



**Distr.
LIMITED**

JULY 2018

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

TWENTIETH SUMMIT OF THE COMESA AUTHORITY

Lusaka, Zambia
18-19 July 2018

**FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE TWENTIETH SUMMIT OF THE AUTHORITY OF
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

THEME: TOWARDS DIGITAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, 19 JULY 2018

(FM/BC)

THE TWENTIETH SUMMIT OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA was held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, in the Republic of Zambia on 18-19 July 2018, under the theme: Towards Digital Economic Integration.

ATTENDANCE

The summit was attended by the following Heads of State and Government, and Plenipotentiaries:

H.E Mr. HeryMartial Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar;

His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia,

H.E Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi;

H.E Mr. Hasabo Mohammed Abdelrahman, Vice President of the Republic of Sudan;

Rt. Hon. Dr Edouard Ngirente, Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwanda;

Hon. Senator Paul S. Dlamini, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of eSwatini;

H.E. Mr. Soeuf Mohamed El-Amine, Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Union of Comoros;

H.E Mr. Jean Lucien Bussa, Ministry of Commerce of the democratic Republic of Congo;

H.E Hassan Houmed Mohamed, State Minister of Trade and Tourism and

H.E. Moumin Ahmed Cheik, Minister of Justice of the Republic Djibouti;

Hon. Ababu Namwamba, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya;

HE Mr. Amr Nassar, Minister of Trade and industry of the Arab Republic of Egypt;

H.E Mohamed Taheir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Libya;

Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius;

Amb. Barry Faure, Secretary of State and Executive Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles;

Hon. Amelia Anne Kyambadde, Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of the Republic of Uganda;

Hon. Simbarashe S. Mumbengegwi, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Monitoring Implementation of Government Programs of the Republic of Zimbabwe;

Ambassador Beyene Resssom of the State of Eritrea;

H.E Mr. Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia; and

H.E. Mr Khemaies Jhnaoui, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia;

COMESA INSTITUTIONS

The following represented COMESA Institutions: Mr. Tadesse Admassu, President, Eastern and Southern Africa Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank); Mr. Mahmoud Mansoor Ali, Executive Secretary, COMESA Clearing House; Her Lordship Justice LombeChibesakunda, Judge President, COMESA Court of Justice; Mr. Cyprian Sakubu representing the Chief Executive Officer, African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI); Dr. AmanyAsfour, Chairperson, COMESA Business Council; Prof Mwinyihija, Chief Executive Officer of the Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI); Mr. George Lipimile, Director, COMESA Competition Commission; Mrs. Katherine N. Ichoya, Executive Director, Federation of Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM); Dr John Mukuka, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA); and Mr. Ibrahim Zeidy, Director, COMESA Monetary Institute;

PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following countries, development partners and organizations also attended the Summit:

European Union, African Development Bank (AfDB), New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), China, France, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the Vatican Holy See, Palestine, India, Japan/ JICA, Norway, Sierra Leone; as

well as the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the UN International Trade Centre (ITC), Afro Champions, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Arab Maghreb Union, the Food Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FARNPAN), and Gulf Cooperation Council;

OPENING OF THE SUMMIT

His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia, and the host, delivered a statement welcoming all Heads of State and Government, plenipotentiaries and all delegations to the Twentieth Summit of COMESA and to Zambia. He reiterated the need to adopt digital technologies to harness efficiencies and lower the cost of doing business. He also urged COMESA Member States to add value to raw materials and be ready to fully welcome the African Continental Free Trade Area. He pledged to provide full support to the regional integration agenda of COMESA by providing clear leadership to the process;

His Excellency Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, the President of the Republic of Malawi, underscored the existential importance of COMESA as an organization and assured the Summit of Malawi's unwavering commitment to implementing the COMESA integration programs. Pointing out the challenges the Republic of Malawi has experienced over the past few years, he assured the Summit that measures have been put in place to put the country on a solid recovery path;

The Rt. Hon. Dr Edouard Ngirente, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwanda, in his statement, welcomed the theme of the Summit, *Towards Digital Economic Integration*, and highlighted a number of digitization programs that the Government of Rwanda has put in place, including on e-Government. He underscored the unwavering commitment of the Republic of Rwanda to COMESA and its integration programs;

H.E Mr Hery Martial Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar and **Outgoing Chairperson of the COMESA Authority** gave a statement outlining the progress made during his tenure. He thanked the Republic of Zambia for the hospitality to all the Heads of State and Government and all delegations since their arrival in Lusaka. He expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Zambia for hosting the COMESA Headquarters in Lusaka and further providing a 10 hectare plot

next to the airport on which plot the new COMESA Headquarters would be constructed.

In his address, he applauded the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea for having the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship. He further appreciated the implementation of the South Sudan cease fire as a result of facilitative work done by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The out-going Chairperson emphasized the need to modernize and upgrade COMESA industries in order to employ more people and increase intra-COMESA trade. He also applauded the introduction of the COMESA Mobile Application for small scale cross-border traders which will reduce the cost of doing trade and the COMESA Electronic Certificate of Origin which is in the process of being implemented.

H.E Mr Hery Rajaonarimampianina, informed that Summit that during his tenure, COMESA deployed innovative technology applications through the usage of block chain technology by insurance companies that have started issuing the digital yellow card and Regional Customs Transit Bond Guarantee Scheme. This initiative will enable the purchase of yellow cards and bonds online and also speed up the settlement of filed insurance claims.

The outgoing Chairperson commended the Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute for implementing the national and regional design studios which through 3D printing, have enabled leather clusters to manufacture customized shoes that can be sold online within the region and to the rest of the world. He stressed that these innovations would form the basis for COMESA's effective participation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is being driven inter alia by 3D printing and artificial intelligence.

In his address, he also informed the meeting that the economy of the future requires that the COMESA region reviews and overhauls the educational system in order to provide an education and skills that will see an increasing number of people being self-employed in the provision of services.

On the matter of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement, he informed the Authority that only Egypt, Kenya and Uganda had ratified it yet it requires 14 ratifications for it to enter into force. He implored the Member

States to ratify the Tripartite Agreement so that it may be used as a basis for implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya were commended for having implemented the standard railway gauge which has provided a cheaper and more efficient transportation of goods and passengers. The outgoing chairperson expressed his anticipation for the completion of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) projects in the Northern and Central Corridors that link up the ports of Mombasa in Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania with Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. He expressed appreciation Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya for the electricity inter-connector project which will enable trade in power to take place between the Eastern Africa Power Pool and the Southern Africa Power Pool.

The outgoing Chairperson appreciated cooperating partners for their support to the regional integration programs and projects. He further welcomed the Republic of Tunisia and Federal Republic of Somalia into the COMESA family.

In conclusion, he thanked the Bureau of the Authority for the support it extended to his chairmanship during the tenure of his office and assured the incoming Bureau of his unwavering support.

VOTE OF THANKS

Honourable Simbarashe Mubengegwi tendered apologies on behalf of the President of Zimbabwe His Excellency Mr Emmerson Dambuzo Manangagwa, who was attending to state matters. Mr Mubengegwi noted the bomb blast that occurred in Bulawayo Zimbabwe which claimed the lives of two people and assured the Summit that Zimbabwe intended to have peaceful elections despite the unfortunate event. He heartily thanked the President, Government and People of Zambia for hosting COMESA and the Twentieth Summit of the Authority, recalling the tireless efforts of Zambia as a frontline State in the liberation struggles in Southern and Eastern Africa. He paid tribute to the Mr Sindiso Ngwenya, the outgoing Secretary General dedicated and selfless service to COMESA in various capacities for thirty four years.

AFTER THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE SUMMIT, THE AUTHORITY,

ELECTED by acclamation His Excellency President Hery Martial Rajaonarimampianina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, as Chairperson, and His Excellency President Arthur Peter Mutharika of the Republic of Malawi as Rapporteur of the Summit of the Authority;

RECOGNISED and **EXPRESSED** gratitude to His Excellency President Hery Marchel Rajaonarimampianina the President of the Republic of Madagascar for serving as Chairperson of COMESA for the past 18 months;

NOTED the Report of the Secretary General on *The State of Regional Integration in COMESA – the Past, the Present and the Road Ahead*;

CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED the Report of the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers;

CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED the Report of the Sixteenth Meeting of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs;

ON THE COMESA ANNUAL REPORT

LAUNCHED the COMESA Annual Report for 2016-2017;

ON COMESA MEMBERSHIP

ADOPTED the Agreement on Admission of the Republic of Tunisia to COMESA and **ADMITTED AND WELCOMED** the Republic of Tunisia as the Twentieth Member of COMESA;

NOTED WITH APPRECIATION the Statement of H.E. Mr Khemaies Jhnaoui, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, conveying gratitude, solidarity and commitment to COMESA as well as readiness to beneficially participate in COMESA and to join the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Arrangement;

ADOPTED the Agreement on admission of the Federal Republic of Somalia to COMESA and **ADMITTED AND WELCOMED** the Federal Republic of Somalia as the Twenty First Member of COMESA;

NOTED WITH APPRECIATION the Statement H.E Mr. Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia, conveying gratitude, solidarity and commitment to COMESA as well as readiness to beneficially participate in COMESA and to join the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Arrangement;

KEYNOTE SPEECH ON YOUTH AND COMESA

APPRECIATED the keynote speech by His Excellency Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, the President of the Republic of Malawi on *The Youth and COMESA* underscoring the critical role of the youth in sustainable social economic transformation and the need for job and wealth creation taking into account the nature of modern economies characterized by value chains and new technologies, **NOTED** the need for curriculum reforms and dedicated training to inculcate economic integration in the youth and institutional reforms to create the enabling environment, and **WELCOMED** the offer by the Republic of Malawi to host the first COMESA Ministerial Meeting on *The Youth and COMESA*;

APPRECIATED the various statements by Heads of State and Government and Plenipotentiaries, stressing the importance of COMESA as a prime organisation that has trail-blazed economic integration programs in Africa;

ON INTRA-AFRICA TRADE FAIR, INVESTMENT FORUM, AND BLUE ECONOMY

COMMENDED the Arab Republic of Egypt on the Intra-Africa Trade Fair to be held in Cairo, Egypt from 11 to 17 December, 2018 and the Third Africa Investment Forum to be held in Sharm-el-Sheikh from 8 to 9 December, 2018; and **WELCOMED** the invitation to COMESA Member States;

COMMENDED the Republic of Kenya on the Blue Economy Conference to share experiences on the Oceans, Rivers and other water bodies as an economic development space in line with the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and COMESA MTSP, planned for 26-28 November 2018 in Nairobi and **WELCOMED** the invitation to COMESA Member States;

ON LEGAL AND CORPRATE AFFAIRS

ENDORSED Council decision to review and amend Article 28 of the COMESA Treaty extending the jurisdiction of the COMESA Court of Justice to include Investor State Dispute Settlement;

COMMENDED the Republic of Seychelles on signing the COMESA Social Charter;

ADOPTED the paper submitted by Mauritius on UN Commission on International Trade Law Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS);

CONGRATULATED sixteen Member States of COMESA that have enacted national competition legislation aimed at enhancing competition and fair trade in the COMESA Market and **ENCOURAGED** the remaining Member States that have not yet enacted national competition legislation to do so;

NOTED that eSwatini is the new name of the former Kingdom of Swaziland;

ON THE COMESA FREE TRADE AREA,

NOTED the progress made in preparation of the instruments for the Digital Free Trade Area (DFTA) such as the electronic certificate of Origin and **ENCOURAGED** Member States that are ready to implement the instruments for the DFTA to do so on a pilot basis;

STRESSED the utmost importance of prioritization of programs that promote small scale cross-border trade, taking into account the aspects of gender empowerment and poverty eradication, **AND CALLED** for extension of these programs to cover both goods and services;

COMMENDED the Republic of Djibouti on its recently launched large Free Trade Zone;

ON THE APPLICATION OF SAFEGUARDS FOR THE KENYA SUGAR INDUSTRY

ENDORSED the decision of Council extending the sugar safeguard measure granted to Kenya, for another two years with effect from February 2019 when the current safeguard expires and **ESTABLISHED** a Subcommittee made up of the sugar exporting COMESA Member States, the Republic of Kenya and the Secretariat, to Monitor and Assess the implementation of the safeguard to ensure that it benefits COMESA Member States;

ON THE COMESA FUND

NOTED the support to Member States for improved implementation of regional programs through the COMESA Adjustment Facility funded by the European Union under the Regional Integration Support Mechanism;

ON MONETARY AFFAIRS

COMMENDED the Central Banks of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia for transacting on the COMESA Regional Payment and Settlement Systems (REPSS);

COMMENDED the Central Banks of Burundi, Djibouti, Sudan and Zimbabwe for their preparedness for live operations;

URGED Central Banks live on REPSS to conduct sensitisation workshops amongst their commercial banks and other stakeholders in order to promote the use/uptake of the system;

URGED Member States to have their Intra-COMESA trade settled through REPSS;

URGED Central Banks that have not yet met the prerequisites for joining REPSS to do so in earnest;

ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

WELCOMED the progress made on various infrastructure programmes on road and railway transport, water and maritime transport, civil aviation, energy, information and communication technology;

URGED COMESA Member States to mobilize resources for the implementation of priority regional infrastructure programmes;

WELCOMED progress made on the Victoria-Mediterranean Navigation Line programme and **URGED** COMESA footprint Member States to continue working together in solidarity and address all issues related to water management;

ON THE PROPOSED COMESA AIRSPACE AGENCY AND THE DRAFT REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING THE COMESA SEAMLESS UPPER AIR SPACE PROGRAM

ENDORSED the decision of the Council to refer the proposed **COMESA AIRSPACE AGENCY AND THE DRAFT REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING THE COMESA SEAMLESS UPPER AIR SPACE PROGRAM** for further technical consideration and evaluation by the Infrastructure Ministers through the relevant Technical Committee to address reservations raised by Egypt and supported by a number of Member States

ON GENDER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

ENDORSED Council decision on the need for COMESA to develop training and skills development programmes for the Youth as provided for in Chapter 25 of the COMESA Treaty in order to create jobs and wealth among the youth in COMESA Member States;

NOTED with appreciation the decision of Council on the adoption of the framework for comprehensive support of women and youth Cross Border Traders;

URGED COMESA Member States to submit their annual gender reports with comprehensive statistics to enable the COMESA Secretariat to compile a regional gender statistics bulletin;

ON THE COMESA-EAC-SADC TRIPARTITE ARRANGEMENT

NOTED with appreciation the report of the Seventh Meeting of the Tripartite Sectoral Ministerial Committee on Trade which was held on 18 June 2018, in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa which took decisions on critical issues to advance operationalization of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA);

COMMENDED the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda for ratifying the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Agreement(TFTA);

CALLED ON COMESA Member States that have not signed the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite (TFTA) to do so;

COMMENDED Libya upon its signing of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement at the Summit;

CALLED ON COMESA Member States that have not ratified the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement (TFTA) to do so for the agreement to enter into force;

ON APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

APPOINTED and **SWORE IN** Ms. Chileshe Kapwepwe(Republic of Zambia) as Secretary General of COMESA for a term of Five Years;

APPOINTED and **SWORE IN** Ambassador Dr. Kipyego Cheluget (Republic of Kenya) as Assistant Secretary General (Programmes) for a second term of five years;

APPOINTED and **SWORE IN** Mr. Dev Haman (Republic of Mauritius) as Assistant Secretary General (Administration and Finance) for a term of five years;

APPOINTED Mrs Martha Elimu (Republic of Uganda) as Director for Human Resources and Administration;

ON COMESA HEADQUARTERS

COMMENDED the Republic of Zambia for the ten-acre land granted for the development of the new COMESA Headquarters and the continued support for its construction;

EXPRESSED gratitude to the Republic of Zambia for providing the Sovereign Guarantee for the construction of the New COMESA Headquarters;

DIRECTED the Technical Committee on the Construction of the New COMESA Headquarters to consider the financing documents and oversee the implementation of the project;

DELEGATED the COMESA Council of Ministers to consider the report of the Technical Committee on the New Headquarters and take appropriate decisions in relation to the construction of the new headquarters;

FURTHER DIRECTED that the Technical Committee on the New Headquarters should be expanded to include all Member States; and

DIRECTED the Secretariat to provide Member States with all information;

ON PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY

ENSHRINED the pivotal role of African countries, and regional and international institutions in solving and mediating conflicts and **HIGHLIGHTED** the effectiveness and capacity of Africa to take the helm of its own destiny and to chart its future without unwarranted external interference;

WELCOMED the announcement of Egypt's hosting of the African Union Centre for Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development;

REITERATED the importance of peace and security and stability for creating an enabling environment for investment, economic development and a viable integration for the region;

RECOGNIZED the generally improved security situation in Burundi and reiterate its concern over the humanitarian situation as well as appeal to

the international community and to the humanitarian agencies to continue to aid the affected populations;

CALLED on all Comorian stakeholders to engage in an inclusive dialogue in order to build consensus on the proposed referendum on constitutional reforms;

REITERATED its solidarity with the Union of Comoros, **RE-AFFIRMED** the sovereignty of the Comoros on the Island of Mayotte and **URGED** the parties to seek a solution through dialogue;

COMMEND all Malagasy stakeholders for having given the privilege of facilitating the dialogue and allowed the appointment of Mr. Ntray Christian as Prime Minister on the basis of consensus, and for having put in place a Government in charge of organizing elections;

WELCOMED the declaration ending the war, which is named joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship between Eritrea and Ethiopia and **CONGRATULATED** President Isaias Afwerki and Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed for their leadership that has led to the normalization of relations between the two countries; as well as **URGED** COMESA Member States to fully support the process towards the full implementation of the six-point agreements between the two Countries and **ENCOURAGED** other countries that are in conflict to draw lessons from the example of the two countries in the peaceful resolution of conflicts by taking their own initiative;

REITERATED its call for the full support for the Government of National Accord and **CALLED** upon all relevant stakeholders in Libya, under the LPA to prioritize finding ways to work together towards building a unified country **STRONGLY CONDEMNED** attempts to illicitly export oil from Libya and **REITERATED** that the National Oil Corporation in Tripoli is the only authorized institution to deal with matters relating to the oil; and **CALLED** for immediate withdrawal of any armed activities in the oil fields and ports;

CONGRATULATED all Malagasy stakeholders for having opted for dialogue and for allowing the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister as well as the establishment of an inclusive Government to organize the upcoming elections;

CONGRATULATED President Hery Martial Rajaonarimampianina for his wisdom and spirit of consensus, which he demonstrated in restoring an environment of peace and mutual trust in Madagascar

APPRECIATED IGAD Heads of State and Government and all Regional and Pan African efforts to resolve the crisis in South Sudan; and **URGED** them to remain seized on the matter until lasting peace is attained in South Sudan;

WELCOMED AND COMMENDED the initiative of HE President Omar al-Bashir of the Republic of Sudan to bring together the government and armed opposition in the Republic of South Sudan in the face to face talks in the capital Khartoum and called upon all parties to the ongoing peace talks in Khartoum to work towards achieving lasting peace;

NOTED WITH APPRECIATION the improved situation in the Abyei Area and commended the efforts of President Omer al-Bashir of Sudan and President Salva Kirr of South Sudan as well as the efforts by the United Nations Interim Force for Abyei; and **ENCOURAGED** all parties to redouble their efforts towards resolving the final status of Abyei; **and CALLED** on the United States Government to remove the name of Sudan from its list of “States sponsoring terrorism”;

CONDEMNED in the strongest terms, the continued attacks by the negative forces in the Great Lakes region namely the Allied Democratic Forces, the FDLR, the Lord’s Resistance Army, the Sudan Liberation Movement (Abdulwahid Nour), Sudan Liberation Movement (Arku Minawi) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) Gipriel Ibrahim;

CONDEMNED terrorism in all its forms and **EXPRESSED SUPPORT** for all measures established to counter terrorism and violent extremism in Member States and especially the efforts of the National Governments and welcomed regional and international support to the National efforts exerted to uproot this plague; **and EXPRESSED its most sincere** condolences to the families of the victims of terrorist acts, and **AFFIRMED** its solidarity with the Governments of Egypt, Ethiopia Kenya, Libya, Somalia and Zimbabwe and their citizens;

WELCOMED the Mauritius Declaration on Maritime Security and noted the Communique of the 21st Session of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS);

NOTED with appreciation, the previous work undertaken with the support of COMESA under the MASE RISM with regards to maritime security; **AND FURTHER NOTED** the invitation by the Republic of Seychelles to the “Africa Ship-Owners Finance Forum” to be held in Seychelles in the first quarter of 2019;

APPOINTED and **SWORE IN** the following eminent citizens of COMESA to serve as Members of the **COMESA Committee of Elders** for a four-year term:

1. *Dr. Sabine Nkarutimana, Republic of Burundi;*
2. *Professor Judith Bahemuka, Republic of Kenya;*
3. *Bishop Mary Catherine Nkosi, Republic of Malawi;*
4. *Ambassador Patrice Eugene Cure; Republic of Mauritius;*
5. *Ambassador. Marie-Pierre Lloyd of the Republic of Seychelles;*
6. *Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Abdelghaffar; Republic of Sudan*

SWORE IN the three member of the **COMESA Committee of Elders** that were appointed during the Eighteenth Summit of the Authority, namely:

1. *Ambassador Ashraf Gamal Rashed of Egypt,*
2. *Madam Hope Kishande Kivengere of Uganda, and*
3. *Ambassador Simbi Veke Mubako of Zimbabwe;*

NOTED with satisfaction the progress made in the DRC with regard to the implementation of the Political Agreement of 31 December 2016, notably evidenced by the improvement of the pre-election political climate, the Government's commitment to finance the elections scheduled for 23 December 2018 and compliance with the electoral calendar as announced by the National Independent Electoral Commission on 5th November 2017;

INVITED all stakeholders in the DRC to work towards the successful completion of the current electoral process and to exercise maximum restraint and to seek non-violent means to resolve disputes;

WELCOMED the DRC Government's pacification efforts in the Kasai region in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks carried out by the KamwinaNsapu militia and **WELCOMED** the gradual return of internally and externally displaced persons;

WELCOMED efforts by COMESA to support the nationally driven democratization process in Member States through launching, relevant States agreed upon, pre-elections assessment missions as well as electoral observer missions and **NOTED** the appreciation by Zimbabwe authorities with respect to the pre-elections assessment mission undertaken in Zimbabwe by COMESA Committee of Elders, ahead of the July 30 2018 Elections in Zimbabwe; as well as confirming its deployment of an observer mission;

ON DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND ELECTIONS

COMMENDED the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo on the progress made on the electoral process **AND INVITED** all stakeholders to be involved in the process to achieve a successful ending of the process;

REITERATED the importance of democracy and good governance in the maintenance of peace, security and stability and **URGED** COMESA Member States continue to strengthen democratic processes, structures and institutions to in order to consolidate democracy and good governance of the region;

CONGRATULATED His Excellency President Paul Kagame on his re-election as President of the Republic of Rwanda;

CONGRATULATED His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta and His Excellency President William Ruto on their re-election as the President and Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya respectively for the second term;

NOTED the maturity exhibited by the democratic institutions in Kenya including the Supreme Court and the Judiciary generally and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission as well as the respect for the Rule of Law by the country's political leadership

CONGRATULATED His Excellency President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi for his re-election as President of the Arab Republic of Egypt;

CONGRATULATED His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa upon his assumption of the leadership of ZANU-PF and President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;

CONGRATULATED His Excellency Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed upon his appointment as leader of the ERPDF and Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;

COMMENDED the political actors as well as the people of Ethiopia and Zimbabwe for their political maturity and the peaceful manner through which the transition in leadership was done;

BID farewell to H. E. Hailemariam Desalegn upon his resignation as Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as well as **APPRECIATED** his contribution in the country and in the region;

BID farewell to H. E. Robert Gabriel Mugabe upon his resignation as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe as well as **APPRECIATED** his contribution in the country and in the region;

WELCOMED the declaration ending the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia and **CONGRATULATED** Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afwerki for their leadership that has led to the normalization of relations between the two countries; as well as **URGED** COMESA Member States to accompany the process towards the full implementation of the agreements between the two Countries and **ENCOURAGED** other countries that are in conflict to draw lessons from the example of the two countries in the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

ON COOPERATING PARTNERS,

EXPRESSED appreciation to Cooperating Partners of COMESA for continued solidarity and support to COMESA and **URGED** them to continue supporting COMESA;

COMMENDED the European Union's financial contribution to COMESA small scale, trade facilitation, private sector development and institutional strengthening programs under the Eleventh (11) European Development Fund (EDF);

ON COMESA INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

NOTED WITH APPRECIATION the contribution made by COMESA Institutions and Specialized Agencies in supporting the COMESA Integration Agenda;

NOTED WITH SATISFACTION the excellent performance of the Trade and Development Bank in recent years which has transformed and seen its assets exceed the USD 5 billion mark, and attain the coveted investment grade status similar to the ratings of the best rated economies in the region such as Mauritius and South Africa;

COMMENDED AND ENDORSED the various reforms, innovations and modernization measures undertaken by the leadership of the Bank and its governance structures that has enabled successive improvements in its risk profile, boosted confidence and attracted several new investors and funders;

CALLED UPON Member States, in particular their Sovereign and related institutions to honour their obligations to the Bank and ensure that the Bank's Charter is honoured so that greater volumes of funding can be mobilized for infrastructure, industry and private sector development

WELCOMED progress made by the Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) in the implementation of activities that are promoting the transformation of the leather sector from the production and export of raw hides to the production and export of value added products;

COMMENDED the ALLPI to continue to spearhead the development of the leather sector as a continental body whose focus is to improve wealth creation, employment and youth empowerment through the industrialization pillar;

ON PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

UNDERSCORED THE need to develop a Regional Model on the General Data Protection Regulation to support Member States in domestication and implementation of the Regulation

ENDORSED the application COMESA for observer status at the World Health Organization- FCTC Conference of Parties

URGED member states to put in place a policy framework for regional payment systems and digital payment services for SMEs and cross border traders including women, the disabled and youth, which will reduce the cost of doing business

URGED Member States to develop awareness programs on block chain technology to support performance of business processes as well as government services

URGED Member States to consider balanced international regulatory frameworks for duty free sales and ensure no unjustified restrictions on duty free sales are imposed, with respect to the WHO Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products and alcoholic beverages;

SWORE IN the following new Commissioners for the COMESA Competition Commission for a term of three years:

1. *Mr. Ali Hamadou Ali Kako (Republic of Djibouti)*
2. *Mrs. Thembelihle Precious Dube nee Dlamini (Kingdom of Eswatini)*
3. *Mr. Michael TekluBeyene (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia)*
4. *Hon. Danson BuyaMungatana (Republic of Kenya)*
5. *Mrs. Charlotte WeziMalonda (Republic of Malawi)*
6. *Mr. Francis Lebon (Republic of Seychelles)*
7. *Mr. Islam Tagelsir Ahmed Alhasan (Republic of Sudan)*
8. *Mr. Brian MuletamboLingela(Republic of Zambia)*
9. *Ms. Ellen Ruparanganda (Republic of Zimbabwe)*

ON APPRECIATION OF MR SINDISO NGWENYA, OUT-GOING SECRETARY GENERAL

THE AUTHORITY HIGHLY COMMENDED Mr Sindiso Ngwenya upon his sterling service to COMESA in various capacities since 1984 and as Secretary General for two terms;

His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia, presented Mr Ngwenya with a copper-plated Plaque for Outstanding Service to COMESA and a golf kit;

The President also presented gifts to Mrs Sibongile Ngwenya;

ON THE STATEMENT OF INCOMING SECRETARY GENERAL

THE AUTHORITY WELCOMED AND HIGHLY APPRECIATED the statement of the Incoming Secretary General, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, in which she highlighted her commitment to advancing the COMESA regional integration agenda, including the prioritization of structural transformation to foster overall economic development in the Member States, building on the progress made since the gallant efforts of the founding fathers. She underscored her commitment to supporting the continental integration programs under the African Union, and she paid tribute to the Outgoing Secretary General, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya for his outstanding service to COMESA;

ON THE 2017-18 COMESA MEDIA AWARDS

Awarded the 2017/18 COMESA Media Prizes to the following:

| | NAME | MEDIA ORGANIZATION | COUNTRY |
|----|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Ms. HerrshaLutchman | Bizweek | Mauritius |
| 2. | Mr. Peterson Tumwebaze | New Times | Rwanda |
| 3. | Ms. Mona Sewilam | ON Network | Egypt |
| 4. | Ms. Esther Mseteka | The Daily Mail | Zambia |
| 5. | Mr. Prosper Ndlovu | The Chronicle | Zimbabwe |
| 6. | Ms. Sarah Natoolo | Uganda Broadcasting Corporation | Uganda |

CLOSING OF THE SUMMIT

THE AUTHORITY

CONFIRMED ITS DECISIONS that the Republic of Sudan will host the Twenty-First Summit of the Authority;

WELCOMED the offer by the Arab Republic of Egypt to host the Twenty Second Summit of the COMESA Authority;

STRESSED the need for annually convening the summits of the Authority;

The Authority **ADOPTED** its Final Communiqué as read by Honourable Mrs Yvette Sylvia, the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers.

DONE at Lusaka, the Republic of Zambia, this Nineteenth day of July 2018, in the Arabic, English and French languages, and all texts being equally authentic.

END