

Contribution of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Agriculture and Rural Development from 2010-2021

Joseph Selisho¹, Professor Jotham. M. Momba²

¹University of Zambia, Institute of Distance Education, Lusaka-Zambia

²University of Zambia, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Lusaka-Zambia

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.701093>

Received: 20 September 2023; Revised: 06 October 2023; Accepted: 10 October 2023; Published: 07 November 2023

ABSTRACT

Background: The study was undertaken due to high levels of poverty in the COMESA region. It endeavoured to explore the contribution by COMESA towards the elimination of poverty using Agriculture and Rural development strategies. The objective of the study was to establish the contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through Agriculture and rural development. The study employed qualitative approach with an exploratory research design and critical case sampling to choose 13 key informants to explore the contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia. Primary data was used from 13 key informants selected purposively using an interview guide to support secondary data. Data was analysed using thematic and content analysis. The study established that COMESA had been significant in the fight against poverty in Zambia. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) supported Zambia's agricultural development policy formulation and implementation amongst others, establishing clear commitment to deliver on investing 10 percent of national budgets in the agricultural sector and achieving a six percent growth in agricultural domestic product. It was established that Zambia had worked with Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) through mobilisation of small-scale farmers in partnership with private and public institutions in regularising policy on staple foods, through policy outreach and research, creating market access, and building the capacity of the small-scale farmers to enable them compete in the domestic, regional and international markets. The study further established that Zambia's livestock development received support from COMESA Livestock Unit which supported efforts aimed at driving sustainable livestock production and productivity, value addition and access to markets in the COMESA region. The Market Linkages Initiative (MLI) supported the ACTESA Secretariat and also focused on promoting growth in food staples trade in Zambia to ensure food security. Zambia through the COMESA Regional Agro-Inputs Programme (COMRAP) implemented by the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) in Zambia contributed to the improvement of rural household food security and livelihoods. The Integrated Production and Pest Management Programme (IPPM) became active in Zambia since 2014 and is an implementation mechanism of the support programme for the consolidation of the action framework under the European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton. The study recommended that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme should be strengthened as it continues to support investment in agricultural development in Zambia particularly enhancing support to small-scale farmers.

Key Words: COMESA, Zambia, Poverty, Agriculture and Rural Development

BACKGROUND: CONTRIBUTION OF COMESA IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN ZAMBIA THROUGH COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Zambia Annual Country Report (2020) in a Strategic Plan 2019-2024", noted that Zambia's 1.5 million smallholder farmers produce about 80 percent of domestic supply of food. The Zambian agriculture sector

comprised of crops, livestock and fisheries whose broad categories of farmers include small-scale, medium and large scale. Small scale farmers represented the majority approximately 90 % of Zambia's agricultural producers and are generally subsistence producers of staple foods with occasional marketable surplus. Medium scale farmers produce maize and a few other cash crops for the market while large scale farmers produce various crops for local and export markets. Agriculture contributes about 19 percent to gross domestic product (GDP) and employs three quarters of the population and climate change had been affecting their yields including poor infrastructure, inadequate input use undermining productivity, profitability and sustainability.

Beegle et al (2016) observed that as of 2012 more than 330 million people on the African continent lived in poverty. Poverty reduction had been slowest in urban areas but rural areas remained much poor. In a quest to alleviate this poverty, trade among African states has been among other solutions. Bwalya et al (2021) observed that Zambia remained a high-poverty country despite having attained middle-income status in 2011. The report projected that the country's high levels of poverty would persist through to the middle of the century unless significant new policies and programmes were developed. Poverty was wide spread in Zambia as many farmers lacked access to markets and credits including lack of access to storage to keep their food and seed from spoiling. There was also inadequate quality seed and fertilizers which affected cotton productivity and hence price volatility. These factors led to the Government of Zambia seeking financial help from different partners of development particularly from COMESA in the fight against poverty. Agriculture is the major source of national income in Zambia. Agricultural markets in Zambia requires great attention in terms of right policies to ensure correct interventions to raise production levels for export and income generation and employment creation. The funded programmes of COMESA with additional financial support from its international cooperating partners of development helped Zambia to promote agriculture and rural development in Zambia through policy formulation or implementation with specific funding such as capacity building in textiles, honey production, casava production, cotton growing, etc. The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the textiles clothing were targeted to ensure support in the value chains and to enhance their knowledge in handlooms such as spinning, dyeing, fashion design, quality assurance, clustering and trade fair participation which saw an engagement of over 300 MSMEs.

To enhance business to business linkages, a leather and cotton expo was organized with over 60 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) participating in the expo in Zambia. The study also established that an exhibition was organized for the leather and cotton to clothing value chain stakeholders to exhibit their products. The exhibition yielded results with over 56 MSMEs participated in the expo and five of which were contracted to supply fabric and apparel to several businesses in Zambia and COMESA region. The sectors attracted policy reforms in order to increase their yields and management during their growth in Zambia. The ultimate goal of the agricultural cooperation and rural development was premised on the fact that farm incomes reduce poverty due to large spillovers to others within the rural economy and hence increase employment in the rural areas of Zambia.

In order to enhance competitiveness and access to markets in the agricultural sector in Zambia, COMESA had several programmes related to agriculture. Trade reforms in Zambia with the support of COMESA and its cooperating partners of development considered poverty alleviation through agriculture and rural development as an engine of industrialisation through value addition giving support to manufacturing sector as source of raw materials.

Interpretivist Research Philosophy or Interpretivism

Pranas et al (2018) observed that interpretivist research philosophy is based on the principle which states that the researcher performs a specific role in observing the social world. This study was guided by interpretivist philosophy or interpretivism. This theory assumes that reality is subjective, multiple and

socially constructed. This means that reality can only be understood through one's experience of that reality which may be different from another person's shaped by the individual's historical or social perspective. According to this research philosophy, the research depends on what the interest of the researcher's interests are. In this study the researcher's interest was to explore the contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Africa: A Case Study of Zambia from 2010-2021. Interpretivist research philosophy emphasizes qualitative analysis over quantitative analysis and the researcher in this study used interpretivist philosophy as an ideal approach to achieve the specific objectives of the study as it was qualitative in nature. Interpretivism integrates human interest into a study as it based on naturalistic approach of data collection such interviews and observation. In this study an interview guide was used administered by the researcher to collect primary data while secondary data was collected from mainly from annual reports, verified internet sources and articles or books.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Regional integration encourages African countries to work together to address common challenges and harness their shared strengths to realise the continent's potential market of 1.2 billion people. The world bank (2021) is a key contributor to Africa's regional integration. The World Bank collaborates with African countries and regional institutions to empower people, unleash trade and optimize shared natural resources and economies of scale to achieve Africa's transformation. Therefore, debates in regional integration can be explained through several theoretical frameworks depending on the context of formation. In this study, the key theoretical perspectives were selected to guide the study. In this study, the liberal economic theory was selected to guide the study and as a guiding tool by COMESA in the fight against poverty in Africa as well as a means of fighting poverty in Zambia. Liberalism as advocated by COMESA to fight poverty in Africa takes the form of the promotion of trade liberalization, trade facilitation, investment promotion, agriculture and rural development and development of private sector. Economic liberalism is a political and economic ideology that supports a market economy based on individualism and private property in the means of production. Economic liberalism is based on the principles of personal property, private property and limited government interference. The term 'liberalism' should be understood in its historical context. Classical liberalism emphasized liberty from government regulation. In the economic context this would include the elimination of restrictions on the choice of occupations or transfers of land. Liberalism asserts that self-interest is a basic component of human nature. In the economic arena, producers provide goods, not out of concern for our well-being, but due to their desire to make a profit. Like wise workers sell their labour and buy the producer's goods as a means of satisfying their own wants. This leads to the belief in a natural harmony of interest. By each individual pursuing their own interest the best interests of a society are served. The forces of a free competitive market economy would guide production, exchange and distribution in a manner that no government could improve upon. The government's role, therefore, is limited to the protection of contracts providing public goods, and maintain internal and external security.

Economic liberalism refers to the ideology that supports the idea of an economic system governed by individual rights. It means that the government refrains from engaging in industrial and commercial activities and that it should not interfere with the economic relations between individuals, groups of people, classes or entire nation. Wealth and property are the two pillars of economic liberalism. It is a foundation of capitalism and challenges the guiding policy while gaining from the state's preferences. Free trade, deregulation, tax reductions, privatization and the flexibility of the labour market are all features present in an economically liberal country. Economic liberalism promotes the notion that the government should refrain from engaging in commercial and industrial activities and should not try to interfere in the economic relations between different classes of people and between different individuals. Adam Smith is regarded as the father of economic liberalism. The system is designed to be more productive, generate income and facilitate multiple exchanges. Economic liberalist countries support individualism and promote innovation and growth. However, economic liberalism has certain downsides such as the growth of unwanted business

dominance and poverty.

ECONOMIC LIBERALISM THEORY

Economic liberalism is a philosophy as well as a way of coordinating capitalism. Adam Smith (1723-1790), a professor of philosophy at Glasgow University in Scotland, is considered the father of economic liberalism. In contrast to the new neoliberalism, this liberalism is now known as Palaeoliberalism or 'old liberalism'. It gave the market absolute precedence and was the dominant ideology in the founding countries during the 1830s and 1920s. Economic liberalization includes strategies and programmes undertaken to promote a system of economic liberalism. One can summarise the core principles of economic liberalization as follows: individualistic idea of freedom, existence of natural order, competition as the steering wheel of the economy, self-interest as the driving force in the economy.

Woodward (1992) observes that poverty reduction can be achieved through economic Liberalisation. Woodward notes that economic Liberalisation encompasses the processes including government policies that promote free trade, deregulation, elimination of subsidies, price controls and rationing system and often the downsizing or privatization of public services. In other words, Liberalisation is the process of relaxation of trade rules and regulations of a country by the government which paves the way for economic growth and development.

The Article by Wallstreetmojo Team revised by Dheeraj Vaidya, CFA, FRM refers to trade Liberalisation to elimination or easing trade barriers between countries to promote free trade of goods and services. Examples of trade barriers are tariffs, import quotas, embargoes and non-tariff barriers. The removal or reduction of trade barriers is an important element of in a free trade agreement and increases the competition in the world market for goods and services. Moreover, integration into global economy is vital for nations to promote economic growth, Industrialisation, urbanization and prosperity. Trade Liberalisation is significant to the global economy, it promotes free trade and contributes to globalisation.

METHODS

Study Design

This study adopted qualitative research method. This method was employed because it relies mainly on human perception and understanding and therefore, the researcher during primary data collection was able to interact with participants using an interview guide in order to enhance credibility of the data.

Study Setting

The study was conducted in Lusaka City within Lusaka province.

Target Population

The target population for this study included 13 informants from COMESA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Bank of Zambia, Zambia Development Agency, Zambia Statistics Agency (Central Statistics Office), Zambia Revenue Authority, Economic Association of Zambia and Jesuit Centre for Theoretical Reflection

Sampling and Sample Size

In this study, critical case sampling was used to select the informants. This sampling technique was used

because the participants were experts in the subject matter. It was also used since this study is an exploratory qualitative research with limited resources and is single case study with a small number of informants to explain the phenomenon of interest. It was also chosen because it had facilitated for an in-depth qualitative analysis of the phenomenon under investigation.

Weller et al (2018) observed that the use of saturation as salience in determining sample size in qualitative research is ideal. In this study, 13 informants from key institutions were selected by the researcher as saturation was reached at this point. Morse (2015) observed that saturation is the most common guiding principle for assessing the adequacy of purposive samples in qualitative research.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT & DATA GENERATION

Oliver (2010) observes that research instruments are tools that a researcher uses in collecting data. However, since the research was focused on secondary data, specific institutions were identified for data collection with specific methods. Creswell (2009) observes that primary data is a type of information obtained directly from first hand sources by means of survey, observation, focus and interviews or experimentation. In this study primary data was collected using an interview guide administered by the researcher. While secondary data was collected from the selected institutions either from books, Annual reports, articles, verified internet sources, etc. in order to get an in-depth understanding. Kasonde-Ngundu (2013) provides that in qualitative research, the main purpose of interviews is obtaining unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed, collecting a numerical aggregation of information from many persons and finding out a 'thing' the researcher was unable to observe themselves. An interview guide was used to collect primary data as it contained pre-defined issues to be discussed in the interview during data collection.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the researcher used thematic and content analysis approach to analyse both secondary and primary data. Bryman (2012) observes that thematic and content data analysis is used to illustrate use of data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretations. Thematic and content analysis was also considered to provide a systematic element to data analysis. In addition, the study was qualitative in nature.

Data Cleaning and collation

In this study, to clean and collate the data, the researcher reformed the data, made corrections to the data and combined the secondary and primary data sets. In addition, duplicated data was purged to minimize errors. Data mismatch, incorrect data, corrupted and incorrectly formatted data and data inconsistencies were eradicated. This was done to ensure that no important data was missing and was not susceptible to contamination at the stage of data analysis. The researcher prepared the data using standardized data formats. In this study, data was cleaned by carefully going through the thematic areas that were created from the research objectives and interview guide administered by the researcher. The body transcripts for citing verbatims read properly to help readers make sense of them.

Delimitation of the Study

The 13 key informants that were interviewed using an interview guide by the researcher were all located in Lusaka as the institutions were purposively selected based on their expertise. These included the following institutions: COMESA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Bank of Zambia, Zambia Development Agency, Zambia Statistics Agency (Central Statistics Office), Zambia Revenue Authority, Economic Association of Zambia and Jesuit Centre for Theoretical Reflection.

Ethical Considerations

The use of pseudo names facilitated the identification of each piece of information from the research questions using their titles rather than actual names as indicated in this study

Cohen et al., (2011) observes that all research activity must be carried out in an ethical manner. Cohen further said that ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place the researcher in a moral predicament which may appear quite irresolvable. Creswell (2014) observes that researchers would harm the individuals or groups they studied when research participants experience anxiety, stress, guilty and damage to self-esteem during data collection and in the interpretation made from the data provided. Rana and Dilshad (2021) observed that ethics concerns two groups of people such as those conducting research who should be aware of their obligations and responsibilities and the researched upon who have basic rights that should be protected by consent. To ethically proceed, this study considered ethical clearance from the University of Zambia Ethical Committee by obtaining an introductory letter to facilitate data collection from targeted institutions. This was in order to give confidence to the researcher as being genuine and for identification purposes. During the period of data collection, this study promoted integrity by respecting participants through obtaining consent from them before being interviewed. The study also upheld research ethics by respecting the rights of participants through making sure that they understood what the study was all about. The researcher observed strict ethical considerations that aimed at protecting participants in the research process by having ethical clearance to collect data. Participants were free to consent to being interviewed by the researcher using an interview guide administered by the researcher by emphasizing that it was academic research meant for the fulfilment of a doctoral programme in International Politics and International Relations at the University of Zambia.

Confidentiality

Creswell (2014) observes that confidentiality in research implies that identifying the participants that will not disclose information. Participants were protected by not having their names or any form of identification disclosed in any way to motivate them to give information using an interview guide administered by the researcher. Pseudo names using titles were used from the target sample size. The rights and of participants were respected and participants were informed that participation in the interview was voluntary as they were at liberty to leave the study at any time if they wished to do so. Oliver (2010) observes that informed consent involves obtaining voluntary participation of people involved and informing them of the right to withdraw from the study at any time. With this in mind, the researcher assured participants of total confidentiality and their responses remained concealed by not disclosing their names. In this study the researcher ensured that the presentations of the findings did not lead to disclosure of names of participants and names of respondent from target organisations when writing verbatims. Codes were used with pseudo names using titles of respondents to represent participants and names of institutions when writing verbatims during data analysis.

Reciprocity

Office of Human Research (2015) observes the protection of human participants in research requires voluntary involvement of participation of participants in research and their generosity may be reciprocated by payments in cash from the researcher but payments should not be more than reimbursement of a documented out-of-pocket expenses. However, in this study, the researcher did not pay anyone as participants freely participated with their consent based on the introductory letter from the University of Zambia for identification of the researcher. Payment was also avoided to avoid compromise on data collection process in terms of responses using an interview guide administered by the researcher. The

researcher in this study ensured that consent was obtained from all participants.

Health Considerations of Participants

As the study was conducted during Covid-19 period, participants were encouraged to wear face masks during data collection including the researcher so that participants were not put at risk of Covid 19. All health standards were observed during interview interactions and social distancing

was observed. Some interviews were conducted through Zoom as some participants worked from home.

RESULTS

The findings were based on secondary data and primary data which included views, thoughts and perspectives of participants from the key informants whose identities were hidden instead pseudo names using their titles were used as indicated in this study. The findings generated from the interview guide were aligned to relevant research objectives and specific questions presented in the themes reinforced with participants' verbatim responses from the interview guide administered by the researcher. Verbal responses from the participants and their respective institutions were represented by pseudo names using their titles representing codes rather than numbers as codes for ethical considerations. The presentation of findings and discussions were based on themes created in this study. This article is based on the following theme picked from the five themes identified in the study on the "Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Africa: A Case Study of Zambia from 2010-2021".

Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Agriculture and Rural Development

The contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through agriculture and rural development was broken into specific findings and discussions that contributed to cooperation in agriculture and rural development with appropriate sub-headings. With COMESA's financial support.

Contribution of COMESA in the fight against Poverty in Zambia through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) supported Zambia's agricultural development policy formulation and implementation amongst others, establishing clear commitment to deliver on investing 10 percent of national budgets in the agricultural sector and achieving a six percent growth in agricultural domestic product. The CAADP agenda sought to change the way stakeholders in the sector did the business by critically reviewing and transforming institutional arrangements, related policies, and human capacities and competencies. The study established that the activities of 2012 focused on support to CAADP Implementation at country level in Zambia, strengthening regional planning and policy formulation, facilitating monitoring and evaluation of regional strategic objectives, facilitating regional communication and information sharing, capacity building at the Secretariat, national and regional level, and strengthening regional partnerships. These strategic functions were also meant to operationalise the COMESA Agriculture Development Strategic Framework (2010-2014).

COMESA mobilized technical, financial and organizational support to assist Zambia in enhancing country level implementation. Zambia had officially launched the CAADP implementation process and signed its National CAADP Compacts. The study established that COMESA also fought poverty in Africa through food production and nutrition security made possible through agricultural policies that encouraged food production and safety in the short and long term in the process supporting Zambia's agricultural development. The discussions and findings in this study were focused on a case study of Zambia from 2010-

2021. According to COMESA Annual Reports (2012-2013) it was noted that Zambia received financial support for agricultural development from Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme to ensure food production and safety in the short and long term. Table 1 below shows Zambia’s CAADP progress at country level in the COMESA region.

Table 1: Zambia’s Agricultural Development through Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) with Financial Support from COMESA and its International Cooperating Partners of Development

Country	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Progress Milestones
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zambia effected Compact Signing in January 2011 • National Agriculture and Food Security Investments Plans (NAIP) Technical Review was done in April 2013 in Zambia • Business Meeting: May 2013 (approx. \$480M pledged by various cooperating partners to bridge the National Agriculture Investments Plans (NAIP) financing gap in Zambia • Budgetary Allocation to Agriculture in Zambia in 2012 was 12.8%

Source: COMESA Annual Report (2012-2013)

In 2016, COMESA mobilised technical, financial and organizational support to assist Zambia in enhancing country level CAADP implementation. COMESA expedited the recruitment of a regional CAADP process facilitator and a policy analyst, whose roles included finalisation of the COMESA Regional CAADP Compact and facilitation of dialogue on the Tripartite Regional Agriculture Development and Investment Framework. A monitoring and evaluation specialist was recruited to support Zambia in the operationalisation of the CAADP M&E Framework at the national level. The process of developing a COMESA-wide CAADP M&E system had been initiated including developing standard tools for assessing country capacities in M&E and tracking the country CAADP process benchmarks. COMESA had also provided technical backstopping support to Zambia in formulating results frameworks for their National Agricultural Investment Plans. Various capacity strengthening initiatives, covering thematic areas, had been undertaken during the period under review in collaboration with regional and international CAADP partners such as these: FAO, GIZ, USAID, World Bank, University of Zambia etc. COMESA facilitated the participation of Zambia in such capacity building related activities, and also mobilized technical and organizational support to add value to various stages of the CAADP implementation process at country level. This enhanced peer learning and exchange of experiences. The main challenge was the need to scale-up financing for implementation of programmes through funding sources.

DISCUSSIONS

Zambia Annual Country Report (2020) in a publication published by the World Food Programme titled “Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024”, it was observed that Zambia’s 1.5 million smallholder farmers produce about 80 percent of domestic supply of food. The Zambian agriculture sector comprises of crops, livestock and fisheries whose main broad categories of farmers include small-scale, medium and large scale. Small-scale farmers represented the majority approximately 90 % of Zambia’s agricultural producers and were generally subsistence producers of staple foods with occasional marketable surplus. Medium scale farmers produce maize and a few other cash crops for the market while large scale farmers produce various crops for local and export markets. Agriculture contributes about 19 percent to gross domestic product (GDP) and employs three quarters of the population in Zambia. Small scale farmers in Zambia produce bulk of the

country's food needs roughly 80% of as well as cash crops which require the right agricultural policies. However, farmers were constantly affected by climate change affecting their yields, had poor infrastructure, inadequate input use which undermined their productivity, profitability and sustainability. The study established that poverty was wide spread in Zambia as many farmers lacked access to markets and credits including lack of access to storage to keep their food and seed from spoiling. There was also inadequate quality seed and fertilizers which affected cotton productivity and hence price volatility. These factors led to the Government of Zambia seeking financial help from different partners of development particularly from COMESA in the fight against poverty.

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Small Scale Farmers with Support from Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) in collaboration with COMESA.**

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, it was established that Zambia had worked with Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) through mobilisation of small-scale farmers in partnership with private and public institutions in regularising policy on staple foods, through policy outreach and research, creating market access, and building the capacity of the small-scale farmers to enable them compete in the domestic, regional and international markets. It was noted further noted that through COMESA, the European Union helped Zambia to come up with seed trade regulations and standards to be harmonised via consultations with the private seed sector that were represented regionally by Africa Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) and at national level by the national seed trade associations; the national plant protection organisation within the ministries of agriculture as well as various media organizations. The Ministry of Agriculture also noted that the draft COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations was tabled before the COMESA Technical Committee on Agriculture and Environment, in 2013. Between October 2012 and September 2013, ACTESA facilitated approval of the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations and also created awareness on the existence of the draft seed regulations before and after their approval to which Zambia was able to comply in managing standards and regulations in the seed sector. The awareness creation workshops included dialogue on alignment of the national seed laws to the seed trade regulations in preparation for domestication in Zambia.

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Trade Barriers in Agricultural Sector**

The Ministry of Agriculture in Zambia noted that the multiplicity of standards coupled with variations in conformity assessment procedures instituted by Governments as official controls, for example, inspections, sampling and testing protocols and certification processes to manage food safety problems or prevent the spread of pests, plant and animal diseases were often unnecessarily restrictive to trade. When unjustified controls persist, they translate into non-tariff barriers. While Zambia had at the highest level endorsed a number of decisions to eliminate non-tariff barriers (NTBs), some of them relating to agriculture, there was growing evidence that sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) related trade barriers had persisted in the midst of an expanding Free Trade Area (FTA). This could hinder agricultural development in the region hence there was need for standardisation. COMESA had taken two approaches to address this problem:

1. The first approach recognized that varied capacities amongst COMESA countries to harmonize sanitary and phyto -sanitary measures (SPS) with international standards and/or negotiate equivalence agreements constituted trade barriers. In this regard, COMESA supported Zambia to negotiate market access agreements whilst applying harmonization and equivalence approaches
2. The second approach was the annual convening of a regional platform, the regional sanitary and phyto -sanitary (SPS) sub-committee, where existing SPS and market access issues were discussed and solutions were explored before the issue became a full-blown dispute. COMESA continued to

strengthen the Regional SPS subcommittee to become an effective mechanism for addressing SPS issues and eliminating SPS trade barriers

- **Contribution of COMESA in the fight against Poverty in Zambia through livestock Development with Financial Support from COMESA Livestock Unit**

COMESA supported Zambia to enhance innovation, generation and utilization of technologies, capacities and entrepreneurship skills of livestock value chain actors including access to markets, services and value addition. The study further established that Zambia's livestock development received support from COMESA Livestock Unit which supported efforts aimed at driving sustainable livestock production and productivity, value addition and access to markets in the COMESA region. The Livestock Unit supported Zambia to attract public and private investments along the different livestock value chains. Livestock production and animal health was enhanced in Zambia to increase productivity and resilience of livestock production systems. The study also established that Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) was endorsed by the 13th COMESA Summit in June 2009 as a specialised Agency that worked with Zambia to:

1. deliver agricultural services to enable smallholders improve their productivity add-value to their products and access markets and
2. promote various market models such as warehouse receipt systems, agriculture commodity exchanges, purchase for progress and access to finance, production and marketing services.

In 2010, Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) made much progress in its operations, integrating producers into national, regional and international markets. Zambia adopted some of ACTESA's operations and transformed them into economic policies through its National Investment Policy and National Industrialisation Policy. This helped Zambia to implement various programmes especially those related to small and medium enterprises.

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Security and Food Commodity Trade in the COMESA Region**

Following the recommendations of Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), the Council at its meeting in August 2010 established five clusters for agricultural trade in staple food products in Zambia. Pursuant to the designation of clusters by the Council, ACTESA at its 4th Stakeholder Forum in Entebbe, Uganda, agreed amongst other issues, to hold the first meeting of the clusters by mid-2011 at which critical support activities for producers were concluded. ACTESA continued to implement a number of important programmes in Zambia that were critical in the commercialisation of small producers.

The Market Linkages Initiative (MLI) supported the ACTESA Secretariat and also focused on promoting growth in food staples trade in Zambia to ensure food security. ACTESA initiated discussions with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other partners of development and agreed on modalities for continued support to Market Linkages Initiative (MLI) when the initial contract with the USAID ended after September 2011. The €20 million COMESA Regional Agricultural Inputs Programme (COMRAP) supported by the European Community (EC) was officially launched on 21 July, 2010 and was implemented in Zambia. The programme aimed to increase agricultural productivity through enhanced access to three intertwined factors, namely: finance (credit), seed and fertilizer. Overall, the programme was expected to assist 3,000,000 smallholder farmers, train 6,000 agro-dealers and accredited, train 700 Bank managers on lending to smallholder farmers. The implementation in Zambia was through the line ministries of Agriculture and livestock and in the country structures such as the national farmers associations, international organizations, sub-regional and international research centres, national research institutions

and extension, international and national insurance companies, and regional and national banks.

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Natural Products Development and Natural Products Commodity Marketing**

In line with the Intergovernmental Committee decision of COMESA, it was decided that Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) to include natural products commodity marketing such as honey and other forest products in its portfolio, Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) in collaboration with APITRADE Africa held an exhibition from 26-27 October, 2010 in Lusaka, Zambia whose theme was: “Role of beekeeping in attaining food security in Africa” to show case the potential of the honey and other forestry products.

The study established that the Industrial and Private Development Division of COMESA supported initiatives to promote sustainable industrialization and private sector development in Zambia. The emphasis of the bee keeping was value addition for exports markets. The Division supported the development of regional industrial policy and strategic frameworks including the support for the development of regional SMEs Policy framework in Zambia. Zambia was supported to domesticate the regional industrialisation and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and local content policy frameworks. It also mobilised technical and financial resource to support the implementation of regional and national industrialization and SMEs strategies and programmes.

As regards to Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Unit (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), there was support efforts to enhance regional and global market access and trade as well as plant and animal health and food security in Zambia. The Sanitary and Phytosanitary Unit ensured to work with Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulatory authorities in Zambia to facilitate market access agreements, implement capacity building programmes across the private and public sectors aimed at compliance with trade partners in sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) requirements.

The Sanitary and phyto-sanitary Unit also worked with Zambia National Bureaus of Standards to develop:

- national recognition frameworks
- supported laboratories to achieve equivalence of laboratory test results and
- recognise each other’s certificate of analysis.

The Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Unit further supported a network of plant health and animal health professionals in the public and private sector in Zambia to manage transboundary plant pests and animal diseases in a transparent and credible manner that did not obstruct trade.

The study further established that COMESA had a Unit or Agency that supported agriculture in Zambia known as Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA). It is a specialised Agency of COMESA established in line with Article 182 of the COMESA Treaty. Its programmes were aimed at boosting of intra-regional agriculture trade through supporting small-scale farmers’ access to agricultural input, output and financial markets. It supported harmonization of agro-inputs of seeds and fertilizers, policies, regulations, standards, quality assurance and market development in COMESA region. The study further established that the Agency supported harmonization of grades and standards for staple food commodities in Zambia to enhance small-scale farmers’ access to national, regional and international markets. It also built capacities of farmers and provided market-linkage support to enhance their success to markets as well as strengthening of market services and facilities. Furthermore, the study established that the Agency, assisted private firms in investing in knowledge, technology and other forms of transfers to the benefit of local suppliers and further provided comprehensive and evidence-based policy findings and

improving the policy environment for investment and agriculture trade in Zambia.

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Agriculture Productivity of Staple Crops and Food Security in Zambia with Financial Support from COMESA**

The study established that increasing agricultural productivity of staple crops and food security in Zambia was the main focus. Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa supported Zambia's agricultural development to enhance productivity and food security the region. According to the COMESA Strategic Plan of 2020-2030, it was noted that Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) is an agency of COMESA that boosts food production through various strategic plans. The aim of this Strategic Plan is to boost intra-regional agricultural trade through support of small -scale farmers access to agricultural input, output and financial markets. The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) Strategic Plan 2020-2030 can be said to be a revitalization strategy stemming from the previous strategy covering the period 2011-2020 approved by the COMESA Council of Ministers in 2011.

The study established that the Alliance for Commodity for Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa's vision (ACTESA) in Zambia was to realize a robust, modern and prosperous regional agriculture sector in which all stakeholders had a high standard of living especially small-scale farmers in rural areas of Zambia being the majority. To achieve this vision, Zambia through ACTESA integrated smallholder farmers into domestic, regional and international markets through an approved policy environment, expanded market facilities, services and capacity building. The following were some key achievements in Zambia in relation to input and output market harmonisation interventions during the period under review as directed by the COMESA Council of Ministers between 2010 and 2019:

1. ACTESA's Strategic plan 2011-2020 of realizing a robust, modern and prosperous regional agricultural sector was approved in October 2012 by the COMESA Council of Ministers
2. The COMESA Seed Harmonisation Regulations were approved in 2014 by the Council of Ministers and the COMESA Harmonisation Implementation Programme (COMSHIP) and was endorsed in 2015
3. As of 2019, Zambia domesticated the COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations
4. Zambia established a regional food balance sheet as a sign of commitment
5. In 2019, COMESA Council of Ministers endorsed the development of the ACTESA Strategic Plan 2020-2030 guiding implementation

- **Contribution of COMESA in the Fight against Poverty in Zambia through Support from International Cooperating Partners -COMESA Regional Agro -Inputs Programme (COMRAP)**

Zambia through the COMESA Regional Agro-Inputs Programme (COMRAP) implemented by the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) in Zambia contributed to the improvement of rural household food security and livelihoods. This was done through training and capacity building of the national and regional input providers and harmonisation of the regional input regulations and support to the seed sector. The following were achieved under the three result areas of COMESA Regional Agro-Inputs Programme (COMRAP) in Zambia:

1. Nature and delivery of financial services improved. Over 775 bank executives, front office staff, insurance officers, farmers and other stakeholders trained in rural finance management, and over 795 insurance officers, bank executives, front office staff and other stakeholders were trained on weather index insurance
2. 25 products of financial services were developed
3. The meteorological stations were capacitated through provision of the automated weather equipment

to ensure quality use of weather index insurance

4. Agro-dealer network strengthened or established- New national associations established in Zambia. These associations played an instrumental role in advocacy, joint procurement and bargaining on business transactions
5. A total of 5,279 Agro-dealers were trained in Zambia
6. A total of 2,034 agents were trained in Zambia
7. Over 40 percent of agro-dealers/agents were trained in Zambia joined their national associations as new members and four new national associations were formed in Zambia
8. An accreditation toolkit was successfully developed and a total of 126 inspectors were trained in Zambia to undertake inspection of agro-dealer's operations
9. Seed and plant material commodity chain was supported in Zambia and other COMESA Member States
10. During the seed multiplication activities, 26,116 metric tonnes (MT) of seed were produced and 25 percent of this seed was multiplied further as certified seed in the 2012/13 season. The seed multiplication activities increased the volumes of quality seed and germ-plasm of new varieties through the foundation seed multiplication to be availed to small-holder farmers
11. The procured seed certification and processing equipment contributed to better quality seed assessed by small-holder farmers in Zambia through increased laboratory and field inspections and further processing of seed availed by small-holder farmers
12. The draft COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations harmonising regional seed certification was done and
13. Variety release and common quarantine pest list were developed.

The study established that during implementation of COMESA Regional Agro-Inputs Programme (COMRAP) in Zambia, participation of women agro-dealers and women seed multipliers were deliberately encouraged to use safe crop protection and fertilizer was an integral component of the agro-dealer training in line with good agricultural practices recognized globally in crop production for women. The programme also managed to link suppliers/manufacturers to agro-dealers who were able to secure consignment stocks (trade credit) from suppliers and manufacturers. Overall, COMRAP programme in Zambia contributed to creating systems and structures for the delivery of inputs, micro finance to smallholder farmers and building the capacity of agro-dealers including initiation of accreditation of agro-dealers.

The Study further established that there were other notable successes of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) implementation process in Zambia which included increasing political commitment and attention to the agricultural sector. This had seen incremental budgetary allocation to agriculture in Zambia. Capacity building at national and regional level was another strategic focus area and in August 2013, COMESA successfully organised the first regional capacity building workshop on sustainable land and water management. The workshop was organised in conjunction with the University of Zambia, a regional centre of excellence and lead institution for Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar I focusing on land and water management.

With increasing support and goodwill from development partners, COMESA hoped to leverage the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda to promote economic growth, trade and regional integration not only in the region but on the entire continent of Africa as way of fighting poverty. Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was instituted by the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. It embodies the resolution by African Heads of State at the Second Ordinary Assembly of the African Union (AU) to accelerate African led economic growth and poverty reduction using agriculture agro-dealer network strengthened or established:

1. New national associations established in Zambia. These associations played an instrumental role in advocacy, joint procurement and bargaining on business transactions
2. A total of 5,279 Agro-dealers trained
3. A total of 2,034 agents trained
4. Over 40 percent of agro-dealers/agents trained joined their national associations as new members and a new national association was formed in Zambia
5. An accreditation toolkit was successfully developed and a total of 126 inspectors were trained to undertake inspection of agro-dealer's operations
6. Seed and plant material commodity chain was supported. During the seed multiplication activities, 26,116 metric tonnes (MT) of seed was produced and 25 percent of this seed was multiplied further as certified seed in the 2012/13 season. The seed multiplication activities increased the volumes of quality seed and germ-plasm of new varieties through the foundation seed multiplication to be availed to small-holder farmers
7. Procured seed certification and processing equipment contributed to better quality seed assessed by small-holder farmers in Zambia through increased laboratory and field inspections and further processing of seed availed by small-holder farmers
8. The draft COMESA Seed Trade Harmonisation Regulations harmonising regional seed certification was achieved and
9. variety release and common quarantine pest list were developed.

• **Integrated Production and Pest Management Programme (IPPM)**

The Integrated Production and Pest Management Programme (IPPM) became active in Zambia since 2014 and is an implementation mechanism of the support programme for the consolidation of the action framework under the European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton. It contributes to the application of COMESA's regional cotton sector strategy as well as putting national strategies into action in Zambia to ensure a healthy, well-functioning cotton sector with improved production and consequently better rural livelihoods and food security.

The study established that the Integrated Production and Pest Management Programme (IPPM) activities in Zambia had focused on increasing the number of facilitators equipped with the technical know-how to boost cotton production sustainably. Some 30 facilitators had been trained during the 2014 cotton growing season to facilitate farmer Field Schools (FFS). These facilitators, in turn had set up pilot Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in their communities in order to share their knowledge with local farmers. To date, the project had trained 30 facilitators in Mumbwa in Zambia, a centrally located zone that boasted of a new producer - managed cotton company as well as several cotton ginneries.

According to COMESA Annual Report (2014), it was noted that the Integrated Production and Pest Management programme (IPPM) in Zambia ensured supporting competitiveness and sustainable intensification of African cotton sectors through capacity development on integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM). The Integrated Production and Pest Management programme (IPPM) was working with various partners in Zambia that included the following : Cargill, Continental, Cotton Association of Zambia, Cotton Board of Zambia, Cotton Development Trust, Grafax, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Mumbwa Farmers Ginnery and Processing Company, Zambia Cotton Ginners Association.

According to the Research Manager at Zambia Development Agency (2021), it was noted that the Integrated Production and Pest Management programme (IPPM) had been active in Zambia since 2014 as an implementation mechanism of the support programme for the consolidation of the action framework under the European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton. The study further established that the Integrated

Production and Pest Management (IPPM) activities in Zambia had focused on increasing the number of facilitators equipped with the technical know-how to boost cotton production sustainably. Some 30 facilitators had been trained during the 2014 cotton growing season to facilitate farmer field schools (FFS). These facilitators, in turn, had set up pilot Farmers Field Schools (FFS) in their communities in order to share their knowledge with local farmers.

Furthermore, a Senior Research Fellow for COMESA (2021) observed that training in Farmers Field Schools covered topics such as good agricultural practices, including the use of quality seed and the application of compost, for better crop growth. Given the heavy use of pesticides in growing cotton, the Integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM) approach also educated farmers on the risks to human health and the environment and encouraged farmers to control pests biologically by strengthening their understanding of pests' natural enemies. Over the course of a cropping season, with support from the facilitator, farmers made field experiments to help solve their agricultural problems. They tested and compared new agricultural practices and technologies to see what worked best for healthy crop growth including the use of improved varieties, better plant management techniques to boost productivity and reduce pest incidence and use of biopesticides. The study further established that the Integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM) project in Zambia had trained 30 facilitators in Mumbwa town, a centrally-located zone that hosted a new producer-managed cotton company, as well as several cotton ginneries. It was hoped that farmers yields would increase their incomes leading to poverty reduction. It would also create employment as result of better yields annually.

According to the Government of Zambia (2021) with support from COMESA Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) worked on modalities to establish a Joint Agro Industrial Park with Zimbabwe. The proposed project was expected to increase the availability of industrial goods and services for the bilateral market and expand intra-regional trade in manufacturing. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Zambia and Zimbabwe in March 2021, to mark the launch the first ever joint industrialization co-operation programme between the two countries.

The purpose of such an arrangement was to increase value addition to agricultural products from raw materials to finished product with high value addition. Zambia's industrial park is partially located at the border with Zimbabwe. The mandate of the Industrial Park was to prioritise processing of value chains such as cotton, maize, wheat, rice, soya beans, sugar, livestock (leather and dairy) and horticulture. These sectors provide extensive linkages with the manufacturing sector particularly in the processed food sub-sector which is key in promoting industrial activities. The project was aligned with the COMESA Industrial Strategy, which Zambia adopted to create a globally competitive environment-friendly, diversified industrial sector which is based on innovation and manufacturing as tools for transforming regional resources into sustainable wealth and prosperity for all. The Project was earmarked to create employment and in the long run reducing poverty in Zambia. The study further established that formation of special economic zones (SEZs) was encouraged as they had a potential to be used as platforms for regional and sub-regional markets and inputs supply.

Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (2015) analysis indicated that rural areas had a higher proportion of persons employed in the informal sector at 92.1 percent compared to 60.6 percent of employed persons in urban areas. At province level, Eastern Province of Zambia had the highest persons employed in the informal sector employment at 92.4 percent while Lusaka province had the lowest proportion at 61.6 percent. Table 2 shows the percentage shares of employed persons in formal and informal sector employment by sex, residence, stratum and province in Zambia in 2015. These employment levels in rural areas of Zambia's provinces both in formal and informal sectors could be attributed to COMESA's support to the agricultural sector development as established in this study in Zambia shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Percentage shares of Employed Persons by formal and Informal Sector Employment, Sex, Residence, Stratum and province, Zambia 2015

Residence, stratum, province and industry	Number in Formal Sector	Percent-Formal Sector	Number in Informal Sector	Percentage-Informal Sector	Number of Employed Person, 12 or older
Total Zambia	983,162	19.7	4,018,939	80.3	5,002,101
Male	712,498	25.8	2,048,361	74.2	2,760,859
Female	270,664	12.1	1,970,577	87.9	2,241,242
Residence: Rural	249,708	7.9	2,891,263	92.1	3, 141,070
Residence: Urban	733, 454	39.4	1,127,576	60.6	186,030
Stratum: Small-Scale	188,302	6.6	2,660,848	93.4	2,849,149
Stratum: Medium	8,793	6.3	130,009	93.7	138,802
Stratum: Large Scale	1,849	23.1	6,138	26.9	7,987
Non-Agric	50, 765	35.0	94,367	65.0	145,132
Low Cost	463,399	32.8	947,745	67.2	1,411,145
Medium Cost	136,038	53.7	117,132	46.3	253,170
Province: Central	74,192	15.5	404,914	84.5	479,106
Province: Copperbelt	238,910	35.2	440,703	64.8	679,614
Province: Eastern	52, 392	7.6	637,332	92.4	689, 724
Province: Luapula	324, 750	38.4	520,717	61.6	845,467
Province: Muchinga	38,650	12.7	264,688	87.3	303, 338
Province: Northern	34,409	7.3	435,449	92.7	469,858
Province: North-western	28, 649	11.7	216,633	88.3	245,858
Province: Southern	121, 788	20.3	477,970	79.7	599,758
Province: Western	29,781	8.9	303,883	91.1	334,664

Source: Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report (2015)

Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (2015) in Table 3 below shows percentage share of employed persons by industry and sector of employment. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries had the highest proportion of persons employed in the informal sector at 94.6 percent while education had one of the lowest proportions of persons employed in the informal sector at 7.5 percent.

Table 3: Percentage Share of Employed Persons by Industry and Sector of Employment, Zambia 2015

Residence stratum, province, industry	Formal Sector- Number Employed	Formal Sector- percentage	Informal Sector - Number /percentage employed	Number of Employed Persons 12 years or older
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	159,066	5.4	2,788,662/ 94.6	2,937,928
Mining and quarrying	71,647	85.8	11,901/14.2	83,548
Manufacturing	78,022	36.9	133,662/63.1	211,685
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	20,137	90.0	2,236/10.0	22,373
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	4,032	81.8	895/18.2	4,927
Construction	53,165	28.5	133,116/71.5	746,281
Trade, wholesale and retail distribution	83,776	11.2	662,280/88.8	746,455
Transportation and storage	49,090	39.3	75,710/60.7	124,800
Accommodation and food service activities	33,178	63.2	19,284/36.8	52,461
Information and communication	15,669	73.0	5,800/27.0	21,469
Financial and insurance activities	36,632	92.2	3,090/7.8	39,722
Real estate activities	800	11.6	6,092/88.4	6,892
Professional, scientific and technical activities	10,735	70.1	4,570/29.9	54,942
Administrative and support activities	38,494	70.1	16, 448/29.9	54,942
Public administration and defense, compulsory social security	86,148	100	0/0.0	86,148
Education	152,847	92,5	12,311/7.5	165, 158
Human health and social work	59, 325	85.8	9,835/14.2	69,169
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,599	55.2	2,923/44.8	6,523
Other service activities	18,679	24.4	57,953/75.6	76,632
Activities of household as employers	7,436	8.4	81,221/91.6	88, 657
Activities of extraterritorial organisation and bodies	684	100	0/0.0	684

Source: Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report (2015)

The study also according to COMESA Annual Report (2018), it was noted that Zambia benefited from Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) whose mandate is to facilitate the development of the

leather sector in Africa in general and in the COMESA. The activities undertaken by Leather and Leather Products (ALLPI) in 2018 were guided by its strategy for the period 2016 -2025 considering global dynamics and the mega trends that affect business in the leather sector. Zambia benefited in capacity building as the Institute implemented capacity building activities in technical and soft skills covering the following areas:

1. export readiness
2. curriculum development
3. cluster design & implementation
4. business plan designing
5. Training in advanced tanning clinics
6. resource optimization
7. business plan designing for clusters
8. vegetable tanning and safety glove production training.

Table 4 below outlines the activities undertaken and output/impact achieved that included Zambia’s participation in the leather and leather products.

Table 4: Zambia’s Capacity Building Strategy with Support from COMESA to Facilitate Production of Leather Products through Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) as per Activities and output /Impact 2018

Activity/intervention	Output/Impact
Leather Sector Policy /Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Leather and Leather Institute Products (ALLPI) facilitated development of leather sector specific strategies in Zambia
Inter and Intra -Trade Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) co-organized trade fairs in Zambia and facilitated/sponsored the participation of SMEs in trade fairs in Zambia
Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings were conducted in Zambia on cleaner technology, footwear and industrial gloves-making, cottage tanning, cluster management and governance
Common Use Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satellite design studios were equipped through Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) facilitation in Zambia
Regional Experts Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert teams at regional level were organized to review and harmonize training curricula, academia platform, and regional design studio in Zambia

Source: COMESA Annual Report (2018)

In addition to the above indicated activities, Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) undertook fund raising, trade promotion through the facilitation of value chain players to participate in

regional and international trade fairs, designed modern effluent treatment systems, installation and commissioning of equipment in Regional Design Studios (RDS) /Cluster Centres and designed hides and skins traceability system in Zambia. Following the rebranding of COMESA/LLPI to ALLPI in line with the Council Decision of 2017, the Institute completed the updating and reconciliation of its governing documents with the rebranding. Some of the recorded and expected outcomes of ALLPI intervention in Zambia included enhanced skills development at various nodes of the leather value chain as follows:

1. The quality and design of footwear and leather goods had significantly improved, as the SME had adopted new technical production techniques in Zambia
2. The SMEs' business approach had been transformed, SMEs had created business linkages with suppliers of leather and other accessories in Zambia and in the COMESA region
3. SMEs competitiveness and growth were enhanced in Zambia
4. Contributed to cleaner production systems and a cleaner environment; efficient and effective implementation of the cluster and incubation programmes in Zambia
5. Improved collaboration and networking between Government, private sector, academia and other leather value chain actors such as the Lusaka Technical College and the University of Zambia and
6. Enhanced knowledge base to influence policy and interventions designing among others.

CONCLUSION

It is very difficult for any country to develop in the absence of interventions such as regional integration, investment promotion, private sector development, agricultural development and industrialization. As such, Zambia like any other country, requires a solid industrial base to start adding value to agricultural produce and other natural resources to create wealth and employment. Thus, Government has a task to ensure that it promotes investment and trade to achieve economic development through regional integration, which comes with competition. Therefore, a competitive market is an ingredient for economic growth and enables countries to adjust to changes and become more innovative. Zambia had realized these integral factors by subscribing to various economic blocs that have played a positive role in the development of global trade resulting in economic integration. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which has its secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia is such a regional economic community (REC) which Zambia is affiliated to helps to ease trade by improving the business climate and harmonizing investment policies, procedures and regulations in Zambia. Investments that have the potential to empower local people with jobs and opportunities to expand their businesses need to be prioritised in Zambia and Government should pay attention to investments that empower the local people with jobs, and wealth creation. The Zambian Government should concentrate on critical investments that would sustain Zambia's currency and the economy key in attracting local investors and foreign direct investment (FDIs). Zambia had benefited from these programmes through greater industrial productivity and competitiveness. There is also increased agricultural production and food security in Zambia. There is also a more rational exploitation of natural resources and more harmonised monetary, banking and financial policies to help small scale farmers to have access to credit and markets.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme should be strengthened as it continues to support investment in agricultural development in Zambia particularly enhancing support to small-scale farmers.

What is known known on this Topic:

1. Studies have been conducted in the COMESA Region on poverty comprehensively
2. Poverty levels in most COMESA Member States had been increasing

3. Studies have been conducted on agricultural and rural development in the COMESA region but not specific to Zambia

What this Study adds:

1. No specific study was conducted on contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through agricultural and rural development. The study adds to the body of knowledge
2. Policy and decision makers may use the findings for policy formulation and implementation
3. This study has shown the deficiencies which could be used for policy decision and implementation

Originality of the article

None of the existing studies have exhaustively analysed the contributions of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia from 2010 to 2021. Therefore, this study is the first to interrogate this area of COMESA in the context of Zambia. The studies conducted in the past have not fully contextualized the following key thematic areas of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia. Contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through cooperation in agriculture and rural development of this article was anchored one of the five objectives in this study which included the following thematic areas generated during data analysis based on the specific objectives and research questions of the study:

1. Contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through trade liberalization.
2. The contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through trade facilitation.
3. Contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through cooperation in agriculture and rural development.
4. Contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through private sector development.
5. Contribution of COMESA in the fight against poverty in Zambia through the promotion of foreign direct investment.

Declaration of Interest

The Authors declare that they have no competing interest

REFERENCES

1. Braun, v., and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A practical Guide for Beginners*, London, Sage Publications.
2. Bryman, A (2012). *Social Research Methods*, London, Oxford University Press, UK.
3. Bwalya et al. (2021). *Zambia Poverty Dynamics National Report*, Chronic Poverty Advisory Council Network, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK.
4. Central Statistics Office (2015), *Living Conditions Monitoring Survey Report*, Lusaka, Zambia.
5. Charmaz, K. (2008, pp155-170). *Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method*, *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, New York: Guilford Press, USA.
6. Chris Martin (2015). *The Role of Digital Innovation in Creating Sustainable Society*, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK.
7. Cohen, C, Manion, L and Morrison. (2017), *Research Methods in Education*, 6th Edition, London: Routledge, UK.
8. COMESA Annual Report (2010), COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.
9. COMESA Annual Report (2012), COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.
10. COMESA Annual Report (2013), COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.
11. COMESA Annual Report (2018), COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.
12. COMESA Statistics (2010), COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia.
13. Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Qualitative and*

- Quantitative Research, New York, Pearson, USA.
14. Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th Edition, London, SAGE Publications, INC.
 15. Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Enquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd Edition, Thousand Ok, California: Sage Publications, USA.
 16. Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* 3rd Edition, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, USA.
 17. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, USA.
 18. Hennink Monique and Kaiser Bonnie. K. (2017). *Sample Sizes for saturation in Qualitative Research: A System Review of Empirical Tests*, Hubert Department of global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, 1518 Clifton Rd Atlanta, GA, 30322 and Department of Anthropology and Global Health Programme, University of California San Diego, 9500 Gilman Drive 0532, La Jolla, CA 92093, USA.
 19. Kasonde-Ng'andu, S (2013). *Writing a Research Proposal in Educational Research*, Lusaka: University of Zambia Press, Lusaka, Zambia.
 20. Kombo, K. D. and Tromp, L. A. D. (2009). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*, Pauline's Publishers, Nairobi, Kenya.
 21. Morse Janice. M. (2015, PP557). *Assessing the Adequacy of Purposive Samples in Qualitative Research*, University of Utah, USA.
 22. Office of Human Research (2015). *Auburn University Human Research Protection Programme*, Auburn, Alabama, USA.
 23. Oliver, P. (2010). *Understanding the Research Process*, London: Sage Publications, UK.
 24. Patton, M.Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* 4rd Edition, Integrating Theory and Practice, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, USA.
 25. Rana, J and Dilshad, S. (2021). *Ethical Issues in Research*. In: Farazimand A, *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*, Springer Cham, Switzerland.
 26. Ridzuan, F. & Wan Mold Nazmee Wan Zainon (2019). *A Review on Data Cleansing Methods for Big Data*, *Procedia Computer Science*, Volume 161, pp 731738, Elsevier BV, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
 27. Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative Case Studies*. In N.K Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 3rd ed. pp443-466, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, USA.
 28. Swapnil Bandgar (2021). *Data Preparation in Data Science*, Published in *Analytic Vidhya*, Gurgaon, Haryana, India.
 29. Swapnil, W. K., Anil H.Y., and Sonu G. (2016). *Big Data: Characteristics, Challenges and Data Mining* International Journal of Computer Application: 25-29, Taylor and Francis Ltd, Publishing House, UK.
 30. Walllman, N. (2011). *Research Methods: The Basics*, London, Routledge, United Kingdom
 31. Weller, S. C., Vickers, B, H. R., Blackburn, A. M, Borgatti, S., Gravlee, C., and Johnson (2018). *An open -ended interview questions and saturation*, *Plos One*, 13 (6).
 32. Sargeant Joan PhD. (2012), *Qualitative Research Part II: Participants, Analysis, Quality Assurance*, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD published in the *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, Washington, D. C, USA.
 33. Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research Design and Methods* 6th Ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, USA.
 34. Yin, R.K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, London: Sage Publications, UK.
 35. Yin, R.K. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: Guilford Press, USA.
 36. *Zambia Annual Country Report (2019), Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024*, Published by World Food Programme, Rome, Italy.