# COMESA Activities in the Field of International Trade Statistics

*Anthony J. Walakira*
*ADP Expert - Eurotrace*

**Workshop on Updated and New Recommendations for IMTS and their Implementation in the Sub-Saharan Region**
**1 -5 November, 2010**
**Lusaka-Zambia**

# Agenda:

- Introduction
- Data Sources
- The EUROTRACE Software
- Country Technical Support and Training
- Data Harmonisation
- The COMSTAT On-line database
- Challenges and Recommendations

# Introduction:

- **COMESA's Mission**

  The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is a regional integration grouping of 19 African sovereign states which have agreed to promote regional integration through trade development and to develop their natural and human resources for the mutual benefit of all their peoples.

- **COMESA Treaty**

  Guiding document or master plan for the attainment of a COMESA Common Market whose overriding objective is to attain sustainable growth through the promotion of joint developmental projects and policies.

# Introduction:

- COMESA Treaty

## Treaty Provisions for Statistical Development

**Article 139**

*"The Member States undertake to co-operate in providing information that would enable them to review the functioning and development of the Common Market and move efficiently in the implementation of provisions of this Treaty."*

**Article 140**

*"The Member States undertake to cooperate in the field of statistics in order to create an enabling environment for regular flows of up-to date, reliable, harmonized and comparable statistical data on various sectors of economic activity, required for an efficient implementation of the objectives of the Common Market."*

# Introduction:

- **COMESA ‘s Current Membership**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| o Burundi | o Eritrea | o Malawi | o Swaziland |
| o Comoros | o Ethiopia | o Mauritius | o Uganda |
| o Congo DR | o Kenya | o Rwanda | o Zambia |
| o Djibouti | o Libya | o Seychelles | o Zimbabwe |
| o Egypt | o Madagascar | o Sudan | |

# Data Sources:

- Customs declarations:-
  - Single Bill of Entries (SBEs), and
  - related customs records

  ….. *are the most prevailing sources of trade data.*
- Non-Customs sources of trade data
  - Reports of Commodity/Crop Marketing Boards
  - Informal Cross Border Trade
  - Currency exchange records & record of monetary Authorities (Central Banks)
  - Enterprise/Company/Market surveys
  - Foreign shipping manifests
  - Parcel and letter post records

# The Eurotrace Software:

- Data Processing software for External Trade Statistics
- Developed by Eurostat (free)
- Comprised of three applications working as a suite
  - DBMS / Editor / COMEXT Browser
- Efficient and Robust:
  - **Flexibility :**
    - ✓ Full control of statistical data
    - ✓ Fully definable control parameters
  - **Save Time:**
    - ✓ Reduce data validation time
    - ✓ Track down and easily correct errors
  - **Help Cooperation between countries:**
    - ✓ Ensure compatibility with partner countries
    - ✓ Enables easy transmission of data

# The Eurotrace Software:

## Current Installations:

- In COMESA installed in 16 Member States (NSOs):-

- ✓ Burundi
- ✓ Comoros
- ✓ Djibouti
- ✓ Ethiopia
- ✓ Eritrea
- ✓ Kenya
- ✓ Madagascar
- ✓ Malawi
- ✓ Mauritius
- ✓ Rwanda
- ✓ Seychelles
- ✓ Sudan
- ✓ Swaziland
- ✓ Uganda
- ✓ Zambia
- ✓ Zimbabwe

# The Eurotrace Software:

## Other Installations:

- 4 Other installations in the Region (NSOs):-
  - ✓ Botswana
  - ✓ Lesotho
  - ✓ Namibia
  - ✓ Tanzania

# The Eurotrace Software:

## Other Installations:

- 12 Installations at Customs Administrations:-
  - ✓ Burundi
  - ✓ Comoros
  - ✓ Ethiopia
  - ✓ Eritrea
  - ✓ Kenya
  - ✓ Madagascar
  - ✓ Malawi
  - ✓ Rwanda + BNR
  - ✓ Swaziland
  - ✓ Uganda
  - ✓ Tanzania
  - ✓ Zimbabwe

# Country Technical Support and Training:

- Provided to countries reporting problems
- Technical assistance normally in use of Eurotrace
- Via mail/phone or mission
- Trouble-shooting and re-fresher training
- Traditional regional training workshops - stopped!
- E-learning training modules developed

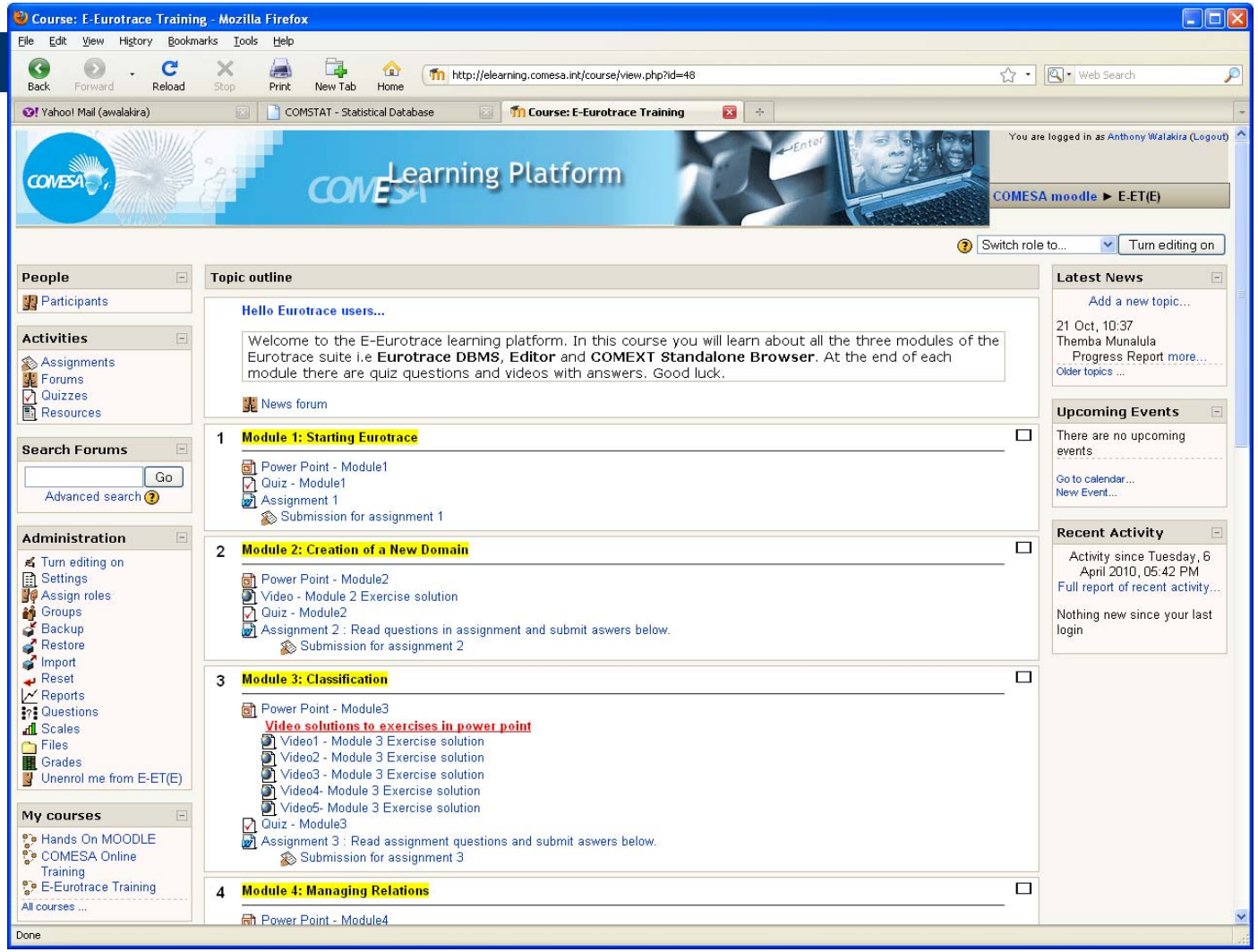
# Country Technical Support and Training:

## Eurotrace e-learning modules:

- New initiative in capacity building
- Pioneered by Eurotrace courses in 2009, (English and French)
- Materials available to a wider perspective of users in the region 24/7
- Users from other RECs welcome to the courses
- Cheaper to maintain and run than traditional workshops
- Workshops in most cases not addressing specific country problems
- Mounted on COMESA Moodle e-learning platform
- Meant to serve as a first-stop reference for technical support
- Ideal for new staff members working on Eurotrace!

# Country Technical Support and Training:

## *Sample screen of Eurotrace e-learning modules:*



# Data Harmonisation:

***The Harmonisation process at COMESA***

- Country codes converted to ISO3166 if not and validated
- HS codes trimmed to 6 digits of HS02/HS07 and validated
- Trade flows and types determined according to CPC
- Values in national currencies converted to USD
- Country file trimmed to structure of COMSUM according to General Trade System
- Country file grouped on coded fields and summed on numeric
- Residual data file uploaded to COMSTAT
- Data validation and harmonization tool developed - 2010

# The COMSTAT Validation Tool

- Above process initially performed manually
- In 2009, a consultant engaged to automate process
- COMSTAT Validation Tool developed
- Tool used to validate data for 2009

# The COMSTAT On-line Database:

- **COM**esa**STAT**istics
- Online interactive database
- Designed to disseminate statistics of various domains that are critical for monitoring the performance of COMESA's regional integration program
- Launched late in 2006, to staff
- 2007 opened up to the public

# The COMSTAT On-line Database:

## Objective

COMSTAT was designed with an overall objective of providing users with online access to the statistical repository database of the Secretariat

# Challenges and Recommendations:

- **Staff turnover**
  - *Re-fresher trainings and technical support*
  - *E-learning initiatives*
- **Low levels of cooperation : Customs – NSOs – Other**
  - *Establish/strengthen necessary institutional arrangements*
- **Under/miss Coverage**
  - *Use of different data sources*
  - *Proper definition and use of Trade Systems*
- **Data Quality : Volumes – Values – Partners**
  - *Recording of weights, quantities and supplementary units*
  - *Recording of second partner country*
  - *Compilation of FOB imports in addition to CIF*
  - *Develop and use principles and standards for data quality (DQAF)*

# Thank you