

**Opening remarks by**  
**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Gilles Hervio,**  
**Head of Delegation of the European Union to Zambia and Representative to**  
**COMESA,**  
**at the signing ceremony of the**  
**MASE CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT**  
**at 10h30**  
**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September**  
**Taj Pamodzi Hotel**

Mr Sindiso Ngwenya, COMESA Secretary General

Monsieur Raymond Tshibanda - Minister of Regional and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Congo/ and Chairperson of the COMESA Council of Ministers.

Mr. Admasu Nebede Gedamu, representing Hon. Ato Ahmed Shinde - State Minister of Finance and Economic Development of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Vice Chairperson of the COMESA Council of Ministers.

Hon. Amelia Kyambadde - Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of the Republic of Uganda and Rapporteur of the COMESA Council of Ministers.

Representatives of the COMESA Member States

COMESA Secretariat officials

Representatives of the media

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to sign on behalf of the European Union a grant of 5.4 million euro (over 40 million Kwacha) to the COMESA Secretariat for the implementation of a regional programme to fight maritime piracy.

Maritime Piracy affects us all, whether being in a landlocked country such as Zambia or in a boat sailing across the oceans. The primary motive of maritime piracy is material gain, whether derived from stolen cargo or ransom.

Approximately 90% of the Eastern and Southern Africa regional trade by volume is transported by sea.

High risk of piracy leads to disruption of trade routes creating higher transport costs, higher insurance costs and, as a result, increased prices.

[The spoken text shall prevail](#)

Some COMESA Member states have been worse affected by piracy in the Indian Ocean. For example, Kenya, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius, have experienced negative impacts on their tourism and fisheries industries.

Over the years, combating maritime insecurity has been a priority for the European Union, combining political action, military operations and substantial technical and financial support to the countries in Eastern, Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean.

The programme we are launching today is part of a 37.5 million euro (300 million Kwacha) regional programme to protect lives, economic development and trade in the region. This wider programme is complemented by many more actions supported by the European Union and implemented by various actors.

We are very proud to support the commitment of COMESA towards the fight against maritime piracy and the illicit flows of funds coming from piracy. Once again, COMESA mobilises its influence and expertise in trade and economic matters to the benefit of its Member States and, therefore, to the benefit of the people in the region.

The 5.4 million euro programme launched today will be implemented by COMESA in cooperation with Interpol. Its purpose is to prevent money laundering by establishing sound laws, regulations and policies. It will also contribute to build the capacity of the governments and financial institutions in the region to coordinate, exchange information, analyse, detect and track financial flows linked to piracy but also to investigate and prosecute financial crimes.

The other components of the wider 37.5 million euro anti-piracy programme will be led by the Horn of Africa Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Eastern Africa Community (EAC) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in cooperation with United Nations specialised agencies and Interpol, and aim to:

- address the root causes of piracy in Somalia,
- support the legal and physical capacity for the arrest, transfer, detention and prosecution of pirates in the region
- strengthen the coast guards and other national bodies responsible for maritime security.

Piracy doesn't respect borders, which makes regional and international action essential. International crime requires international responses. That is why the European Union, COMESA, other African organisations and the countries in the region are working together. The programme launched today plays a role in the global effort, which has already produced excellent results, to sustain and reinforce the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean.

Thank you very much for your attention.