



# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ZAMBIA AND COMESA

October – December 2016

## EDITORIAL

**BY AMBASSADOR ALESSANDRO MARIANI**

The last quarter of the year has been a very productive period in the relations between Zambia and the European Union with meetings and dialogue at all levels. The new Government of Zambia, civil society organisations and private sector have worked in close consultation with the European Union to further strengthen the partnership between Zambia and the European Union.

Mrs Cecile Kyenge, Member of the European Parliament and Chief Observer of the EU Electoral Observation Mission, returned to Zambia to present the EU EOM final report on the August 2016 elections. She had the opportunity to meet a large variety of interlocutors and present the findings of their observations as well as comprehensive recommendations for future elections. She also confirmed that the European Union remains committed to work with the Zambian partners in the journey of democratic development.

Important milestones have been achieved in terms of economic relations, facilitating contacts and exchanges of ideas between the new economic Ministers and the representatives of the European companies which are members of the EU Zambia Business Club. The development relations have been further boosted in many areas and notably in the field of energy and civil aviation. Further steps forward were also made in preparation of new development programmes for 2017 focusing on energy, agriculture, public finance management and gender equality.

The EU Delegation launched a new call for proposals open to civil society organisations to protect the rights of marginalised groups and participated in the sixteen days of activism against gender based violence. Both are priorities pursued by Zambia and the European Union.

Finally let me take this opportunity to recall the common work done together with the COMESA Secretariat aimed at facilitating regional economic integration. This is part of the EU DNA and we are most pleased to share our

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experiences with COMESA. The Delegation of the European Union in Zambia represented the EU at the 36<sup>th</sup> COMESA Policy Organs meeting held in Madagascar.

## EU – ZAMBIA PARTNERSHIP

### EU ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

#### EU ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION PRESENTS ITS FINAL REPORT ON THE AUGUST 2016 ELECTIONS IN ZAMBIA (NOVEMBER 2016)

The Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission to Zambia, Mrs Cécile Kyenge, Member of the European Parliament, returned to Lusaka in early November to present the Final Report to the ECZ, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, political parties, domestic observers and civil society. *“Zambia’s recent elections demonstrate that there is always room for improvement. While the elections were competitive, the process highlighted several areas where steps can be taken to enhance the inclusivity and credibility in future,”* Mrs Kyenge said.

The recommendations, 33 in total, included in the EU EOM’s Final Report include: a detailed review of the electoral legal framework and redrafting of unclear, ambiguous and conflicting provisions; the removal of overly restrictive limitations of freedom of assembly in the Public Order Act; publication of individual polling station results for all elections in a timely manner, and an end of the *de facto* subdivision of polling stations into polling streams; an assessment of the results management system for accuracy, timeliness and transparency; clarification of the rules and procedures for complaints, for local, parliamentary and presidential elections; transformation of ZNBC into a public service broadcaster with full editorial independence from government, and enhanced oversight of the ECZ of the public media.

*“Our final report brings together the findings of all our observations in the three-month period the mission was in Zambia, as well as comprehensive recommendations for*

*future elections. They are addressed to the relevant institutions – the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), the Government of Zambia, the police, political parties, civil society, and other key stakeholders. Let me stress that many of these recommendations will require cooperation between state institutions, and should be inclusive of all elements of society, including civil society. The European Union remains committed to work with Zambian partners in its journey of democratic development,”* Mrs Kyenge added.



The report makes key recommendations for consideration by the authorities, the election management bodies and other key election stakeholders. They include the following:

#### Legal Framework:

- Conduct a detailed review of the electoral legal framework and redraft unclear, ambiguous and conflicting provisions in order to ensure consistency and increase legal certainty.
- Remove overly restrictive limitations of freedom of assembly in the Public Order Act. Clearly define the grounds for the police to impose conditions and to restrict assemblies, and narrow the geographic scope of any such restrictions. Shorten the notice period required for public campaign events, and respect the principle of notification as opposed to permission in accordance with the May 2016 judgment of the Supreme Court.

#### Election Administration:



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- The ECZ should rely less on local government officials and local administrative structures and exert greater direct management over all aspects of the electoral process. The development of a permanent independent structure of the ECZ at regional level should be implemented, as well as a temporary independent structure at constituency levels during the immediate period of elections.
- The *de facto* subdivision of a polling station into polling streams should no longer be used. All locations where voters cast ballots should be called polling stations, be duly gazetted and identified by a unique code, with results individually posted and published.
- A review of constituency boundaries should be undertaken to ensure that constituencies better reflect population distribution.

#### Voter Registration:

- Consideration should be given to extracting the voter register from a future national population register, included the planned biometric population registry.
- The ECZ should ensure that political parties and civil society organisations have access to the final voter register well in advance of the elections, as has historically been the case.

#### Election Results:

- The ECZ should publish individual polling station results for all elections in a timely manner. Scanned polling station results forms could also be published, to further build confidence.
- The results management system (RMS) should be assessed for accuracy, timeliness and transparency. Consideration should be given to introducing double-blind data entry, to better ensure data integrity.

#### Media:

- ZNBC should be transformed into a public service broadcaster enjoying full editorial independence from government. Protection of tenure of the board of directors

and senior management should be guaranteed, who should be appointed in a transparent manner, with the involvement of media professionals and civil society organizations. News and content management staff should also be appointed in a manner protected from political interference, and be subject to public interest rules.

- The ECZ should exercise enhanced oversight over the public media, and more actively address complaints related to campaign coverage.

#### Complaints and Appeals:

- The right to effective remedy should be enhanced by clarification of the rules and procedures for complaints, for local, parliamentary and presidential elections. The rules on which courts have jurisdiction should be unambiguous. The competencies and procedures for conflict management committees (CMCs) should be defined in detail and ensure that they do not overlap with those of police and the courts.

*The EOM's final report can be found on:*  
[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/final\\_report\\_eu\\_eom\\_zambia.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/final_report_eu_eom_zambia.pdf)

#### **HANDOVER CEREMONY OF EU ELECTIONS OBSERVERS MISSION EQUIPMENT USED BY THE EU ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION (NOVEMBER 2016)**

On 8 November, Mrs Cécile Kyenge and the Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Alessandro Mariani, hosted at the EU Delegation the handover ceremony of equipment used by the EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) during their presence in Zambia from June to September 2016.

The 14 Civil Society Organisations that received the in-kind donations work in a variety of important sectors in Zambia, including on issues such as the rights of prisoners, health, education, media, youth and persons with disabilities



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Ambassador Mariani stressed that he considers the EU's work with civil society an integral part of the EU's overall partnership with Zambia, and expressed the hope that the donations would make a meaningful contribution to the efforts of the CSOs.

<https://www.facebook.com/EUDeZambia/posts/1151624174922747>

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### LAUNCH FOR CALL FOR PROPOSALS UNDER THE EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY (DECEMBER 2016)

The European Union Delegation to Zambia has taken the opportunity of the celebration of Human Rights Day for announcing officially the launch of its Call for proposals under the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (EIDHR) which identifies the protection of the rights of marginalised groups as a priority. For this occasion, a launching ceremony was organised at the EU Delegation where were present PS Davy Chikamata representing the Minister of Community Development and Social Welfare, H.E. Alessandro Mariani, Ambassador of the European Union, Ambassadors of the EU Member States in Zambia, as well as several dignitaries and representatives of the Government and Civil Society Organisations. During the ceremony, Ambassador Mariani stated that *"With continued commitment and fruitful partnerships at the Government and civil society level, and*

*with greater tolerance vis-à-vis some marginalised groups, Zambia could set the example for many other countries on the continent".*



After the addresses, guests could attend an artistic expression on one of the key priority areas, the rights of persons with disability, in the form of poetry and drama performed by Young Voices from the NGO.

[Cheshire Homes Society of Zambia](#). [#EU4HumanRights](#) [#EIDHR](#)

### 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

In marking 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, the Ambassador of the European Union, Alessandro Mariani, joined other Cooperating Partners on a visit to [LifeLine/Childline Zambia](#), a project in Lusaka co-funded by [DFID Zambia](#) and [USAID Zambia](#) which aims at helping victims of GBV. British High Commissioner Fergus Cochrane-Dyet delivered a statement on behalf of all Cooperating Partners in Zambia supporting government efforts to tackle gender-based violence.

This was followed by a statement of Professor Chikamata, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, who expressed the commitment of the Zambian Government in fighting against GBV.



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[#16DaysOfActivism](#)    [#EU4HumanRights](#)    [#StopGBV](#)  
with [UK in Zambia](#) [Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka](#) [Suomen suurlähetystö Lusaka - Embassy of Finland Lusaka](#)



## EU ZAMBIA BUSINESS CLUB

### CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMIC PRIORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT (OCTOBER 2016)

On 27 October the EU-Zambia Business Club (EUZBC) organised its first event after the launch of the Club in June. The event was an opportunity for the EUZBC members to have a fruitful exchange of views on the Government's economic priorities with the Minister of Finance, Hon Felix Mutati, Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Hon. Margaret Mwanakatwe and Minister of National Development and Planning, Hon. Lucky Mulusa.

The Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Alessandro Mariani, reconfirmed that the private sector is the backbone of the economy and therefore welcomed the participation of the Ministers to the event in close dialogue with private sector. Ambassador Mariani reiterated the EUZBC's objectives and its current status. The Club is an informal association of over 200 European companies active in Zambia, from 14 EU Member States, and which is being integrated by Zambian companies. Its overall objective is to facilitate trade and increase investment opportunities between the EU and Zambia. The EU-Zambia Business Club currently focuses on facilitating and conducting dialogue with the Zambian government on

issues prioritised by the Club members, facilitating and conducting networking events amongst its Members (B2B events), facilitating the creation of strategic alliances between Zambian and EU companies and encouraging ethical business practices by all companies operating in Zambia. The Club is in the process of registering as a Society under the Societies Act and of establishing a formal structure.



On their part the three Ministers made comprehensive and elaborate presentations. Minister Mutati focused on the Zambian Economic Recovery Plan also known as "Zambia Plus". He highlighted the importance of resolute implementation of reforms, focusing on the need to cut subsidies on fuel, electricity and agriculture (1.0 bn USD). He highlighted the principle that one cannot spend what one does not have because excessive borrowing leads to higher interest rates and ultimately to crowding out the private sector. He took the commitment to invest time and energies to improve the whole macro – economic framework. Minister Mwanakatwe highlighted the importance of creating jobs and the paramount role of the private sector which is the engine for growth. She highlighted the importance of enhanced trade and facilitation of investments as key to the development of Zambia, with emphasis on industrial investments where possible.



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*Hon Minister of Finance Felix Mutati with Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Alessandro Mariani*

Minister Mulusa updated the EUZBC on the preparatory work for the next National Development Plan which is expected to be approved next year. He advocated for long term planning and an integrated multi sectoral approach so as to abandon the old habit to plan in "sectoral silos". All the three Ministers highlighted their intention to work in close consultation with the private sector, which they consider the engine for growth and sustainable development, and finally expressed the wish of future similar opportunities for meetings with the EUZBC.

The interventions of the Ministers were welcomed and followed by an interesting question and answers session where members of the EUZBC had the opportunity to interact with the three Ministers. Some of the issues raised were related to the macro – economic framework, the access to credit, development of workforce skills and irritants to internal trade such as the excessive number of police roadblocks.

The speech of the Ambassador of the European Union can be found here:

[https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/zambia/13703/opening-remarks-ambassador-alessandro-mariani-eu-zambia-business-club-conference-economic\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/zambia/13703/opening-remarks-ambassador-alessandro-mariani-eu-zambia-business-club-conference-economic_en)

## CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR (DECEMBER 2016)

The purpose of the second (and end of the year) meeting of the EU-Zambia Business Club was twofold: the first part focussed on the arts and culture sector of the economy, whilst the second one took stock of the achievements of the Club and looked forward to the upcoming year.



*Ms. Mulenga Kapwepwe, the Chairperson of the National Arts Council of Zambia*

Ms. Mulenga Kapwepwe, the Chairperson of the National Arts Council of Zambia and "Zambia's patron of the arts" according to CNN, honoured the audience with her presence. She summarised the state of play of the sector, which suffers from severe underfunding and a skills gap, whilst also presenting opportunities for the private sector to get involved and appealing to the business people present to offer internship opportunities to the artists, so that they can further develop their work into viable businesses.





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Interventions and questions from the EUZBC membership focused on the institutional setting of the sector and the way in which the members are already supporting the arts and culture sector. The second part of the meeting was internal and looked at the draft Constitution of the EUZBC and the steps needed to register the Club as an association under the Societies Act. Other ongoing projects are the building of the website and the logo, which should be finalised in the first quarter of 2017, whilst more medium term objectives refer to conducting a study on the impact of EU investment in Zambia and to increasing the network.

## ENERGY

The last quarter of the year was marked by two major milestones between the EU and Zambia: (i) the signature of the Declaration of Intent on Enhanced Cooperation on Energy ; and (ii) the signature of the financing agreement for the Support to the Zambia energy sector: Increased Access to Energy and Renewable Energy Production

### **SIGNATURE OF THE DECLARATION OF INTENT ON ENHANCED COOPERATION ON ENERGY (NOVEMBER 2016)**

On 16 November 2016, in the framework of the UN twenty-second climate Conference of the Parties (COP22) in Marrakech, Minister of Energy David Mabumba, signed a Declaration of Intent on enhanced cooperation with 10 Cooperating Partners supporting the energy sector in Zambia. The signing ceremony took place as part of a high-level event of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), a joint undertaking of the African Union and European Union.

The Declaration of Intent aims to provide a platform for strengthened policy dialogue and coordination with a view to accelerating the supply of clean energy and facilitating access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services for Zambia's citizens and businesses. The ten Cooperating Partners who signed the declaration are: The European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Sweden, United Kingdom, the United States of

America and the World Bank. The African Development Bank also signed the Declaration.

By engaging in this enhanced cooperation, Zambia and the Cooperating Partners intend to work closely together in addressing the current sector challenges, such as the power supply shortages, the lack of diversification of resources in the country's energy mix, over-reliance on unsustainable sources of energy in urban and rural areas, limited level of private sector investment, and low electrification rates, especially in rural areas where most of the poor people live.



*Commissioner for International Development and Cooperation Neven Mimica and Hon Minister of Energy David Mabumba*

The reinforced cooperation platform should facilitate implementation of much needed sector reforms and ensure better coordination of assistance programmes supporting Zambia's development goals for the energy sector. Transition to a more diverse and sustainable energy supply, increased access to sustainable energy services, improved technical and commercial efficiency, as well as increased investment and know-how through private sector participation will be at the centre of this multilateral cooperation. An indicative roadmap outlining planned support from the Cooperating Partners has been attached to the Declaration of Intent and will be subject to regular review and discussion.



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During the signing ceremony, Minister Mabumba said “...I wish to thank our Cooperating Partners for their support over the years and for the support that will be mobilised in the future. We expect that, by uniting forces with Cooperating Partners and taking a common approach, the Government of the Republic of Zambia will be in a position to satisfy the growing energy needs of Zambian citizens as well as businesses with clean, reliable and cost effective energy services. This is our firm commitment”

## **SUPPORT TO THE ZAMBIA ENERGY SECTOR: INCREASED ACCESS TO ENERGY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION (NOVEMBER 2016)**

On 28 November, following the signature of the Declaration of Intent on Enhanced Cooperation on energy, the Government of Zambia and the European Union signed a grant of €40 million (approx. 420 million Zambian Kwacha at prevailing exchange rates).

This is a tangible 'fruit/result' of the signing of the Declaration of Marrakech which paved the way for the launching of this programme financed by the European Union.

The good message is that that this new programme has been designed to help Zambia in unlocking its energy generating potential and addressing the current sector challenges, such as the power supply shortages, the lack of diversification of resources in the country's energy mix, over-reliance on unsustainable sources of energy, limited level of private sector investment, and low electrification rates, especially in rural areas where most of the poor people live.

It is an ambitious and comprehensive energy development programme whose overall objective is to increase access to clean, reliable and affordable energy and to promote renewable energy production and energy efficiency in Zambia. In this way, the programme will also support Zambia's endeavours to mitigate the climate change effects as agreed under the international climate agreement reached during the climate conference in Paris,

December 2015, which has entered into force at the beginning of November in record time.



*Hon Minister of Finance Felix Mutati with Ambassador of the European Union, H.E. Alessandro Mariani and Secretary to the Treasury Fredson Yamba*

This objective is to be achieved through a number of various assistance efforts running in parallel, such as:

- support to public institutions to revise and further develop the legal and regulatory framework in support of sector reforms and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency throughout the country;
- capacity building of both public and private sector stakeholders to ensure adequate know-how transfer and skills development ;
- and support to demonstration projects promoting sustainable renewable energy business models and energy efficiency solutions, primarily in rural areas which cannot benefit from grid expansion in the foreseeable future.

The Programme will also facilitate a significant technological advancement and market expansion for renewable and energy efficiency solutions.

In fact European companies in the Member States of the European Union are widely recognized worldwide leaders in terms of renewable and energy efficiency applications



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and many of them are willing to consider investing in clean energy in Zambia.



There is confirmed interest, which will grow very significantly as soon as the right policy framework and decisions will be put in place facilitating private sector investments (e.g.: cost reflective tariffs).

The speech of the Ambassador of the European Union can be found here:

([https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/zambia/16119/speech-ambassador-mariani-signature-financing-agreement-support-zambia-energy-sector\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/zambia/16119/speech-ambassador-mariani-signature-financing-agreement-support-zambia-energy-sector_en))

## CIVIL AVIATION

### SIGNATURE OF THE FINANCING AGREEMENT FOR CIVIL AVIATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (PHASE II) (NOVEMBER 2016)



On 22 November the Government of Zambia and the European Union signed a grant of €5.6 million (approx. 60 million Zambian Kwacha at prevailing exchange rates).

Before entering into the specificities of the project it is worth providing some background information:

- The European Union assistance to the aviation sector in Zambia has already a quite considerable track record. In recent years, the European Union supported the development of airport infrastructure here in Lusaka at Kenneth Kaunda International airport and also at the Harry Mwanza Nkumbula International airport in Livingstone. This was done through two rehabilitation projects financed under the 8th and 9th European Development Funds respectively.
- More recently, improved governance of the aviation sector has been addressed under the 10th European Development Fund. This programme assisted Zambia in achieving conformity with the international safety standards required by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the European Union.
- In June of this year we all welcomed the fact that Zambia was removed from the European Union's Air Safety list. There is no doubt that EU assistance was instrumental in achieving this major milestone.
- This, in practical terms, has some immediate positive effects: Domestic and international travellers have much more confidence in using the air flights to move from one place to another in Zambia with an obvious positive impact on the economy of the country, given also its dimensions. In addition, the European and other international travellers can now purchase their ticket to any airport in Zambia directly from Europe while before they could purchase their ticket to Lusaka only and had eventually to buy a separate ticket for the domestic leg of their travel. Moreover,



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Zambian registered air carriers can from now onwards operate in European skies. And as a result of this long awaited achievement, Zambian and European Union citizens and economies are brought closer together.

With the new programme, (phase II), the European Union intends to help address remaining bottlenecks in the current institutional and regulatory framework so as to ensure full conformity to operational requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). The programme targets new, concrete results in terms of strengthened air safety and security oversight systems, air traffic management services brought up to international standards and key sector institutions better prepared and equipped to perform their statutory functions as foreseen by the new Aviation Act.

To that end the European Union will provide assistance to the Ministry of Transport and Communication, the Civil Aviation Authority, Zambia Airports Corporation, educational establishments and other sector stakeholders, including private sector service providers. Various forms of support are envisaged under the programme, which in large part will be implemented through and in partnership with a specialized EU institution – the European Aviation Safety Agency based in Koeln, Germany. The Agency will put at the disposal of Zambia the finest expertise in the European Union in the area of aviation safety.



The project “Quality Early education in Community Schools (QECS)” (600.000 EUR; Oct 2014-June 2017) is funded by the European Union and implemented by VVOB (Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand VZW) in partnership with ZOCS (Zambia Organisation for Community schools). The project aims at providing quality early education to Zambia’s marginalised and vulnerable children in peri-urban and rural communities in the Kitwe and Ndola Districts in the Copperbelt. The project also targets raising awareness on healthy nutrition and the need of birth registration.

Main activities of the project include the construction of early childhood (ECE) classrooms in 18 community schools, construction of latrines, training and mentoring of ECE teachers, providing of teaching and low resource packs and involvement of the local authorities, Zonal In-service Coordinators and Districts Resource Centre Coordinators.

In November Fabienne Van Den Eede, Head of the Governance and Social Sectors Section and Patricia Kapolyo project manager did a monitoring visit to see what results had been achieved so far. During these two days they visited 11 of of 18 community schools and were warmly welcomed by a number of communities.

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

### QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (QECS)

“Early childhood is the most significant period of development in our lives, establishing the cognitive, emotional and social foundations upon which we built our futures.”



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The team witnessed a number of well-equipped and welcoming ECE classes, ECE teachers who changed their teachings styles, satisfied and committed parents which were involved in the schools construction through the parents committees which are key to sustain the community schools as they lack sufficient government support and we also saw happy children in a colourful environment.

There is still work to be done before achieving all targets before the end of the project which will be closely monitored by the VVOB and the EU Delegation.

commitment of the European Union to support regional development and regional economic integration.

"It is a pleasure and a privilege to have the opportunity to address all of you today at the very beginning of the 36th COMESA Policy Organs Meetings here in Antananarivo. First of all a vote of thanks to the Government and People of Madagascar for the warm welcome reserved to all of us and for the organisation of the events.

The European Union attaches great importance to its long-lasting, wide and comprehensive, partnership with COMESA which is a testimony of the continued, strong, commitment of the European Union to support regional development and regional economic integration.

This year's central theme of the COMESA Policy Organs meetings and Summit is "inclusive and sustainable industrialization", which we understand is one of the key challenges and opportunities for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The inclusive and sustainable industrialization agenda is in line with the EU Agenda for Change that focuses on promoting "inclusive and sustainable economic growth" worldwide.

Economic diversification and local value addition are crucial to move away from over-dependence on exports of raw materials. This becomes more evident at times such as today when the demand for metals in emerging economies is moderating and commodity prices suffer from it.

This economic diversification has to take place in a sustainable way by addressing the challenges of climate change, losses of biodiversity and environmental degradation.

Policy goals need to be accompanied and sustained by concrete actions such as those financed by the European Union under the EDF bilateral programs agreed at country level with COMESA member countries and those financed by the European Union under the EDF regional programs such as the one for the Eastern, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region. All together this support accounts for approx. 7 billion Euro of grants. At the regional level, our

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"The European Union attaches great importance to its long-lasting, wide and comprehensive, partnership with COMESA which is a testimony of the continued, strong,



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partnership with COMESA focuses on the promotion of trade and economic regional integration.



We are all well aware of the great benefits of integration. Regional integration leads to bigger markets, facilitates trade flows; reduces production costs and prices for consumers. This further stimulates domestic and foreign investments. For Africa, regional integration can also be a building block for wider integration at continental level and into the world trading system. However, regional integration is not an easy process. It implies giving away some national prerogatives and needs strong political leadership at the level of the Member States, leadership and organization for the domestication of commitments taken at regional level, as well as strong and powerful regional organizations in the driving seat.

Beyond the bilateral and regional EDF allocations which all of you are familiar with I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that last month the European Union has launched a new strategic initiative “the European External Investment Plan” to encourage investment in Africa and in the EU Neighbourhood to strengthen our partnerships, promote a new model of participation of the private sector and contribute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This plan represents a new approach moving beyond classical development assistance. While the traditional development assistance remains important it is clear that this alone cannot meet the challenge of achieving sustainable development growth. It must be complemented by other tools in order to make best use of and leverage public funds.

As stated by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini: “We see regions with a huge potential that is held back by war, poverty, the lack of infrastructure, and weak governance. Our European Union is already the first donor worldwide: we invest more in development cooperation than the rest of the world combined. But we also know that public resources cannot be sufficient if we want to untap this huge potential and achieve the sustainable development goals. European firms are already creating jobs and growth in our entire neighbourhood and Africa, for the benefit of our partners and of the European citizens. While creating the conditions for Europeans to expand their business and move into new countries, the new External Investment Plan will support our partners’ economies and societies, as well as our strategic foreign policy goals, from security to global development”

The European Union has allocated € 3.35 billion of grants from the budget and EDF for the External Investment Plan until 2020 and this should serve to mobilise and leverage up to € 44 billion additional investment. The External Investment Plan will be used to (i) mobilise investments, through the new guarantee, under the External Fund for Sustainable Development; (ii) step up technical assistance to develop financially attractive and mature projects and thus helping to mobilise higher investments; (iii) improve economic governance, the business environment and engage with the private sector.

The European Union is confident that all these initiatives will be instrumental in facilitating and accelerating the pace of economic integration and regional development.

I thank you all for your attention and wish you an excellent work and deliberations over the next days."