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**PRESS RELEASE**

**COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COMESA COMPETITION COMMISSION AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES' COMPETITION AUTHORITIES**

On 26-27 July 2023, the COMESA Competition Commission (CCC), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) Competition Commission, the East African Community Competition Authority (EACCA), Economic Community of West African States Competition Authority (ERCA) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) held their first meeting to discuss collaboration on competition and consumer protection matters in the region.

The meeting was held in light of the background that there are various legal instruments at the continental level which advocate for the integration of African economies; coordination and harmonization of the policies and activities of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in all fields or sectors with the goal of closer cooperation; resolving the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expediting of the regional and continental integration process; that RECs Free Trade Areas are building blocs for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); that best practices in the RECs are to be taken into account in the integration process; and advocating for strengthening of RECs.

In the meeting, the RECs recognized the coming into force of the Competition Protocol of the AfCFTA in February 2023 and recent global developments which point towards the need for RECs to combine efforts to achieve convergence in their activities with respect to competition and consumer protection. They also recognized that to be successful in regulating competition and consumer protection in the region, there will be need for collaboration at various levels; RECs and their Member States, RECs and other RECs, RECs and the continental body to be established under the AfCFTA and the continental body and the State Parties.

The first meeting of the RECs involved an exchange of views on the efforts by the RECs in advancing competition in the region and measures that can be applied to enable cooperation on matters of competition and consumer protection law enforcement. The RECs concluded that for there to be effective collaboration:

1. There is need for capacity building through exchange of expertise and staff.

2. Information sharing taking into account the confidentiality obligations pertaining under each REC.
3. Conducting of joint studies by the RECs.
4. Harmonisation of the policies/laws for the different RECs, joint investigations and enforcement activities, where applicable.
5. Discussion of emerging trends and sharing international best practices on competition/consumer protection.



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