

UGA 63

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
SUBREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (UNECA/SRDC/SA)**

**BACK TO OFFICE REPORT**

<b>Staff Member:</b>	<b>Victor T. Kachoka, Economic Affairs Officer</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>(a) To participate at the Second COMESA Meeting of the Committee on Agricultural Cooperation</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Lusaka, Zambia</b>
<b>Dates:</b>	<b>14 – 16 June, 2000</b>
<b>Programme Element:</b>	<b>Technical Cooperation</b>

## **I INTRODUCTION**

This report falls under Operational Activities within the context of the Programme of Work and Priorities of the ECA/SRDC-SA for the 2000-2001 Biennium. It is consequential to my participation at the Second COMESA Meeting of the Committee on Agricultural Cooperation held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, in Lusaka from 14 to 16 June, 2000.

## **II OBJECTIVE**

The objective for my participation at the Meeting was two-fold. First to represent the Centre on invitation by COMESA Secretariat. Second, to join COMESA Secretariat at Servicing the Meeting within the context of on going cooperation between ECA and COMESA.

## **III CONTENT OF THE MEETING**

The Meeting, which was attended by eleven Member States of COMESA, was officially opened by Honorable S. Desai, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Apart from ECA, some eight international and intergovernmental organizations, as well as donor institutions attended the Meeting.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Desai reminded delegates about the objectives of the Meeting and emphasised the importance of Agriculture in the COMESA Region. The Minister's statement was preceded by that of the COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, who gave an overview of the performance of the Agricultural sector in the COMESA Region. The Malawi High Commissioner to Zambia, His Excellency Mr. G.P. Bandawe, gave a vote of thanks.

The substantive agenda of the meeting consisted of 15 reports. Two of the Reports namely the "Draft COMESA Agricultural Strategy", and the "Challenges and Opportunities of the COMESA Free Trade Area: An Agenda for Sustainable Agricultural Development" emanated from major studies which were undertaken by consultants. The full list of the reports, the outcome of the Committee's deliberations, and the list of delegates together with their contact telephone and fax numbers as well as e-mail addresses are included in the Report of the Meeting.

## **IV CONTRIBUTIONS BY ECA/SRDC-SA AT THE MEETING**

The SRDC's contributions at the meeting can be categorized in several ways:

### **a) Substantive Servicing**

In addition to working hand in hand with COMESA Secretariat in Servicing the Meeting, I was also requested to facilitate the deliberations of the Sub-committee that was appointed to revise the draft Agricultural

Strategy. As a facilitator, I ensured that meetings were convened on time, compiled the report of the sub-committee's deliberations which was later presented to the adoption session of the main Committee by the Chairperson who was the leader of the Ugandan delegation (see page 5 and page 1 of the Report and Annex 1 respectively).

b) Substantive Contribution

During deliberations on selected agenda items, I made some interventions, some of which helped to provide the way forward where there was a deadlock. For example, when the meeting was deciding whether or not to postpone the review of the Report on the Draft Agriculture Strategy until the next meeting pending its revision by the Secretariat, I recommended the formation of the sub-committee to review the strategy.

Additionally, during the Committee's consideration of the Report on the study on Formulating the COMESA Agriculture Policy, I drew the attention of the Committee to the need for member States to adopt nexus approach in agricultural development programmes. Hence the inclusion of the item on Environment and Natural Resource on page 9, paragraphy 26 of the Report.

c) Background Documentation

Following consultations with the Director, ECA/SRDC-SA, I distributed the following publications/information at the meeting:

- i) Policy Framework on Nexus issues of Population, Food Security and Environment in Southern Africa – Proceedings of the Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Nexus issues of Population, Food Security and Environment in Southern Africa, 7 – 10 September, 1998, Lusaka, Zambia.
- ii) ECA/SRDC-SA Brochure
- iii) List of ECA vacancies for June 2000

## V REPORTS OF THE MEETING

The Report of the Meeting and all the background documents specified in the agenda of the Meeting have since been deposited in the Library. Among other things, the sub-committee recommended that the strategy be revisited by beefing up the objectives

and incorporating a section on logical framework. The sub-committee made further recommendations on how to harmonize the studies on the COMESA Agriculture Policy and the COMESA Agriculture Strategy.

## **VI CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### a) Conclusion

This Mission was successful in that all its objectives were met. The SRDC participated effectively at the Meeting and assisted COMESA with the substantive servicing. There are however a few recommendations for follow-up actions on the part of the ECA/SRDC-SA on some issues which appear in the Report of the Meeting.

### b) Recommendations

#### **Study on Formulating the COMESA Agriculture Policy**

Page 9, paragraph 27 of the Report, raises concern that due to limited funding some elements of the study would have to be left out. It is recommended that FSSDD should carefully examine the Report of the Study and perhaps assist COMESA in undertaking studies of those which will not be accommodated by COMESA's budget.

#### **Agriculture and Trade Promotion**

Page 27, paragraph 98 of the Report carries the recommendation for the establishment of a regional mechanism for coordinating agricultural marketing information, similar to Information and Cooperation Services for Fishery Products in Africa (INFOPECHE). ECA/SRDC-SA could also sound FSSDD and DISD on the possibility of assisting COMESA in conducting the feasibility study for this important project.

## **VII BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

1. COMESA Agricultural Strategy
2. Challenges and Opportunities of the COMESA Free Trade Area: An Agenda for Sustainable Agricultural Development
3. Progress Report on the Study on Formulating the COMESA Agricultural Policy
4. Regional Strategy for Agriculture Development and Food Security
5. Rice Production Development
6. ICIPE -- Post-harvest Losses Project
7. Phytosanitary and Sanitary Measures
8. Report of the Regional Workshop on the Establishment of a Common Marine Fisheries Investment and Management Policy
9. Workshop Reports on Upgrading Quality and Safety of Fish and Fishery Products

10. Phase 1: Project Proposal on the Production and Marketing of Value-added Fishery Products in Eastern and Southern Africa
11. Project Proposal on the Setting up a Common Framework for Managing Shared Inland Fisheries in the COMESA Sub-region
12. Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Seed Treater Project – Phase II
13. INFOPECHE Membership
14. Agricultural Marketing
15. WTO Agricultural and Trade Agreement Workshop