



President of Burundi receives the Managing Director of the COMESA Trade and Development Bank Group



On Tuesday October 29, 2024, the Head of State of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, received in audience Mr. Admassu TADESSE, President and CEO of the COMESA Trade and Development Bank Group (TDB), who was visiting Burundi as part of the work of the 23rd Summit of the COMESA Conference of Heads of State and Government.

During this audience, they briefly discussed the position of this institution and the strategies to be implemented to stimulate economic growth in the member countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, COMESA.

“It was an opportunity to present to him the current state of affairs of this bank, especially as the Burundi Head of State will take over the reins of the COMESA presidency in two days”, indicated Mrs Rosine GATONI, Spokesperson for the President of the Republic of Burundi. The Head of State took the opportunity to congratulate the Managing Director of TDB on the remarkable progress made by the bank, as well as its support for member states in their development.

We look forward to examining the possibilities of supporting these two priority sectors, namely agriculture and mining”, said the President of the Trade and Development Bank Group, before adding that the institution intends to use all the means at its disposal to exploit investment opportunities in COMESA member countries and initiate development projects in collaboration with their respective banks, which have consequently become members of the Trade and Development Bank Group of the COMESA. **(Presidency)**

The Head of State receives in audience Russell Dramini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini

On November 1, 2024, the day after the 23rd COMESA Summit, the Head of State of

Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, received in audience, at NTARE Rushatsi Presidential Palace,

In this Edition:

page

President of Burundi receives the Managing Director of the COMESA Trade and Development Bank Group

1

The Head of State receives in audience Russell Dramini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini

1

President Ndayishimiye takes the helm at COMESA

2

Burundi's First Lady travels to Dar Es Salaam

3

The First Lady's participation in the Africa-Asia Conference: a commitment to sustainable social impact

3

COMESA goods Certification for greater credibility on the export market

4

Women encouraged to take part in decision-making bodies

5

Bujumbura hosts the 17th COMESA Business Forum

7

The Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock answers questions from Senators

8



His Excellency Russel Dramini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini. He came to offer his congratulations on the prestigious regional organization whose presidency he has just been entrusted with, and also on the success of the 23rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of COMESA member countries.

The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency Russell Dramini, also conveyed a message from His Majesty Mswati III, King of Eswatini, calling for the consolidation of good bilateral relations, friendship and cooperation between the Kingdom of Eswatini and

the Republic of Burundi. A wish shared by both countries, as the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, received this message with enthusiasm and commitment to strengthening this cooperation in various sectors of national life.

During their discussions, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini took the opportunity to appreciate the opportunities offered by Burundi, especially in the agricultural sector, where soil fertility, climatic conditions and rainfall make Burundi one of the few African countries that do not import food.

In view of Burundi's enormous potential, His Excellency Russell Dramini expressed the wish to strengthen cooperation through trade, requesting that Burundi export agricultural products to the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The Burundian Head of State welcomed the wish expressed by the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini, and promised his host that this cooperation framework would be further strengthened, whether through COMESA or bilaterally. **(Presidency)**

President Ndayishimiye takes the helm at COMESA



At the COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Bujumbura from October 28 to 31, 2024, the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, was invested President of this regional community for a one-year term, with Kenyan President William Ruto as his Vice-President.

In his opening speech read before the Presidents of Zambia, Ethiopia, the DRC, Kenya and Madagascar and the various delegations, the President indicated that this summit, which coincides with the celebration of COMESA's 30th anniversary, is an opportunity to assess the achievements made by this organization in moving forward together towards a common future.

Burundi's Number One believes that the agricultural and mining sectors provide and generate income, but remain under-exploited, and called for joint efforts to strengthen food security and stimulate economic growth.

He also called on the 21 COMESA member states to give priority to trade relations, leaving their countries open to strengthen solidarity.

"As part of its commitment to accelerate integration and meet the challenges linked to the free movement of goods and services, from today Burundi will exempt all COMESA member countries from short-stay visa requirements", announced the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye.

After presenting COMESA's very positive results during his term of office, Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema emphasized that peace and security are very important pillars of COMESA's successful integration.

"On this day, our thoughts go out in particular to the peoples of COMESA member regions, who continue to suffer from insecurity, particularly eastern DRC, Somalia and Sudan. Only solidarity and support between our nations can overcome this chal-

lenge", added the Burundian Head of State, raising the collective conscience to fight against the armed groups rampant in Eastern DRC, blocking the Community's effective integration.

The COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit held in Bujumbura was an opportunity for some countries to request the Community's support for their candidacies for the post of Chairman of the African Union Commission, as its current Chairman Moussa Faki has just completed his term. **(Presidency)**

Burundi's First Lady travels to Dar Es Salaam



On Monday October 28, 2024, the Office of Information, Communication and Spokesperson of the President of the

Republic of Burundi issued a press release announcing that First Lady H.E Angeline Ndayishimiye was traveling to Dar Es Salaam, in the United Republic of Tanzania.

According to Mrs Rosine Gatoni Guilène, Head of Office and Spokesperson, H.E Angeline Ndayishimiye took part in the 11th edition of the Africa-Asia Conference, organized by the Merck Foundation.

She indicated that the event also marked the 7th anniversary of the Merck Foundation and twelve years of joint development programs. **(Presidency)**

The First Lady's participation in the Africa-Asia Conference: a commitment to sustainable social impact



On October 29, 2024, the First Lady of Burundi, H.E Angeline Ndayishimiye, took part in the 11th edition of the Africa-Asia Conference organized by the Merck Foundation. The event, which celebrated the Merck Foundation's 7th anniversary and twelve years of joint partnership and development programs, provided an opportunity to take stock of initiatives carried out in collaboration with the offices of the First La-

dies, aimed at the well-being of African and Asian populations.

In the case of Burundi, this partnership has enabled the Foundation Bonne Action Umugiraneza, chaired by H.E. Angeline Ndayishimiye, to implement innovative programs in key areas such as health, education and the empowerment of women and young people. These actions have generated a significant positive impact in Burundi, empowering many citizens. One major achievement is the opening, in 2023, of Burundi's first in-vitro fertilization center. This infrastructure, the only one of its kind in the country, has already enabled the birth of three babies, offering couples facing fertility difficulties a local alternative, avoiding costly trips abroad. This initiative is fully in line with the Merck Foundation's vision of improving women's health and strengthening reproductive health services on the African continent. In addition, the partnership between the Foundation Bonne Action Umugiraneza and the Merck Foundation

has enabled the training of Burundian doctors in essential medical specialties, reducing the shortage of qualified human resources within the healthcare system. This invaluable support improves access to healthcare for many communities and contributes to the sustainability of public health progress in Burundi.

In the education sector, scholarship and vocational training programs for vulnerable girls have also been established. By offering these young women new prospects, these initiatives strengthen their social and eco-

nomic inclusion, while contributing to a more educated and empowered generation.

The trip also served to consolidate relationships with the other First Ladies present, fostering future exchanges and collaborations for the benefit of sustainable development on both continents. Thanks to these alliances, the Foundation Bonne Action Umugiraneza and the Merck Foundation continue to be committed to concrete, hopeful actions for the well-being and future of the people of Burundi. **(Presidency)**

COMESA goods Certification for greater credibility on the export market



Goods produced in the countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) should be certified to compete on the global export market.

The President of the National Assembly, the Right Honourable Gélase Daniel Ndirirababw, expressed himself on Tuesday October 29, 2024, when he visited the trade Fair and exhibition taking place within the premises

of Burundi's National Assembly Palace, on the sidelines of the 17th COMESA Business Forum, which took place in Burundi from October 28 to 31, 2024. The forum closed with the 23rd Summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

The show features food, craft, industrial and export products from COMESA countries.

The fair provides an opportunity for exhibitors to get to know each other, and to establish partnerships with a view to exchanging business opportunities.

He reminded exhibitors of the vital role of advertising in business, and suggested that they use large-screen displays to advertise and promote their products. **(National Assembly)**

Solemn closing of August 2024 ordinary parliamentary session



The President of the National Assembly gave the lion's share of attention to the monitoring of government action when he solemnly closed the August 2024 ordinary parliamentary session on Thursday October 31, 2024.

While congratulating the Honourable Members, who had put their heart and soul into making the past session a success, the Right Honourable Gélase Daniel

Ndirirababw urged them to keep up the momentum by educating the population about the electoral process that will culminate next year in 2025.

In his speech, the President of the Lower House of the Burundian Parliament also revealed that other activities, as varied as they were different, would be taking place. In addition to the adoption of bills, the Honourable Members also urged the population to register for the general census of the population, housing, agriculture and livestock, as well as for the legislative and local elections scheduled for next year.

Parliament also took part in the swearing-in ceremony for the commissions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The public also flocked to this parliamentary institution, which hosted a trade fair held as part of

the 23rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of partner countries within the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The Right Honourable Gélase Daniel Ndabirabe congratulated

the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye, on the success of this Summit. **(National Assembly)**

The population of Nyabihanga is invited to register



On October 29, 2024, the First Vice-President of the Senate, Honourable Denise Ndadaye, visited Murama, her native hill in Nyabihanga commune, Mwaro province, to assess the progress of voter enrolment in preparation for the 2025 elections.

During her visit, Honourable Denise Ndadaye announced that 1,030 of the 1,200 people expected to register had already done so. She took the opportunity to appeal to the population present and to the local administration to in turn sensitize the community to wake up early in the morning and register en masse, so that everyone can exercise their right to vote.

Among the advice given by Honourable Denise Ndadaye, she stressed the importance of remaining serene, cultivating love within the community and helping one another.

She also called on the population to protect the environment, seeing this as a solution to the climatic hazards that bring floods, strong winds and other frequent bad weather to the region.

The visit concluded with a gesture of solidarity, with the distribution of uniforms to kindergarten pupils and footballs to pupils in fundamental and post-fundamental schools, in order to promote sporting activities on this hill. **(Senate)**

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Women encouraged to take part in decision-making bodies



On Tuesday, October 29, 2024, the Association of Repatriates Burundian women (AFRABU) in collaboration with the Senate, presented a report illustrating the results of the added value of the role of women members of hill and district notables' councils, in promoting women's rights in their role of conflict management.

In his opening remarks to the day's activities, Honourable Ferdinand Ndayisavye, who had represented

the Senate Bureau, invited women to seek to be elected at all levels of representation of the people. He urged them to carry out their duties with zeal and dedication, in order to enhance their contribution to the respect of human rights in general, and women's rights in particular.

In their presentations, the consultants who prepared the report set out their assessment of the level of women's participation in decision-making bodies, for the period 2016 to 2023. According to the study, the evolution of the proportion of women in various political positions is positive. Based on samples, their survey showed that women are less numerous in the councils of hill notables, but that their performance is very satisfactory.

In their speeches, participants encouraged women to play a greater part in the various levels of administration and representation of the people. They proposed a study of the reasons why young girls drop out of school

at a higher rate than boys, in order to find a remedy. They noted the need for a capacity-building workshop for hill notables, to improve their performance.

In terms of challenges, the hill notables expressed a lack of working equipment. They also pointed to the lack of offices in certain localities.

At the end of the proceedings, the participants validated the report by acclamation. The participants in this activity were mainly senators, presidents of various standing committees, representatives of the the Association of Repatriates Burundian women (AFRABU) and the judiciary, some hill notables and many others. **(Senate)**

Burundians urged to remain united during election period



Accompanied by his wife, the President of the Senate, Right Honourable Emmanuel Sinzohagera, joined the population of the Tenga-Local hill, Rubirizi zone, Mutimbuzi commune in Bujumbura province, during work to lay a culvert along a track

linking the Gihora and Gikoma sub-hills, on November 2, 2024.

Addressing the participants, the Right Honorable Sinzohagera urged Burundians to remain united during this electoral period, and to get on with the various tasks required for development. He urged them to continue to preserve peace and security.

The President of the Upper House of Parliament called on the people of Bujumbura to protect the environment and take good care of the waters of Lake Tanganyika. He asked the local administrative authorities to contribute to the respect of urban norms during the various construction projects. The meeting was also attended by a number of Bujumbura Province administrative officials. **(Senate)**

Cibitoke population urged to plan births and protect the environment



On November 2, 2024, the First Vice-President of the Senate, Hon. Denise Ndayaye, accompanied by the Head of office of the Governor of Cibitoke province, joined the local population to take part in work to clear the gutters surrounding the Rugombo modern market, located on Mparambo I, hill in Rugombo commune.

In her speech to the participants, Hon. Ndayaye called

on the population to control demographics by planning births, stressing the importance of having children one can support materially. She also encouraged the authorities to look after street children, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender.

The First Vice-President of the Senate also stressed the importance of protecting the environment to combat climate change. She recalled that the recent rains had caused material and human damage in several parts of the country.

She also made an urgent appeal to the inhabitants to increase their production by devoting themselves to agricultural activities and the breeding of various animals, in order to counter inflation on the markets.

Finally, she expressed her gratitude to the people of Cibitoke, especially women, for their massive participation in this work. **(Senate)**

Bujumbura hosts the 17th COMESA Business Forum



Bujumbura, the economic capital of Burundi, has been hosting the 17th COMESA Business Forum since Monday, October 28, 2024, as a prelude to the summit of Heads of State and Government of COMESA member countries. The forum was opened by Burundi's Prime Minister, Lieutenant General of Police Gervais Ndirakobuca.

The 17th Business Forum of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa brings together political and industrial leaders from the COMESA region to discuss building stronger regional value chains in mining, tourism and climate-resilient agriculture.

According to the President of the COMESA Business Council (CBC), Mr. James Chimwaza, participants will discuss ways of modernizing climate resilience to ensure the sustainability of agricultural production and the optimization of mining, in order to create added value through public-private partnership.

He pointed out that the development of these three sectors - agriculture, minerals and tourism - accompanied by quality control in line with international standards, will help to meet the challenges of climate change and the conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, which are having an impact on the economies of the COMESA region.

He said that the local cooperative system can meet the challenges of conflicts, by focusing on boosting production through the development of the digital payment system underway in COMESA member countries.

On the subject of digital payments, the Chairman of the COMESA Business Council, Mr James Chimwaza welcomed the willingness shown by the central banks of COMESA member countries to organize capacity-building and experience-sharing sessions, as well as the tripartite cooperation between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Burundi's Prime Minister, Lieutenant General of Police Gervais Ndirakobuca, who opened the forum, welcomed the fact that it was being held under the theme: "Accelerating regional integration through the development of regional value chains in the fields of climate-resilient agriculture, mining and tourism".

COMESA is a regional economic community comprising 21 member states, with a combined population of over 640 million and a GDP of around US\$1094 billion, according the numbers taken from the COMESA Trade Report 2023. To unlock this potential, Burundi's Prime Minister pointed to the need for deliberate efforts to overcome barriers to trade and investment flows, and foster regional integration. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the COMESA economy, accounting for almost 40% of the region's GDP and employing over 60% of its population.

However, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Report highlights that agricultural productivity in many of the organization's member countries remains below potential, due to inadequate infrastructure, limited access to technology and regulatory barriers. Mining is another extremely promising sector. COMESA is home to a third of the world's mineral reserves and two-thirds of the world's diamond deposits. Despite this, much of this mineral wealth is exported in the form of raw materials, with little or no added value, he lamented.

According to the African Union's report on the vision for the mining industry in Africa, the value of exported minerals could be multiplied fivefold with proper beneficiation and processing on the continent. As the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the

COMESA/EAC/SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area become fully operational, it is imperative that COMESA member states position themselves to take full advantage of this expansive market.

Prime Minister Lieutenant General of Police Gervais

Ndirakobuca pledged that Burundi would work with all stakeholders to achieve these goals. He acknowledges that the success of these initiatives will depend on the participation of the public and private sectors, as well as the support of international partners. (RTNB)

The Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock answers questions from Senators



In a plenary session at the Senate on October 30, 2024, the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, His Excellency Mr. Prosper Dodiko, was the guest of the day, answering questions from Senators relating to the sector for which he is responsible.

Asked about the progress of the project to intensify the cultivation of sweet sorghum, to extract ethanol, sugar and fodder for livestock, the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock said that the donor first requires the promoter of the project and the documents attesting to the granting of a land of 2 thousand hectares before the disbursement of an amount of 153,510,000 U.S. dollars, which represent the cost of the project.

According to the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, the matter will be discussed by the Council of Ministers, and there are two possibilities: either the State will grant the land, or it will recover the project.

Asked by the senators why the State does not place particular emphasis on promoting the cultivation of oil palm and sugar cane to extract ethanol and fuel, as is

done in other countries, the Minister replied that the country does not yet have the financial resources to set up modern plants. Nevertheless, he pointed out that the State is in the process of mobilizing foreign investors to invest in this sector.

Senators pointed out that mining sites, rubble extraction sites or quarries are not being restored after these extraction activities, resulting in a significant loss of arable land for farmers. In this regard, he indicated that he would conduct an inventory of unfilled sites and that offenders would be punished in accordance with the law.

In response to the senators' suggestion to involve private sector economic operators in seed research to increase quantity, the minister clarified that research is already open to private sector investors. He added that all land designated for seed production must be reclaimed by the Burundi Institute of Agronomic Sciences (ISABU), particularly the seed centers. The Minister of Environment, Agriculture, and Livestock also stated that his ministry plans to establish a pilot research center for hybrid rice, potatoes, and hybrid maize.

During this session, several recommendations were made to the Minister regarding the release of salaries for the staff of the Coffee Washing Stations Management Company (SOGESTAL), the protection of Lake Tanganyika against pollution, and the preservation of natural forests. They also urged the Minister to rehabilitate the Moso Sugar Company (SOSUMO) so that it could increase its production. (RTNB)

Makamba: Celebration of the International Peace Day

The Non-Governmental Organization at the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross organized ceremonies on Thursday, October 31, 2024, in Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba province, marking the celebration of the International Peace Day, which is celebrated every year on Sep-

tember 21, and the International Day of Mental Health, celebrated every year on October 10.

During his speech, Mr. Jean Pierre Niyonzima, the legal representative of the Non-Governmental Organization at the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross (MIPAREC NGO), stated that good social cohesion and



mutual respect among individuals are the factors that can lead populations towards sustainable development and peace.

He indicated that this NGO operates in 60 communes across the country and expressed satisfaction with the good collaboration that exists between the administration and MIPAREC. He also thanked partners who assist them in carrying out their work.

According to Mr. Jean Pierre Niyonzima, during the current year, the NGO MIPAREC, through its justice and peace project, has managed to resolve 253 family conflicts and has helped 20 individuals with mental health issues.

These ceremonies were organized under the central theme: "Prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace." (RTNB)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation

Department of Communication

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