

Working Group on COMESA Rules of Origin agree on outstanding issues on CTH



Photo: SG with working group on CTH

A Meeting of the Working Group on Rules of Origin to consider pertinent issues affecting rules of origin including the paper prepared by Mauritius in an effort to finalizing outstanding work on the Change of Tariff Heading (CTH) rule and the detailed rules of origin was held in Lusaka Zambia on 5-6 April 2011, pursuant to the decision of the Council at its 28th meeting held in Mbabane, Swaziland.

The meeting that was officially opened by Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, the Secretary General of COMESA was well attended by experts from the following Member States: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, DRC, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia

and Zimbabwe.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Ngwenya welcomed the experts to Lusaka and to the meeting and spelled out the task ahead of them as that of moving decisively and finalizing the bracketed chapters of the CTH to enable the Business community consolidate gains of regional integration through flexibility in applying the COMESA Rules of origin. The Secretary General further urged the experts to have a broader view and take into account the current trends in rules of origin in other parts of the world that are now embracing simpler and more flexible rules for the benefit of the economies of the integrating members.

After two days of deliberations, the experts agreed on all the proposals

that were tabled before them and hence Change of Tariff Heading (CTH) rule that touched on four main economic categories of Agriculture and Agro-processing (concerning wheat and Meslin flour (Parts of Chapter 11), edible oils and margarine (Parts of Chapter 15), Sugar (Parts of Chapter 17) and food preparations (Parts of Chapter 20); Plastics;(Parts

of Chapter 39) Textiles (Parts of Chapters 51, 52 and 61) and Machinery and Equipment (Parts of Chapters 84 and 85). (There was however a reservation from Mauritius on some few Headings).

With this agreement what it means is that the business community now has full flexibility in the application of all the COMESA rules of origin and that exploitation of the CTH rule which is now complete, could encourage investments and value addition in the region.

Besides, pursuant to the decision of Council at its 27th meeting held in May 2007 Nairobi - Kenya, Member States could move to implement all the previously agreed chapters as well as those that were finalised in the 5-6 April meeting.

Trade Information Desks launched at Bunagana Uganda DR Congo borders

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on 31st March 2011 launched Two Trade Information Desks at the border of Bunagana, Southern Uganda, and Eastern DR Congo

The Launch was attended by high profile officials from respective central governments, both from Kampala, Uganda including High Commissioner Richard Kaboneri the Uganda High Commission to the Rwanda. Bunagana also serves as a trade route to small scale traders to and from Uganda and Northern Rwanda

In addition local authorities from both countries were in attendance. Amongst them were the high officials of Kisoro district and the representative of the Governor of North Kivu province.

The Director of Legal and Institutional Affairs Mr. Brian Chigawa represented the COMESA Secretary General. COMESA is using the launch to reiterate the importance of the Bunagana border for trade not only between the two countries but also in the region.

The main objective of the Trade Information Desks is to facilitate and support small scale traders with daily issues and the problems they are facing at the border.

COMESA has recognized that the small-scale cross-border traders are very important to trade in the region. Though the small traders move small quantities, over time, because the small traders are so many, they move huge volumes of trade a day.

Speaking during the launch of the facilities at the Ugandan side, COMESA Secretary General Sindiso Ngwenya through his representative Mr. Brian Chigawa, said that COMESA is determined to reach all areas of the region and to make a significant difference to the people through the installation of Trade Information Desks.

"As COMESA, our wish is not to end at the installation of the TIDs, but together with the people of the area, working with the two TID Managers of both sides, we wish to continue making improvements in the form of capacity building and thus enhanced facilitation of trade for the small-scale traders at this border", Ngwenya said.

Mr. Ngwenya said that Trade Information Desks are a very cardinal tool for bringing the informal trade into the ambit of formal trade. "The informal trade carried out by the small cross border traders is an important and recognized trade in COMESA, he further said.

He stressed the importance of Trade as been a catalyst for building peace in the region on whose populations



Photo launch of Bunagana ITD

are extremely interdependent.

And speaking at the same function the representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo Mr. Pascal Musungu who is also the director at the ministry of international and regional co-operation said he is happy to see COMESA open yet another Boarder Post in Congo especially in Bunagana as it has been conflict prone in the past.

"This very Border has had to be closed for some time because of the intense insecurities caused by the rebels and we therefore appreciate COMESA's efforts" He said.

Mr. Musungu added that no country can see development where there is no peace because peace is a strong footing for positive growth for all sorts of things: economical, developmental and even spiritual (personal growth).

Meanwhile Republic of Uganda representative Steve Kamukama who is a senior commercial officer at Ministry of Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Industry said that the Trade Information Desk will help curb the fears and bring better understanding of trade among small scale cross-border trade between the two nations.

"I wish to specifically address the small cross border traders regarding taxes – please go to the TID", Mr Kamukama said.

Information desks on both sides of the border supply the small traders with information required to conduct proper and efficient trade. Additionally, COMESA is assisting the traders to form cross-border associations, so that there are better organised.

Feedback

*From: Sebastien Ntahuga [mailto:sntahuga@yahoo.fr]
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2011 12:01 PM
To: e-COMESA Newsletter
Subject: Re: e-COMESA Newsletter, Issue No. 289*

Thank you for keeping me informed about the development of the whole sub region. A further and strengthened cooperation between EAC, COMESA and SADC is a great signal towards integration of the continent.

Ntahuga S

*From: RA Dobke GELO [mailto:dobke@gelo.org]
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2011 9:48 AM
To: e-COMESA Newsletter
Subject: Re: e-comesa Issue No. 288 - Special Edition on the 4th COMESA Investment Forum
I am very interested in your newsletter and read it for some years - since 2001!*

Please answer a question: is there anybody from Germany, a representative from federal or regional government from Germany or serious representative from german economy or banking ?

*Best regards
Ullrich Dobke*

*Reminder to the Media: COMESA Media Awards 2011
The media in the COMESA region is reminded that submissions to the COMESA media Awards for the year 2011 have started. Rules for participation are available on www.comesa.int or simply Google "COMESA Media Awards 2011"*

Remember: If you submit your article, you stand an opportunity to win.

Events

• 11-15 April 2011 Asmara, Eritrea Training of Public Procurement by the Enhancing Procurement Reform Capacity programme (EPRCP)

African Development Bank Supports Infrastructure data collection on the continent



Photo meeting of experts in statistics

Experts in statistics from within and outside Africa met in Lusaka from 6th to 8th April 2011 to review the African Infrastructure Statistics Handbook. The Handbook has been compiled with support from the Africa development Bank (AfDB) within the Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Programme. Regional organizations such as COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS and AFRISTAT are collaborating with the AfDB on this project.

The main objective of the workshop was to review the content and get individual and collective contributions on how the Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Programme can be improved in order for it to adequately address the needs of data users while at the same time facilitating data collection and analysis.

African Development Bank Zambia Country Representative Dr. Freddie Kwesiga opened the workshop and highlighted that contribution from the participants would enrich the Handbook and make it a key reference as a repository on infrastructure data. "I wish to reiterate the importance of credible and robust statistics in the overall planning and development

process but more so in the infrastructure area. This is mainly due to the very important role that infrastructure plays towards poverty reduction and overall economic development," Dr Kwesiga added. Infrastructure Development is one of the AfDB's core strategic pillars in its current Medium term Strategy (2008-2012). The specific infrastructure interventions that AfDB focuses on are the type that bring medium to long term development gains, in addition to significantly contribution towards poverty reduction. The areas include transports (roads, rail, and water ways), energy (generation and transmission), ICT, agriculture (irrigation, storage and value addition), and social (education/health) infrastructure.

Dr Kwesiga added that huge sums of public and private sector resources are being invested in infrastructure making it imperative that donors and member countries are enabled to scientifically measure and quantify the contribution of infrastructure investment towards overall economic development. The World Bank is also involved in this project of improving infrastructure data collection in Africa.

Women call for Partnership The Federation of National

Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM) has said mobilization of resources is crucial in achieving planned advocacy and avoiding duplication of efforts.

The Federation said this in Malawi's capital Lilongwe during the closure of a three day consultative forum on food security and women in business organized by FEMCOM in collaboration with the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA).

FEMCOM Acting Executive Director Mrs Katherine Ichoya asked ACTESA and FEMCOM to pull their resources together under the overall guidance of COMESA for the advancement for women.

She said a single coordinating agency in COMESA would coordinate information dissemination and encourage information sharing.

"Information sharing and dissemination in the COMESA region is very crucial to unlock the potential of women in business. For instance identifying markets for products within the region is a sustainable way of boosting food security and women in business," Ichoya said.

COMESA Director Gender and Social Affairs Mrs Emiliana Tembo, said gender mainstreaming and climate change initiatives approved by the council of Ministers is important in the region. The Forum attracted participants from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Mauritius among others.



In Pictures: the Permanent Representative to COMESA met at COMESA today, they were briefed on progress on COMESA integration as well as the preparation for the upcoming COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit.

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