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COMESA BUSINESS COUNCIL
Voice of the Private Sector in the Region
BUILDING REGIONAL GOING GLOBAL

BIZNET WEEKLY

Fortnightly Newsletter of the COMESA Business Council

NEWS & FEATURES

Who we Are!!

CBC is the recognized Business Member Organization, established as a private sector institution of COMESA. We represent the interests of businesses sectors at a regional level. The services provided go beyond advocacy, to actively promote business participation in regional integration, investment and global trade. This is done by facilitating the growth of strong business synergies, the development of business opportunities, business alliances, legislative and strategic advocacy. We provide custom tailored services that are driven by both industry and enterprise interests.

IMF Forecasts Drastic Economic Slumps Across EAC Due to Covid-19

All five East African Community countries should brace for drastic drops in their economic growth rates this year as a direct result of the global coronavirus crisis. The International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook projections for 2020 pegs Kenya and Tanzania's respective GDP growth rates at one per cent and two per cent respectively in 2020, down from 5.6 and 6.3 per cent respectively in 2019. Uganda will maintain a 3.5 growth rate this year, compared with 4.9 per cent in 2019.

Rwanda's predicted decline from 10 per cent in 2019 to 3.5 per cent this year is the steepest drop in the region, comparable only with Ethiopia's new 3.2 per cent projection from nine per cent in 2019. But the outlook for 2021 is slightly better for Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, with Nairobi's growth rate expected to shoot back up to 6.1 per cent (higher than 2019) while Tanzania and Uganda also recover to 4.6 and 4.3 per cent respectively.

The IMF said the Covid-19 pandemic will cause a three per cent contraction in the global economy in 2020, much worse than during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. "In a baseline scenario, which assumes that the pandemic fades in the second half of 2020 and containment efforts can be gradually unwound, the global economy is projected to grow by 5.8 per cent in 2021 as economic activity normalises. The risks for even more severe outcomes, however, are substantial," it added. For Tanzania, the new IMF projection represents a sharp change from early last month—after completing its latest mission to the country—when it reported that the economy had rebounded to an estimated annual growth rate of six per cent in 2020, up from four per cent projected in early 2019.

That projection was still below the seven per cent growth rate quoted by the government, a contradiction that caused some friction between Tanzania and the IMF last year. The IMF said in March that increased activity in the country's construction and mining sectors had helped to boost real GDP growth. It also predicted that Tanzania's inflation would remain under five per cent, exchange rate stable, and the public debt manageable at below 40 per cent of GDP. Analysts say the corona virus pandemic has sparked the steepest downturn in the global economy since the 1930s, and could become far more severe in developing economies, which have not had the kinds of lockdowns already implemented in China, the United States and some European nations.

Several EAC countries are implementing full or partial lockdown measures while others, including Tanzania, have restricted social movements in a bid to fend off the full brunt of the pandemic as experienced elsewhere outside the continent. "It is very likely that this year the global economy will experience its worst recession since the Great Depression," said the IMF.

Read more on: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/IMF-forecasts-drastic-economic-slumps-across-EAC/2560-5527722-o1wtaz/index.html

Flying is getting safer by the year, IATA report says

Flying became safer for the public last year, with the number of people dying in accidents falling by more than half compared with 2018; the lowest level in five years according to the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) 2019 safety report that was released on April 6. The association says some 4.54 billion people safely travelled on 46.8 billion flights during 2019.

However, the year saw a total of 240 deaths from eight fatal accidents involving four jet aircraft and four turboprop aircraft. Sixty-five per cent of the fatalities (157 deaths) were from a single accident—Ethiopian 302, a Boeing 737 Max-8 that crashed minutes after taking off from Addis Ababa for Nairobi on March 10, 2019.

Despite that, IATA says there was an improvement across all major safety performance indicators compared with 2018 and to the five-year average of the 2014-2018 period. The all accident rate improved from 1.36 per million flights or one accident for every 7333,000 flights in 2018 to 1.13 accidents for a million flights in 2019.

Last year's rate translates into one accident for every 884,000 flights. It also shows a sharp improvement when compared with the five-year average of 1.56 accidents per million flights or an accident every 640,000 flights. The highest number of fatalities resulted from loss of control of the aircraft during flight and hard landings.

In 2019, fatality risk or the odds of a passenger or crew member getting involved in an accident with no survivors was 0.09 in a million flights. One would have to travel every day for 29,586 years to experience an accident in which all on board die There were 53 accidents in 2019; eight of them involved fatalities. That was an improvement from 62 accidents in 2018, and a five-year average of 63.2 accidents.

"The release of the 2019 Safety Report is a reminder that even as aviation faces its deepest crisis, we are committed to making aviation even safer. Based on the 2019 fatality risk, on average, a passenger could take a flight every day for 535 years before experiencing an accident with one fatality on board. But we know that one accident is one too many.

"Every fatality is a tragedy and it is vital that we learn the correct lessons to make aviation even safer," said IATA director general and chief executive Alexandre de Juniac.

Read More on: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Flying-is-getting-safer-by-the-year-Iata-report-says/2560-5521000-si34e/index.html

Grounding Flights Wilts Flower Sales

Lack of freight capacity is the latest challenge facing the flower industry in Kenya as it struggles to recover from losses of over $83 million in March due to lockdowns in its main market of Europe. The industry is slowly shaking off the crippling effects of the corona virus pandemic.

“We have started to see a slight steady recovery in the international market. Demand is beginning to grow, a sign that the flower industry could get back on track. This improvement now poses a new challenge. The available freight capacity cannot accommodate the rise in volume demand,” Clement Tulezi, Kenya Flower Council chief executive said.

Available Capacity He added that prior to the outbreak, the capacity available per week was approximately 5,000 tonnes but currently the available capacity stands at 1,300 tonnes for all commodities including flowers, fish, vegetables among others yet the current demand for flower exports is 3,500 tonnes per week.

The reduced freight capacity has been occasioned by a decline in passenger flights globally, including the grounding of national carrier Kenya Airways (KQ). The problem has been exacerbated by airlines having increased their rates, charging more than double from Nairobi to most market destinations.

Ethiopian Vs KQ Ironically, despite KQ being grounded, the Kenyan government has granted Africa’s biggest carrier, Ethiopian Airlines, licence to operate passenger planes grounded by Covid-19 for cargo from the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, in Nairobi to Europe and Asia.

KQ has protested the move, contending that Ethiopian will take a huge chunk of the business of shipping flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables, a preserve of the national carrier

https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Grounding-flights-wilts-flower-sales/2560-5528098-vhafbe/index.html

ILO Gives Grim Global Job Loss Over the Next 90 Days

At least 195 million people around the world are going to be jobless in the next three months due to the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the International Labour Organisation has said. In a statement released last Tuesday, the UN agency said full or partial lockdown measures taken by governments around the world to curb the spread of the disease was now affecting almost 2.7 billion workers, a figure representing around 81 per cent of the world's workforce.

The ILO estimates that 1.25 billion workers, representing almost 38 per cent of the global workforce, are employed in sectors that are now facing a severe decline in output and a high risk of workforce displacement. Key sectors include retail trade, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing.

Steep Decline Wholesale and retail trade segments represent the biggest share of workers who are typical lowly paid and unprotected. The sector has 482 million workers who include among other checkout clerks, stockers, shopkeepers etc. The accommodation and food services sector is severely affected and it accounts for 144 million workers.

According to the ILO report, this sector is suffering from almost full closure in some countries and steep decline in demand in cases where operations can continue. The manufacturing sector which employs 463 million workers has also been hit hard as workers are asked to stay home, factories closed and global supply chains grinds to a halt. The transport, storage and communication accounts for 204 million jobs around the world including airline pilots and crew members, drivers and other delivery workers as well as people who work in warehouses that support transport and globally supply chains.

Catastrophic Losses In its second edition of the ILO Monitor, Covid-19 and the world of work, the organisation said in the current situation, businesses across a range of economic sectors are facing catastrophic losses, which threaten their operations and solvency, especially among smaller enterprises, while millions of workers are vulnerable to income loss and layoffs. The impact on income-generation is especially harsh for unprotected workers and the most vulnerable groups in the informal economy.

"Employment contraction has already begun on a large (often unprecedented) scale in many countries. In the absence of other data, changes in working hours, which reflect layoffs and other temporary reductions in working time, give a better picture about the dire reality of the labour market situation,"

said the report. ILO Director General Guy Ryder who spoke to a French TV confirmed that the four sectors are particularly hard hit by the crisis. "These are the four areas of activities which we think are in the sharp ends of the employment impact," he added. The ILO head said that there have been several efforts from the governments around the world but losses in jobs will not be averted.

"We have seen some remarkable interventions from governments individually but these notwithstanding, the next three months for the second quarter of 2020, we are going to see the loss of equivalent 195 million full time jobs around the world."

Higher Proportion "There were considerable efforts being made by individual' governments to put physical stimulus into their economies, to accommodate monetary policies and this is welcome, however the problem is that it is of course done individually. There a very little by way of global co-ordination," said Mr Ryder.

"Particularly in low- and middle-income countries, hard-hit sectors have a high proportion of workers in informal employment and workers with limited access to health services and social protection. Without appropriate policy measures, workers face a high risk of falling into poverty and will experience greater challenges in regaining their livelihoods."

https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/ILO-gives-grim-global-job-loss-over-the-next-90-days/2560-5520984-oiv04p/index.html

RwandAir to Fly Cargo from China

RwandAir has resumed cargo flights to Guangzhou, China, as the airline embarks on a recovery path following suspension of passenger flights in March to stop the spread of Covid-19. The airline has been operating cargo flights only to Brussels and London at least once a week using its A330 jets, and had suspended cargo flights to China in February.

“The cargo flights to Guangzhou are not a complete reinstatement, it will operate as an ad-hoc cargo flight that will be coming in on demand. RwandAir is here to support the economy, there many exporters who currently need to export their goods to Europe and China, and this flight comes in to fill the existing demand,” said Jimmy Musoni, the airline’s director of global sales and operations.

The suspension of flights hit the carrier, whose prospects were looking bullish, after it opened new lucrative routes to Guangzhou, Tel Aviv and Kinshasa last year, and was closing in on its direct routes to the US after expanding its fleet, to better serve its growing routes.

RwandAir is one of the public entities that are scheduled to receive a financial relief package from the government, as the country moves to salvage the key sectors of the economy in order to minimise the Covid-19 pandemic shocks to the economy. It is not yet clear how much will be allocated to RwandAir and which priority areas the airline will inject this money in as the Ministry of Finance is still working on the budget for the entire relief package.

“The financial relief package to RwandAir is still being worked upon by the Ministry of Finance, along relief to other affected sectors of the economy like tourism, it is not yet finalised, the line ministry can give more details,” said the Minister for Infrastructure Claver Gatete.

Despite suspension of passenger flights, the airline has been incurring maintenance costs, passenger compensation and other fixed costs, which have compounded the financial shocks the airline is experiencing. “The loss is huge, it was a complete halt, we are still quantifying the total loss, but the airline continues to suffer financial shocks especially from the on-going refunds and fixed costs like servicing loan commitments,” said Mr Musoni.

RwandAir has been pivotal in supporting the growth of the tourism, growing passenger numbers every year, most of which have been conference delegates or tourists.

https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/RwandAir-to-fly-cargo-from-China/2560-5528092-gd6legz/index.html

Uganda Lowers Central Bank Rate

Uganda's central bank has dropped its policy rate from nine per cent announced in February 2020 to eight per cent for April, to counter the fallout from the corona virus pandemic on commercial banks, micro deposit taking institutions, the economy and borrowers. The one per cent rate cut appears modest compared with recent policy rate cuts of more than two per cent announced by some African and European central banks and the US Federal Reserve.

Lower interest rates are meant to cut banks' funding costs, reduce borrowing costs boost consumer demand and restore economic growth in the wake of the damage caused by the pandemic. There are signs of a global economic decline prompting financial bailout packages.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a severe contraction in economic activity due to a combination of global supply chain disruptions, travel restrictions, measures to limit contact between persons, and the sudden decline in demand. "Consumer-facing sectors have been severely affected by social distancing measures and heightened uncertainty, while the manufacturing sector has declined on account of disruptions to the inflow of raw materials," reads the Bank of Uganda's monetary policy statement issued on April 6. Uganda's economy is projected to grow by around 3-4 per cent in 2019/20, down from earlier forecasts of 6-6.5 per cent.

"The rate cut is within our expectations. I'm also interested in the rationale behind it while the additional measures announced by the central bank will help commercial banks cope with the difficult aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and also contribute towards economic recovery," said Benoni Okwenje, general manager for Treasury Operations at Centenary Bank.

https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Uganda-lowers-central-bank-rate/2560-5520998-s5qwq1/index.html

Market Focus: Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is located in central sub-Saharan Africa, bordered to the northwest by the Republic of Congo, to the north by the Central African Republic, to the northeast by South Sudan, to the east by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, and by Tanzania (across Lake Tanganyika), to the south and southeast by Zambia, to the southwest by Angola, and to the west by the South Atlantic Ocean and the Cabinda Province exclave of Angola.

According to The World Bank, the country has a total population of 89.25 million and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US$47.22 billion. The economy greatly relies on the mining sector, which accounts for 89.5% of export earnings and draws the vast majority of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) pledges. DRC has some of the largest mineral reserves in sub-Saharan Africa. Key mineral exports include copper, gold, cobalt and diamond. Agriculture is also a key contributor to livelihoods and GDP, with timber and coffee as some of the leading agriculture exports.

The DRC is a member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC), the African Union (AU), the and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

i. Markets which DRC can target in COMESA and supply products

	Market	Current Export Value US$'000	Products with Potential
1.	Zambia	1,400,975	Copper ores and concentrates, cobalt ores and concentrates, carbonates and peroxo-carbonates percarbonates, copper mattes, cobalt mattes and other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy, unwrought cobalt, lead waste and scrap, boards, cabinets, parts of electrical transformers and inductors, self-propelled boring or sinking machinery, zinc dust, self-propelled trucks fitted with lifting or handling equipment, self-propelled graders and levellers, flexible tubes, pipes and hoses, of plastics, parts for boring or sinking machinery, self-propelled front-end shovel loaders.
2.	Egypt	110,620	Copper refined, fuel - lubricating or cooling medium pumps, tropical wood, sapelli - sawn or chipped lengthwise, articles of iron or steel, copper refined unwrought, copper-tin base alloys unwrought, wire of copper-nickel alloys.
3.	Uganda	34,492	Gold, waste and scrap of tinned iron or steel, mahogany sawn, waste and scrap of cast iron, coffee, crude palm oil, waste and scrap of stainless steel, natural rubber latex, whether or not prevulcanised, cocoa beans, tropical wood, waste and scrap of alloy steel, residues of petroleum oil, packaging materials, waste and scrap, of aluminum, waste oils containing mainly petroleum.
4.	Rwanda	14,294	Electrical energy, crude palm oil, waste and scrap of tinned iron or steel, waste and scrap of alloy steel, tropical wood, mahogany sawn, crude palm kernel and babassu oil, ores and concentrates, beauty or make-up preparations, grain sorghum for sowing, plain woven fabrics of cotton, soya bean seed for sowing, containers of glass, coal, spices, shelled peas, waste and scrap of cast iron.
6.	Kenya	12,723	Mahogany sawn, plants used primarily in perfumery, crane lorries, unused postage, coffee, alkaloids of cinchona and their derivatives, black fermented tea, worn clothing and clothing accessories, wood sawn, oil seeds and oleaginous fruits, packaging materials of plastics, spark-ignition reciprocating or rotary internal combustion piston engine, for aircraft, medicaments, oil or petrol-filters.

Source: ITC Trademap & Export Potential Map

ii. International Markets Congo can target and supply products

	Market	Current Export Value US$'000	Products with Potential
1)	China	5,682,945	Cobalt mattes, copper refined, cobalt ores and concentrates, copper unrefined, petroleum oils - crude, copper ores and concentrates, gold, niobium ores and concentrates, tropical wood, copper mattes, non-industrial & industrial diamonds unworked, tungsten ores and concentrates, wood in the rough, sapelli, sawn or chipped
2)	Zambia	1,400,975	Copper ores and concentrates, cobalt ores and concentrates, carbonates and peroxo-carbonates percarbonates, copper mattes, cobalt mattes and other intermediate products of cobalt metallurgy, unwrought cobalt, lead waste and scrap, boards, cabinets, parts of electrical transformers and inductors, self-propelled boring or sinking machinery, zinc dust, self-propelled trucks fitted with lifting or handling equipment, self-propelled graders and levellers, flexible tubes, pipes and hoses, of plastics, parts for boring or sinking machinery, self-propelled front-end shovel loaders.
3)	United Arab Emirates	849,805	Copper refined, diamonds, gold, wood sawn or chipped, wood in the rough, precious stones and semi-precious stones, ferrous waste and scrap, builders' joinery and carpentry of wood, sheets for veneering, live fish, cigars, ores and concentrates, slag from the manufacture of iron or steel, petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons, petroleum coke, nitric acid, titanium oxides.
4)	Korea	643,813	Copper, refined, petroleum oils, crude, cobalt ores and concentrates, cobalt oxides, cobalt mattes, waste and scrap, of copper, waste and scrap, of aluminium, copper ores and concentrates, waste and scrap of precious metal, wood in the rough, wood sawn, live fish, worn clothing, setts, worked slate, fabricated asbestos fibres, worked mica, unglazed ceramic flags, ceramic wares for laboratory.
5)	Saudi Arabia	525,099	Copper refined, Beech sawn, Mahogany sawn, Coniferous wood sawn, Dark red meranti, Tropical wood, Parts and accessories for instruments and apparatus for measuring or checking electrical quantities, Women's or girls' trousers, Wood sawn.

Source: ITC Trademap & Export Potential Map

iii. COMESA Countries can supply the following products to DRC:
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Sulphuric acid, Cement, Sulphur, Cane sugar, Water Quicklime, Washing preparations, Prepared binders, Biscuits Fertilisers, Pumps for liquids, Prepared, explosives Self-propelled bulldozers, Motor Vehicles, Meat and edible offals, Wheat flour, Palm oil Quicklime, Flat-rolled iron steel, Cocoa, Organic Sulphur compounds, Cigars, Bar & rods of iron

iv. Important Contacts

Chamber of Commerce in DRC (Federation des Enterprises du Congo) FEC
10 avenues des aviateus – Commune de la Gombe
BP 7247 Kin 1
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Tel: +243 81 2488890
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Corona Virus Challenges Open New Doors for Egypt's Businesses

World economies have been hard-hit owing to the corona virus outbreak. The impact of the pandemic is expected to overshadow the global economic outlook in 2021, if not in the following years as well. In its recent economic outlook report, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected the global economy to fall to three percent in 2020, down from 6.3 percent in January 2020.

"This is a major revision over a very short period. This makes the Great Lockdown the worst recession since the Great Depression, and far worse than the Global Financial Crisis. The world has changed dramatically in the three months since January. The magnitude and speed of collapse in activity that has followed is unlike anything experienced in our lifetime," stated the report released during the IMF and World Bank spring meetings that concluded on Friday.

Egypt is not far behind. As one of the developing economies and emerging markets, Egypt's real GDP growth is projected to fall to two percent in 2020, down from 5.6 percent in 2019, and is expected to rise slightly to 2.8 percent in 2021, according to the report. Unemployment rates are expected to hit 10.3 percent in 2020, up from 8.6 percent in 2019, and to surge to 11.6 percent in 2021. These indices reflect how Egypt's economic activity and doing business will be affected during and after the pandemic.

Strategic consultant and market trends analyst Islam El-Saadany told Ahram Online that it is going to take 18 months for the coronavirus impact to be visible in the economic and business sectors around the world. Under the coronavirus outbreak, El-Saadany said Egypt's business activities are divided into "growing, slowing and half-dead sectors, each with its own challenges, yet with potentials that can help it survive and start over." The growing sector, according to El-Saadany, includes business activities such as medical supplies, commodity supplies, information and communication technology, food and retails, and e-commerce. The latter is witnessing a growth of between 300 to 500 percent.

In this regard, for instance, MENA's healthcare market is projected to grow from $185.5 billion in 2019 to $243.6 billion in 2023, with an 11.7 percent compound annual growth rate at the constant exchange rate, according to Fitch Solutions recent report. El-Saadany explained that this significant growth is owed to the COVID-19 outbreak that resulted in greater demand on the products that these activities provide. The slowing sector includes activities such as financial services for banking and non-banking systems, auto trading, finance leasing, and real estate. The sector witnessed a reduction ranging from 30 to 50 percent as the COVID-19 outbreak forces consumers to rearrange their spending priorities and keep their financial positions because of economic uncertainty.

"The half-dead sector includes activities such as tourism and its related activities. The preventive measures the government has adopted to contain the COVID-19 outbreak, including halting air traffic and social distancing led to the creation of this sector," said El-Saadany.

Among the industries seeing the greatest impact from the fallout are hospitality and travel (89 percent), education (87 percent), media and entertainment (80 percent), while production firms in agriculture, factories, mines and utilities reported some uptick in revenues, according to the survey. Some 95 percent of business board members said they are adopting new measures to curtail the impact of the COVID-19, including communicating more regularly with employees (68 percent), taking new health and safety procedures (67 percent), cancelling major events (64 percent), and suspending business travel (53 percent), the survey revealed.

http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/367648/Business/Economy/Coronavirus-challenges-open-new-doors-for-Egypt%E2%80%99s-.aspx

Product Focus - Blueberries - HS Code 08104050

Blueberries are perennial flowering plants with blue to blue-black skin that is covered by a waxy bloom, giving the fruit a light blue appearance. The flesh is creamy-white to green in color and juicy. For fresh market, the fruit should be fully blue and firm. Blueberries are non-climacteric fruit but should be harvested near to full ripe as flavour does not improve after harvest.

The plants are usually erect, prostrate shrubs that can vary in size from 10cm to 4m in height.

Blueberry bushes normally bear fruit in the middle of the growing season and fruiting times are determined by local conditions such as altitude and latitude. Blueberries are sold fresh or processed as individually quick-frozen fruit, purée, juice, or dried or infused berries, which in turn may be used in a variety of consumer goods, such as jam and jelly amongst others.

VARIETY

Buyers in the end market often do not have preferences for specific blueberry varieties. The main reason for it is to optimise productivity and extend supply seasons. However, choosing the right variety is important to obtain the best product for your client in terms of flavour, firmness, colour and shelf life. Large blueberries with sweet taste are most likely to fetch higher prices currently. In the future, as the market for blueberries further matures and end clients become more knowledgeable, specific variety preferences may also develop.

OPPORTUNITIES

The global import of blueberries increased by 47% in the period 2014 to 2018 from US$ 1,8 billion to US$3.4 billion. The table below highlights major importers regionally and internationally;

International Markets		Regional Markets	
✓ USA	✓ China	✓ South Africa	✓ Mauritius
✓ UK	✓ Hong Kong	✓ Ghana	✓ Botswana
✓ Netherlands	✓ France	✓ Namibia	✓ Gabon
✓ Germany	✓ Belgium	✓ Algeria	✓ Kenya
✓ Canada	✓ Switzerland	✓ Angola	
✓ Spain	✓ Norway	✓ Seychelles	

MARKET ANALYSIS

According to Trademap statistics, COMESA's exports of blueberries to the world increased over the past five years. COMESA's exports increased by 89% from US$88 thousand in 2014 to US$838 thousand in 2018. The major export markets for COMESA include United Kingdom, South Africa, Norway, Germany, Malaysia, Switzerland, Ireland, Singapore, France and Canada, among others.

EXPORT POTENTIAL

In the past years COMESA countries who have been producing and exporting blueberries include:

Product Focus - Blueberries - HS Code 08104050

	Country	Potential & Existing Export Markets
1.	Zimbabwe	United Kingdom, South Africa, Norway, Germany, Ireland, Iceland, Singapore, Switzerland, Malaysia, France
2.	Egypt	Malaysia, Estonia, Germany, United Kingdom, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Qatar.
3.	Tunisia	Libya, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, France, Netherlands.
4.	Uganda	Rwanda, Kenya, Netherlands, India, Canada, Norway, United Kingdom, Austria, Belarus, Kenya, Netherlands, Oman
5.	Kenya	United Kingdom, France, Germany, Peru, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Lebanon, Netherlands, Poland, Uganda

PRICE

General wholesale prices for 12 x 125 g packages (1.5 kg) can be €6 to €7 euros on the low side, up to €11 to €15 euros in a good market. If you work with an importing company or trader, expect to pay them around 8% commission plus handling costs. Retail prices are usually between €12 and €24 per kilo. Small packages with premium blueberries are the most expensive. Organic blueberries are sometimes sold for more than €24/kg. Be aware that retail prices have no relation with trade prices.

PACKAGING

Blueberries are mainly packaged in quantities of 1 - 3 kg in chip baskets and trays of wood, paperboard or plastic. To prevent the fruit from drying out, 200 - 250g punnets are wrapped in polyethylene film.

The package shall protect against risks such as;
- contamination, leakage and dehydration.
- rough handling during loading and unloading;
- compression from the overhead weight of other containers;
- impact and vibration during transportation;
- high humidity during pre-cooling, transit, and storage

Produce is shipped in refrigerated air containers or on-air cargo pallets. Temperature-controlled storage facilities at airports are needed to ensure produce quality.

QUALITY

Blueberries must at least be:
- intact;
- sound – produce must be from rotting or deterioration likely to make it unfit for consumption;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- practically free from pests;
- practically free from damage caused by pests;
- fresh in appearance;
- free of abnormal external moisture;
- free of any foreign smell and taste, including bitter taste in case of bilberries;
- able to withstand transport and handling. Blueberries must be practically free of agglomerated berries. Blueberries must be practically covered with bloom, according to the varietal characteristics.

Product Focus - Blueberries - HS Code 08104050

Most customers for example in Europe almost exclusively requires Class I blueberries as a minimum. Blueberries in this class must be of good quality and within the following permissible tolerances:
ü very slight leakage of juice;
ü very slight bruising;
ü a tolerance of 10% is allowed for fruit that meets Class II standards.
In no case may the defects affect the fruit flesh, the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and the presentation in the package.

LABELLING
Labels should include provide the following information:
ü the name
\ under which the product is sold;
ü the product's commercial identification: class, size (code), number of units, net weight;
ü the name and address of the producer;
ü the place/country of origin;
ü traceability code (for example Global Location Number);
ü Officially recognised code mark such as a Global Gap Number (GGN) (recommendable).
In addition, any certification logo or retailer logo (in the case of private-label products) should be displayed on the label.

INDICATIVE BLUEBERRY SUPPLY CALENDAR TO EUROPE

VOLUNTARY STANDARDS
Exporters are urged to comply with food quality and safety standards such as Global GAP, Fair Trade and Sustainable Agriculture Network:

ü GLOBAL G.A.P. Crops (Global Good Agricultural Practice): the standard is primarily designed to reassure consumers about how food is produced on the farm by minimising detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reducing the use of chemical inputs and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare.

ü HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, Requirements for the hygiene of food is laid down and states the general hygiene procedures for food at all stages of the production process from primary production to the world consumer ("from-farm-to-fork approach").

ü Fair Trade International: an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable development and poverty alleviation and sets the Fairtrade standards. One organization (FLO-CERT) is responsible for auditing and certification of compliance against the Fairtrade standards.

ü Sustainable Agriculture Network - Rainforest Alliance: network of conservation groups committed to community-based conservation initiatives and research. The certification program for SAN standards is operated by Rainforest Alliance.

ü BRC (British Retail Consortium) - BRCGS' Standards guarantee the standardisation of quality, safety and operational criteria and ensure that manufacturers fulfil their legal obligations and provide protection for the end consumer.

Certification to BRCGS' Standards is now often a fundamental requirement of leading retailers, manufacturers and food service organisations.

ü IFS (International Food Standard) - The IFS comprise eight different food and non-food standards, covering the processes along the supply chain. However, IFS does not specify what these processes must look like but merely provides a risk-based assessment of them. The different standards are now used by manufacturers and retailers worldwide to meet new requirements for quality, transparency and efficiency resulting from globalisation.

Market Analysis Tools for Market Familiarisation

COMESA Business Council is encouraging current and potential exporters to familiarize with the International Trade Centre (ITC) Market Analysis tools to enable a systematic approach to potential markets and boost exports to existing markets.

The available market analysis tools provide up-to-date market intelligence to users such as researchers and business people with interest in exporting and international trade. The tools allow users to have an in-depth knowledge on trade performance in sectors of interest or country.

The tools provide quick answers to the frequently asked questions by researchers, exporters and potential exporters such as:
- How much is being exported to a specific destination (by value and quantity)?
- What is being exported to that destination and what is the potential?
- What are the product standards requirements?
- What are the market access requirements?
- What is the size of the world trade for a product or service?
- What are the trends for that market - i.e. is the market growing and by how much?
- Which countries does my country currently trade certain products with?
- Are there opportunities to identify new or alternative markets?
- What tariff measures exist in a specific market?
- Which countries compete to supply a specific product/service to a specific market or to the world? - Is there seasonality for imports of a specific product in a given market?

The portals and market analysis tools, include:

Global Trade Helpdesk (https://globaltradehelpdesk.org):
The Global Trade Helpdesk aims to simplify market research for businesses by creating a unified source for key trade and market intelligence. The beta version of the platform is online and was showcased at the World Chamber Congress. It integrates information from across partner agencies on:

Ø import flows and import growth
Ø export potential forecasts,
Ø preferential and MFN tariffs
Ø regulatory requirements and notified changes
Ø international and voluntary sustainability standards
Ø information about potential partners to help with trade finance and export promotions needs

The tool provides information in Arabic, French, English, Russian, and Spanish.

Export Potential map (http://exportpotential.intracen.org)
The Export Potential Map identifies products, markets and suppliers with (untapped) export potential as well as opportunities for export diversification for 226 countries and territories and 4,377 products. The Export Potential Map provides timely and practical information on products, markets, and suppliers with untapped potential, as well as prioritizing new sectors with favourable chances for success in export diversification. Moreso, the tool evaluates export performance, the target market's demand and tariff conditions as well as bilateral links between the exporting country and target market to provide a unique ranking of untapped opportunities.

Market Analysis Tools for Market Familiarisation

Trademap (www.trademap.org)
Trade Map provides trade flow information in a user friendly and easily accessible format. Users have access to one of the world's largest trade databases containing indicators on national export performance, international demand, alternative markets and the role of competitors from both the product and country perspectives.

Users can quickly and easily: analyse current export performance; identify promising export markets; assess the level of competition in the global market; assess the level of competition in a specific export market; find information on the average tariffs applied by countries to the import of a specific product from specific partner countries; view trade data at the national tariff line level; identify new supplying markets; review opportunities for diversification; assess national trade performance; identify existing and potential bilateral trade with any partner country or region; access trade data as recent as the previous quarter in the same year; and identify companies exporting, importing or distributing a specific product in a number of markets.

Market Access Map (www.macmap.org)
The database provides information on applied customs tariffs including:
Most Favoured Nations (MFN) tariffs and preferences granted unilaterally and in the framework of regional and bilateral trade agreements.

Standards Map (www.standardsmap.org)
It is a database on private standards and presents academic, scientific papers and research articles discussing private standards issues in global value chains.

Investment Map (www.investmentmap.org)
The database that assist in identifying potential investors in a given sector, identifying competitor countries for inward investment, and defining opportunities for bilateral investment.

Trade Competitiveness Map (http://tradecompetitivenessmap.intracen.org)
It provides country market analysis profiles for around 240 countries and territories. Each profile provides a series of tools to facilitate strategic market research, monitor national and sectoral trade and macro-economic performance and design trade development strategies.

Sustainability Map (http://sustainabilitymap.org)
It provides online access to a wide-range of information related to sustainability initiatives, standards and trends.

Market Price Information Portal (https://mpi.intracen.org/home)
The Market Price Information portal has been developed in response to a growing need among MSMEs and small-scale farmers for access to up-to-date market information. In developing countries in particular, access to such information is often scarce, unaffordable, inaccessible or out of date. By providing timely information on prices free of charge, the Market Price Information portal will help strengthen the ability of MSMEs to make decisions and anticipate shifting trends in international markets. The Market Price Information portal will help them become more competitive, make it easier to connect to global markets, and enable them to grow their businesses

OUR SERVICES

1 BUSINESS POLICY AND ADVOCACY
Influencing policy is at the heart of what we do

2 BUSINESS FACILITATION SERVICES
Business support services that are regional in nature.

3 MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
We are our members -towards strengthened business collaboration

Our Important Links

- http://comesabusinesscouncil.org/
- http://comesabusinesscouncil.org/Account/Login
- http://comesabusinesscouncil.org/Content/web/documents/news-media/
- http://comesabusinesscouncil.org/Home/AboutUs/Membership

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