The COMESA Development Paradigm Based on Best Practices

*A Call for Papers to Assist Policy Formulation for Inclusive Development*

The region may be awash with conferences and material suggesting that Africa is headed in the right direction in its development trajectory, but the reality on the ground may in many cases show an economic growth that is not necessarily achieving key public policy objectives especially meaningful job creation and decent incomes especially for the ordinary people. The importance of tangible inclusive development cannot therefore be overemphasized as the overarching test of how well the region is doing. In this context then, COMESA Secretariat is receiving papers from interested contributors for consideration in elaboration of a development paradigm based on best practices. If published or circulated, the paper will carry the author’s names. The papers may cover the following areas:

a. Introducing the concept of a development model that lifts the majority of the population out of poverty through targeted wealth-creation programs, in light of internationally agreed goals and the COMESA vision, to set out in some detail the key elements of a possible organizing logic for all COMESA programs;

b. What COMESA is and what it has done best since its establishment in 1994, concluding with suggestions for best practices in regional integration programs, eg the approach that promotes trade facilitation and interconnectivity into a seamless regional market; a rule-based system that has seen the elimination of duties and quotas and establishment of mechanisms for addressing NTBs; improving macroeconomic and political stability; what attracts foreign investment and generates local and regional investment in COMESA, drawing on the UNIDO surveys and COMESA statistical surveys (the regional market and macroeconomic and political stability), initiating programs for rural transformation and wealth creation for the ordinary people: categorizing these lessons into those for the big picture and those for grass-root approaches;

c. Case studies of success stories: companies that have benefited from the FTA within the context of COMESA becoming a leading export market for various member states, leading investment destinations in terms of subsectors with an assessment of key location factors (big companies), mobilization of MSMEs through clustering and location in designated areas such as industrial parks and
through commercial villages and warehouse receipt systems (small proprietors), trade and project finance (dedicated credit lines in high street banks and rural financial institutions), priority sectors for economic development in terms of job creation and universal access to basic services as social infrastructure as well as rapid growth poles, resource mobilization from the public through shares and bonds; and the interface between these initiatives and COMESA programs; innovators, innovation communities and innovation ecosystems; and sports industries;

d. Millennium villages – 6-8 out of the 13 millennium villages of the world are in the COMESA region: success stories (mobile banking in Malawi, cultural products in Rwanda, replication in Rwanda, education in Kenya) and progress towards achievement of the MDGs in the context of national efforts and global partnerships;

e. An assessment of the social economic development prospects in COMESA in light of key contemporary regional and global issues, emerging global power relations, and the improving prospects for Africa; in the context that COMESA is in a position to have a meaningful role as a mechanism for mobilizing the member states and rallying them to common courses of action on all the relevant issues and in their international economic relations; long-term challenges COMESA faces as a region and as member states, and solutions to them;

f. Africa/ COMESA as a global growth pole, drawing on the recent ECA-AU conference; a discussion of initiatives to promote equitable sharing of benefits from natural resources, value addition and economic transformation; and

g. An assessment of key best practices to constitute a COMESA development paradigm, in the context of continental and global development objectives indicating key growth sectors that promote job and wealth creation; and a summary of recommendations for an action plan.

It is planned that the papers will inform policy discussion among stakeholders and by the Policy Organs of COMESA, to assist in the formulation of programs designed to promote inclusive development in the COMESA region.

Case studies of about 500 words, and short papers of about 2,000 words and long papers of about 5,000 words with footnoting and written in easy prose, may sent in by Monday 21 May 2012, to Francis Mangeni at fmangeni@comesa.int and Tasara Muzorori at tmuzorori@comesa.int.