

COMESA Heads of State and Government among the most visible Africans at COP 18



The ongoing UN climate conference began its high-level talks on Tuesday, 4th December 2012, and COMESA heads of state and government were in the majority that addressed the opening session. Swaziland Prime minister DR Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini (in picture) addressed the conference on behalf of the African group. Swaziland is the current Chair of the Africa group of negotiators. COMESA has over the year supported Swaziland participate in all post COP 10 preparatory meetings. COMESA has also supported about 20 negotiators to the 18th UN Conference of Parties (COP 18). Other COMESA Heads of State and government who are addressed the opening ceremony were: Djibouti president Ismail Omar Gelleh, Ethiopia Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn and Comoros Vice President Nouridine Bourhane. The only African head of State to address the opening session out of the COMESA region was Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba.

Heads of states and governments and ministerial delegates from over 190 countries are participating in the second phase of talks which runs until Friday. Speaking on behalf

of the Africa Group, the Swazi premier, without naming names, highlighted the efforts by certain quarter to “re-interpret” the concessions that had already been made in Durban, a possible reference to the emphasis of some negotiators, such as those from the United States, to place different meanings to the previously understood terms “equity”, “common but differentiated responsibilities” and “applicable to all Parties”. He called upon the conference not to backslide on earlier commitments.

While the COP in Durban recognizes the need to ensure aggregate emissions of greenhouse gases by parties included in Annex 1 by between 25 to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, this was not reflected in the pledges made by the same Parties, said Swaziland. Referring to declarations by some Annex 1 Parties for an eight-year second commitment period, Swaziland said it has been the position of the African Group that “significantly increased levels of ambition from Annex 1 countries over the period to 2020 is vital to save our continent from serious impacts due to climate change.” “The Africa group cannot consider

locking such low levels of ambition in for such a long commitment period, which will result in disastrous consequences, especially on Africans, LDCs and small island states.” He emphasized. Annex 1 Parties include the industrialized countries that were members of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1992, plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties), including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States.

The Comoro vice president warned that for the small island countries climate change, particularly the rise of sea level ; threatened to wipe them off the world map. “We are in a situation where if nothing is seriously done citizens of the small island countries will have to literally migrate by the end of this century since they will no more be habitable”.

The Djibouti president called upon the delegates to work together and not allow old divisions that have characterized past negotiations to “divide us” he added that Djibouti with only 150mm of rain per year, was working hard to reduce its emission despite the already negligible level. The Ethiopian Prime minister reminded the gathering the role played by his predecessor Minister Meles Zenawi in advancing Africa position since Cop 15 that took place in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009.

The Gabonese president summarized the task in a simple sentence “the fight against climate change is neither a choice nor an option. Unless we all engage there is no hope for success.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,

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speaking at the opening ceremony, urged participants to “sustain the momentum for change so painstakingly built in Bali, Poznan, Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban”.

Pointing to water stress, land degradation, melting icecaps, Ban said “we are in a race against time to stay below the agreed threshold of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels that will avoid the worst impacts of Climate Change

Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani attended the opening ceremony and highlighted the importance his country attaches to averting climate change and protecting the environment.

The emir also pledged Qatar’s contribution to green technologies which can help strike an optimum equilibrium between the need for energy and emission reduction.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, reminded the delegates that “the eyes of the world” and “the urgency of the science” are upon them, encouraging them to improve long-term global adaptation and mitigation responses and chart the course of future efforts.

In the high-level segment, the delegates were expected to discuss the two thorny issues left unsolved at the lower level of talks -- the extension of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the implementation of developed countries’ pledged finance support.

Talks on the KP track last week divided on the details of the accord’s second commitment period, including its length and strength as well as the carry-over unused carbon permits to the extension.

The negotiators also disagreed on whether to allow countries that plan to retreat from KP to continue using its market mechanism to meet their national emission cut targets. On the finance support front, the developing countries demand transparency on the rich nations’ contribution to the Fast Start program, whose target, 30 billion U.S. dollars, the donors claimed to have exceeded.

Also, more specific plans need to be set out for the long-term Green Climate Fund, whose aim is to ramp up annual provisions by 2020 to \$100 billion but now remains an empty shell.

Farmers in Uganda call for support from COMESA



As part of the COMESA value chain development programme, the out grower farmers in the Kapeeka area in Nakaseke in Uganda have called on the COMESA secretariat to provide funding for the purchase of drying facilities to enable them contribute effectively to the value chain in the agriculture sector in order to increase their yields.

The Kapeeka Out Growers farmers associations who spoke through Great Lakes Agriculture Development limited - GLAD director general Bent Ronsen, when a team from the COMESA Secretariat and the AKiba International Limited officials and consultants visited the farming block on 6th December 2012, said there has been so much wastage in the yields in the past due to lack of technologies that can help solve the problem. AKiba has fifteen commodity value chains which are being promoted in the area as well as other parts of the country and are yet to be rolled out to the entire region.

Mr Ronsen said the Kapeeka area produces maize and other crops all year round since the rainfall is continuous in the area. This makes it difficult for them to dry the produce effectively hence affecting the quality and quantity of the yields especially for the small scale farmers. He said that it becomes

very problematic for the out growers as well as him as a commercial farmer, to dry farm produce especially maize as they normally use sun and wind drying methods. He however called on COMESA to assist the farmers in order to implement and enhance the Value chain by providing financial support to purchase a drying machine, which will result in further job creation in the area. “Currently we have about 70 workers at this farm and as you may know, the out growers also provide some employment to various people who help out at the farms but we would like to increase the number of people working on our farms especially if we completely mechanize our farms” Ronsen said. He said; “The cost of the equipment we want for 2000 metric tonnes for the drying alone, costs over USD 700 000.”

Mr Ronsen said once the machine is in the farmers will ensure that value chain implementation in Kapeeka area will be enhanced which will result to improved livelihoods of the member in the area and the rest of the country as a whole. “We are really looking to COMESA to help us as this is the only way we shall produce maize of high quality that will meet international standards. He said there is need to create value through extension services to the small scale farmers for better yields.

COMESA talks to Member States on CVTFS/CEMES



The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa COMESA is conducting sensitization workshops with the stakeholders in the various COMESA Member States to inform and educate them on the COMESA Virtual Trade Facilitation system and the COMESA Electronic Market Exchange System.

The workshop held in Kenya had participants drawn from the Kenya Transporters association, African Truckers Online, Kenya International Freight and warehousing Association – KIFWA, Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Association –FEAFFA and other private sector organizations from Nairobi and Mombasa. The project is aimed at coordinating trade activities in terms of information exchange, cargo tracking and monitoring movements of goods in order to insure trade efficiency and ultimately promote competitiveness and consolidate regional integration.

The CVTFS will support related stakeholders in the countries to be more efficient by introducing a coordinated programme of action featuring mutual cooperation and key investments in regional transport infrastructure and trade facilitation.

Speaking when he officially opened the

sensitization workshop at Mombasa Beach Hotel, in Kenya on 4th December 2012, COMESA Secretary-General Sindiso Ngwenya said the implementation of the Systems will help the region to leap frog technologically by adopting the CVTFS and the CEMES which when fully implemented will substantially reduce transaction costs (the cost of doing business) and make the individual economies competitive.

The Secretary-General said the first phase of the programme will benefit Government agencies because the implementation of the CVTS will bring about transparency and good governance in the monitoring and management of transit trade and in the means of transport, in that the CVTS provides visibility of both the cargo and truck in real time.

He further said the second phase will see the roll out of the functionalities which are under development like basic fleet management , which will include but not limited to speeding, dangerous driving, designation by truck owners and operators of lay overs for drivers, Over load Control, installation of navigation systems to enhance road safety, control of fuel consumption ,International Standard Organization(ISO) Certification

standard for night driving and a system that can report to the truck operators/ owners of GSM jamming.

Ngwenya said time is up for businessmen and women to do business that is not competitive as this contributes to the depletion of the living standards of the people in the COMESA region.

Ngwenya also show-cased the COMESA Transit Plate that will be stuck on every truck moving under the COMESA Virtual Trade facilitation System along the corridors.

“This Transit plate will be an identity for all the COMESA Carrier trucks so that when you reach the boarder, you don’t have to have any problems with customs provided that you have all the correct documentations”, He said.

The Secretary-General said that 2013 is a year of implementation saying there has been too much paper work and talk in the past and it’s now time to implement the proposals that are on paper.

He said that most of the project implementation will done through the Micro, Small and medium Scale entrepreneurs (MSMEs) because they are the back born of the economic development in the region accounting for 60 percent of GDP.

“Dear participants, with the advent of new technologies, there is no need for us to be using old systems that will make doing business expensive, therefore these COMESA initiated systems are intended to firstly make you goods and vehicles safe from point of origin up to destination”, Ngwenya said.

He added; “As for the Electronic Market Exchange system, it will bring all the stakeholders registered with COMESA on



the one platform that will allow you to see who does what, where, when, and how.”

Ngwenya said the Electronic Market Exchange System is an online system that will

provide detailed information on the goods available, where to find them and the costing related to the good and services.

The participants were also given a real time presentation of the CVTFS by the project consultant who showed the architecture of the system which has the following components i.e., Data exchange module which integrates with the revenue collection bodies, the second one was the Risk Management system, the third being the Transit bond and finally the tracking system.

The next workshop will be held in Kampala, Uganda.

COMESA to Increase GDP to 50 Billion US Dollars by 2015

COMESA Secretary General Sindiso Ngwenya has told the various stakeholders in the Transportation industry in Uganda that COMESA intends to increase the Gross Domestic Product from the current US\$18 in 2011 to US\$50 Billion by the year 2015 provided the stakeholders are ready to embrace the new technologies and work extra harder.

“We need to work very hard because I made a promise at the just ended COMESA heads of states and summit here in Kampala, at Munyonyo, to the heads of states and government, that we need to increase the Gross Domestic product of the region from the 18 billion US dollars in 2011 to 50 billion US dollars by the year 2015,” Ngwenya said.

He added; “we are only going to achieve this if we work hard and embrace the new technologies currently in place. We also need to be ready to work 24 hours as we expect cargo to move without stopping and at the borders, we will need to operate without stopping.”

The Secretary-General said that there is need for the transporters to employ two

drivers who should get certified to drive cargo in the night without stopping.

“Why should you pack your truck in the evening because you don’t have night drivers? You need to have two drivers like it is in the air transport where there are two pilots and these drivers should be certified to drive in the evening, and this is the only way we shall meet the target,” Ngwenya echoed.

With the ever-rising trade amongst and beyond the COMESA region the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa COMESA Secretariat, has realized the need for reducing the cost of doing business in various ways.

One of the way in which the region will gain in the ever-growing trade is by reducing the transportation costs of goods from one point to the final destination by cutting down on unnecessary costs by using new technologies that cost less.

In this vain, COMESA has continued to sensitize its’ Member States on the use of the new projects i.e., the Comesa Trade Virtual Trade facilitation system

and the COMESA Electronic marketing system which are aimed at reducing the cost of doing business.

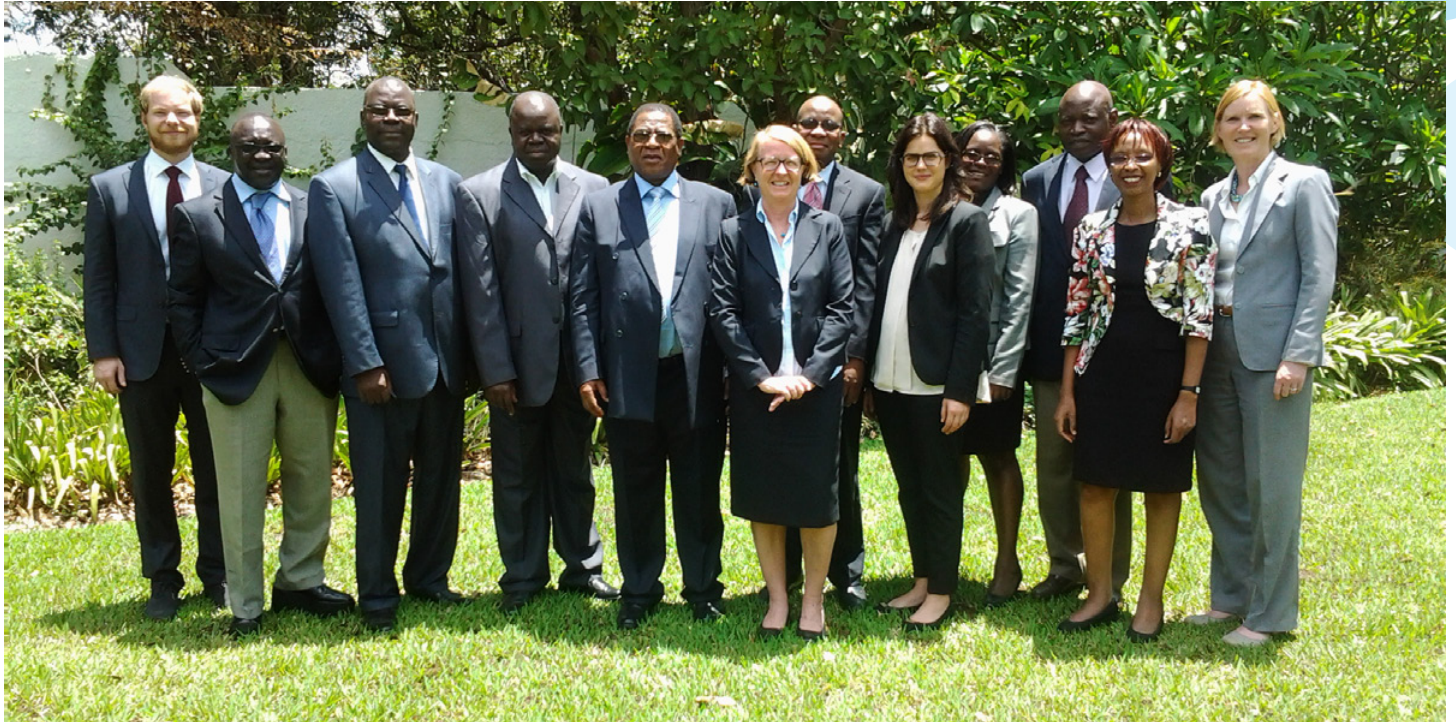
The second sensitization workshop was conducted in Kampala, Uganda at the Hotel Africana, attended by the Uganda Revenue authority, the Uganda Transportation Association, Insurance Companies and many other stakeholders.

He told the participants that the pilot project will run for three months after which recommendations will be made as to whether the project can work or not.

Ngwenya was however quick to urge the Customs authority to ensure that they examine each truck so that no illegal compartments may be used to carry smuggled goods.

He said that there is also need to ensure that the truckers or transporters carry with them approved customs declaration documents from the origin through the borders until the point of destination.

The Uganda Transporter have been given 50 units for piloting the project in the Kampala and other parts of the country.



COMESA Secretary-General Sindiso Ngwenya called up on the Swedish Government to consider joining the PTA Bank.

The secretary-General extended the invitation during consultations that were held at the Residence of the Ambassador of Sweden to Zambia and Permanent Representative to COMESA, H. E. Lena Nordstrom.

Mr. Ngwenya highlighted COMESA's goals and priorities and particularly focused on the key Institutions of COMESA that support integration including the PTA Bank, the Africa Trade and Insurance Agency (ATI), ZEP-RE, the Clearing House.

He said the Tripartite FTA, has scored many successes towards the attainment of the Customs Union and the structural and systemic challenges that relate to regional integration.

He particularly emphasized on the

need for conscious and deliberate efforts to support inward productive and marketing structures that promote value addition and link production to manufacturing.

Ngwenya however called on sectoral dialogue at political, technical and private sector level, for effective programme design that responded to the challenges of the region.

The consultations, which were held at the invitation of the Ambassador brought together officials from the Swedish Government, the Swedish Embassy in Zambia and the Embassy in Kenya and COMESA Secretariat which was represented by officials from Trade, IPPSD, Legal and COMAid Divisions/Unit

And speaking when she welcomed the COMESA delegation, the Swedish Ambassador, H. E. Lena Nordstrom commended COMESA on its efforts and particularly noted its achievements in peace

and integration, which she said is impressive.

Ambassador Nordstrom was particularly emphatic about the role of trade and economic development as a catalyst of peace and security, which she elaborated by using the example of European Union.

She expressed desire to explore further areas of cooperation with COMESA, that would be additional to Sweden's contribution to COMESA through the EU.

The meeting identified several broad areas of collaboration that covered economic integration and peace and security. The meeting also agreed to build on the successful discussions to define areas of cooperation for the coming years and have regular dialogue that would further consolidate the relationship between Sweden and COMESA.

Selected Secretariat Photo Focus_ Part 1

