministers of Trade and Gender from the COMESA region toured the Zambia-Zimbabwe border known as Chirundu and found that women struggle and face several challenges to trade compared to men.

## Upcoming events:

8-12 March African Development Bank Mid-Term Review Mission for EPRCP, Cresta Golf Hotel, Lusaka Zambia

9 March 2010 : COMESA Policy Framework For Food Security in Pastoral Areas. Pamodzi Hotel Lusaka Zambia

12th March 2010 Steering Committee of the Regional Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence, , Nairobi, Kenya

12-13 March 2010 COMESA Technical staff retreat to discuss mainstreaming gender and other crosscutting issues, Zambia

# Secretary General satisfied with the African Development Bank partnership

The Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank is currently undertaking an independent evaluation of the assistance given by the Bank to COMESA for public procurement reform in its 19 Member States, during the period 2001-2009. The Bank's assistance was channelled through two projects, viz. a) Public Procurement Reform Project 2001 (completed); and Enhancing Procurement Reforms and Capacity Project 2006 (ongoing). The evaluation aims to assess the results of the projects and the performance of the Bank and COMESA in designing and delivering the projects.

The three-man evaluation team comprising Mr. M. P. Madhusoodhanan (Madhu), Mr. Mohamed Tani, Mr. Girma Kumbi and supported further by Mr Ashie Mukungu (Senior Economist) and Mr. Natan Jere (Procurement Specialist) from the African Development Bank Country Office at Lusaka, shared the preliminary findings from the previous country visits (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda) prior to Zambia. The findings were presented to Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, Secretary General in the company of Mr. Gabriel Masuku, Legal Officer and the COMESA project team on public procurement reforms.

Mr. Madhu in his short brief to the Secretary General noted that while realisation of project outcomes may require a longer timeframe, the early indications are very positive. Notable progress is being made in public procurement reforms in the four countries in the areas of decentralisation of public procurement function, alignment of the legislative measures to the COMESA Public Procurement Directive adopted by the Member States in 2003, involvement of private sector and civil society in the legislative process, and the efforts towards



capacitating the public procurement entities and generating awareness in the private sector. The contribution of COMESA in these areas through the two projects has been well-received by various stakeholders.

The evaluation also found that at the operational level public procurement reform faces several challenges. As part of the reforms, institutions and systems have been created in most countries but challenges are noted in enforcement – prominently governance-related. While donor partners have contributed substantially in various ways to procurement reforms, better donor coordination would have helped in building the synergy required to address the challenges effectively. The evaluation noted that the procurement capacity of most of the government entities and the private sector is very inadequate in all the countries visited.

Mr Madhu further noted that the efforts towards public procurement reforms aimed at good governance and regional integration need to be addressed with a long term perspective through co-ordinated actions of all key

stakeholders – government, political parties, electorate, media, civil society organisations, private sector and donor partners – and, fine-tuned to the specific country contexts and challenges.

While responding to the evaluation's preliminary findings, the Secretary General pointed out the need for the national governments' greater ownership and commitment to reform, a single window effort to address the capacity challenges, exchange of experiences across the region, and greater resource mobilisation by COMESA for public procurement reforms. The Secretary General expressed his satisfaction on the partnership with the African Development Bank for the procurement reforms in COMESA and the Bank's assistance to other COMESA projects.

On way forward the Secretary General was advised that the Mid-Term Review of the current Project (EPRCP) was going to take place in the coming week and that the outputs from the current review process will help immensely in informing the strategy development process on procurement reforms in the region.

# CBC AND SWAZILAND INITIATE PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2010 COMESA BUSINESS FORUM AND REGIONAL TRADE FAIR

6

The next COMESA Business Forum and Regional Trade Fair are scheduled to take place in August 2010, at Manzini, Kingdom of Swaziland, in the margins of the COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit. The COMESA Business Forum (CBC) and the Trade Fair provide opportunities for the COMESA private sector to network and deliberate on regional trade related policy issues impacting their operations on the ground, and to showcase their products and services to a wider regional market. The Business Forum also presents occasion for high ranking Government Officials to interface with the private sector on matters of trade development and trade policy.

The recent CBC Board Meeting and the Private Sector Consultative Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya from 25-27 January 2010, among other key issues, discussed the need to own and facilitate the COMESA Business Forum and

the Regional Trade Fair. The two meetings were supported by the COMESA Secretariat and the International Trade Centre under PACT II. One of the recommendations from this consultative process was the need for the CBC to establish immediate contact with the Swaziland Ministry responsible for trade, in order to identify and link the CBC with a local private sector related host institution to enable preparations to begin as soon as possible.

During mid-February 2010, the CBC and the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce (FSE&CC), in partnership with the Swaziland Government, through the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade, officially launched preparations for the two private sector events.

This follows a mission to Swaziland by the CBC Coordinator, Dr. Nalishebo Meebelo, whose objective was to engage with the Ministry and to establish which local private sector

entity would be selected to lead the planning process on the ground, and on behalf of the regional business community. This collaboration was also meant to ensure that the necessary guidelines and support were provided to the Swaziland Organizing Committee from the onset.

The FSE&CC was selected to take leadership in organizing for the COMESA Business Forum and Trade Fair. They are expected to work closely with the National Organizing Committee. It is expected that the entire spectrum of the private sector in Swaziland will also be engaged in this process and that the regional business community, through the CBC, will also actively participate in the planning and execution of the two events.

8-12 March African Development Bank Mid-Term Review Mission for EPRCP, Cresta Golf Hotel, Lusaka Zambia