



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## **RATES PROGRAM**

**Second Quarter Progress Report – FY 2008  
January 2008 to March 2008**



**April 15, 2008**

**This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by Chemonics International Inc.**



**Second Quarter Progress Report - FY 2008  
January 2008 to March 2008**

**April 15, 2008**

**Submitted by Chemonics International Inc.**

**A USAID-funded Project  
Contract #623-C-00-02-00089-00**

**The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Agency for International Development or the United States Government.**

## Table of Contents

Acronyms .....	ii
I. Introduction .....	1
2. Quarterly Progress by Commodity .....	1
2.1 Maize/Grains .....	1
2.2 Coffee .....	3
2.3 Cotton/Textiles .....	5
2.4 Dairy .....	7
2.5 Policy .....	8
3.0 Association Capacity Building .....	11

## **Acronyms**

ACA	African Cotton Association
ACTESA	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa
ACTIF	African Cotton and Textile Industries Federation
ACP	Africa Caribbean and Pacific
AFCCE	African Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
APEP	Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program
CCIA	COMESA Common Investment Area
CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
CFI	Computer Frontiers International
CIP	Coffee Improvement Program
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CMS	Coffee Marketing Specialist
CQI	Coffee Quality Institute
CTMS	Cotton/Textile Marketing Specialist
C-T-A	Cotton, Textile and Apparel Continuum
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo

DRLEF	Djibouti Regional Livestock Export Facility
EAC	East African Community
EAFC	East African Fine Coffee Association
EAGC	East African Grain Council
ECA Hub	East and Central Africa Global Competitiveness Hub
ECAPAPA	Eastern and Central Africa Program for Agricultural Policy Analysis
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ESA	East and Southern Africa
ESADA	Eastern and Southern African Dairy Association
FARA	Fixed Amount Reimbursable Agreement
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network Project
FOODNET	Post Harvest and Marketing Research Network for Eastern and Central Africa Project
FSD	Financial Services Deepening Trust
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GHA	Greater Horn of Africa
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GPS	Global Positioning Systems
GTPA	Grain Traders and Processors Association
HS	Harmonized Standard
IBAR	Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources
ICAC	International Cotton Advisory Committee
ICO	International Coffee Organization

IEHA	Initiative to End Hunger in Africa
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IT	Information Technology
ITI	International Technology Investment Ltd.
ITMF	International Textile Manufacturers Federation
JGI	Jane Goodall Institute
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KMDP	Kenya Maize Development Project
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
KSA	Knowledge sharing and Analysis Project
LOL	Land O'Lakes
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development
NFRA	National Food Reserve Agency (Malawi)
NSB	National Standards Bureaus
NTB	Non Tariff Barrier
NWG	National Working Group
OE	Organic Exchange
PIR	Project Intermediate Result
PIVA	Partner Institutional Viability Assessment
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan

RATES	Regional Agriculture Trade Expansion Support Program
RATIN	Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network
REDSO	Regional Economic Development Services Office
REGI	Regional Economic Growth and Integration
RTFP	Regional Trade Facilitation Program
RTO	Rates Trade Office
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCAA	Specialty Coffee Association of America
SCAE	Specialty Coffee Association of Europe
SCAJ	Specialty Coffee Association of Japan
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
STR	Simplified Trade Regime
TOH	Taste of Harvest
UHT	Ultra High Temperature
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCA	Value Chain Analysis
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWC	Worlds Wildest Coffee Conference and Exhibition
ZCGA	Zambia Coffee Growers Association

## I. Introduction

This report summarizes the progress of the RATES program during the second quarter of FY 08. The format conforms to the reporting requirements as spelled out in the 12 month extension modification (Modification 10) of the Chemonics International RATES contract. Below, is a summary of the progress of each commodity and the policy component of the program:

## 2. Quarterly Progress by Commodity

The RATES program is dedicated to increasing the value of agricultural trade in specialty coffee, maize, cotton and textiles and dairy within the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region and the rest of the world. Through policy advocacy, lobbying, public relations, and marketing, RATES is expanding private sector contributions to regional trade initiatives in ESA. RATES is improving the ESA regional business environment by taking actions that strengthen institutions, improve the availability of technologies, increase cooperation and reduce policy and regulatory constraints, thereby providing the foundation for reducing food insecurities in the region. Below is a summary of progress for each commodity and the RATES policy component:



The NCPB grain silos in Eldoret could be empty next season as a result of the post election violence in the North Rift that has delayed planting of maize for the upcoming season

### 2.1 Maize/Grains

The maize program, under the banner of “Maize without Borders” is focused on improved trade facilitation through a more structured regional marketing system. Key to the implementation of this program is RATES’ support to grain trade associations throughout the region including the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) and the Grain Traders and Processors Association (GTPA) of Malawi.

Supporting structured trading activities. The EAGC can play a critical role in the development of a more structured grain trading system in the region. As part of this effort, RATES has been working to increase the capacity of the EAGC to assume a coordination role by supplying traders and producers with the necessary instruments to trade in a more structured manner.

- *Kenya Pilot WRS activity.* With RATES and KMDP support, the Eastern African Grain Council (EAGC) is continuing its efforts to coordinate a pilot grain warehouse receipt system (WRS) in Nakuru despite setbacks due to the

recent unrest that has made immediate delivery of grain impossible. The WRS pilot program is intended to offer farmers a system for storing their maize in safe warehouses and a mechanism that allows commercial banks to provide credit to these farmers based on warehouse receipts guaranteeing the quality of the maize.

EAGC has engaged Lesiolo Grain Handlers as the management agent and has certified their silo in Nakuru. This location is now receiving maize from farmers. As of the end of March, over 10,000 (90 kg) bags of maize have been delivered to the warehouse in Nakuru. Equity Bank has provided approximately US \$130,000 in credit to farmers holding warehouse receipts. The KMDP is organizing the farmers on the ground, but still experiencing problems with small farmers who have been reluctant to move maize in the effected areas.



**EAFCA Board members Nick Hutchinson (left) (Chairman, Anne Mbaabu Executive Director (center), and Chris Kaijunda, Uganda Board member at the Uganda EAGC launch**

- *Launching the EAGC in Uganda.* With RATES support, the EAGC held an official launch ceremony of the EAGC Uganda chapter in January at the Royal Hotel in Kampala. The purpose of this promotional event was to introduce the board and Secretariat to the Uganda stakeholders and to highlight services provided by EAGC to its members. The Secretariat also took the opportunity to invite new companies and organizations to join EAGC. Over 50 Ugandan stakeholders attended the event and 10 companies/associations have already joined the EAGC.
- *GTPA Stakeholders meeting.* RATES grain trade team (Stephen Njuria, Pam Chesire and Bridget Okumu) traveled to Malawi to participate in a grain sector stakeholder meeting organized in conjunction with the Malawi Grain Traders and Processors Association (GTPA). The GTPA is a recipient of a small RATES Partners Fund grant that is focused on helping build the capacity of this association.

Sixteen participants from the private and public sector attended this meeting to discuss the grain situation in Malawi and to discuss future strategies for increasing exports of maize. The RATES team gave a presentation on structured grain trading systems and how the EAGC can provide support to this national-level association.

The GTPA noted that members have traded 301,000 metric tons of maize to Zimbabwe this year with a value of

approximately US \$ 60 million. This maize is being traded through a contract with Zimbabwe through the National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA). Zimbabwe has given the NFRA a new contract for an additional 200,000 metric tons and GTPA exporters are expecting additional sales through this arrangement. As Malawi is not often a major exporter of grain, FEWNET Malawi was asked to give a presentation on the current maize situation in Malawi. They noted that the government has lifted the recently imposed export ban on maize and Malawi is expecting a good maize crop next season in spite of the increased rainfall. The Ministry of Agriculture is projecting an anticipated surplus of one million metric tons.

- *World Bank Training.* In February, Stephen Njuria and Pamela Chesire were invited by the Commodity Risk Management Group of the World Bank Malawi to conduct a training course on the fundamentals of maize markets, trading, and risk management to a group selected from Malawi Government ministries, specifically targeting the Agriculture, Food Security, Finance, and Trade Ministries. Fourteen senior ministry representatives attended the training course that should help these public sector players to better understand the fundamentals of private sector grain trading.



**Members of the Board of the GTPA at a traders meeting in Lilongwe. Members of the association traded over 311,000 metric tons of maize to Zimbabwe this year**

## 2.2 Coffee

RATES strategy in promoting specialty coffee exports has been to work through the Eastern African Fine Coffees Association (EAFCA), the regional body representing nine Eastern African coffee producing countries. RATES' long-term goal is to position EAFCA as a major actor in the marketing and promotion of Eastern African fine coffees in regional and international coffee markets. RATES and EAFCA are working with the private sector, both in the region and in the primary consuming countries, to build on strong relationships and market linkages. Some promising results:

### EAFCA as a leading origin of specialty coffees

- *5th Annual Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition.* EAFCA concluded a very successful fifth Annual Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition held in Kampala from February 14-16<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This 3 day event attracted over 500 coffee players from over 30 countries around the world to come together to network, make deals, and to celebrate the

Eastern African coffee industry. President Yoweri Museveni officially opened the conference and urged the sector to focus on adding value to coffee in Africa and to take advantage of new markets and regional opportunities. US Ambassador to Uganda, Mr. Steven Browning, cut the ribbon to officially open the exhibition. During his remarks, Ambassador Browning stressed USAID's continued commitment to supporting the Uganda coffee sector through USAID Uganda's APEP program and its follow on project next year. He applauded RATES' regional work in promoting regional coffee exports and supporting EAFCA that has now become a major player in the world coffee arena.



**US Ambassador to Uganda, Mr. Steven Browning, talking with exporters at the EAFCA coffee conference held in Kampala**

In his opening remarks, Secretary General of COMESA, Erastus Mwencha, applauded USAID's support to the coffee sector and to other value chains in the region. He noted that thanks to USAID East Africa support to coffee, cotton/textiles, dairy and staple foods, a number of regional private sector trade associations have emerged that are working closely with COMESA to address regional trade issues.

Conference attendees had an opportunity to hear a bullish outlook on coffee prices from coffee marketing guru, Judith Gaines, whose presentation is always a highlight of the conference. The International Coffee Organization, the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) and the Specialty Coffee Association of Europe and Japan (SCAE and SCAJ) attended the conference along with many of the major coffee importing and exporting companies including Starbucks Coffee Company, a major sponsor of the Taste of Harvest Cupping competition this year. In addition to Starbucks, many smaller roasters and importers were also at the conference and encouraged the industry to form direct relationships with the roasters who are the key players that market African coffees to the consumers.

Attendees also had an opportunity to meet with 50 exhibitors (many who had elaborately decorated booths) that showcased regional coffee, coffee equipment and ancillary services to the coffee industry. Exhibitors are expected to sign contracts with a value of US \$20 million over the next few months as a direct result of market linkages and contacts made through the conference and exhibition.

EAFCFA sponsored the first annual Uganda Barista Competition that ran concurrently with the Exhibition. This event is aimed at promoting domestic consumption of coffee and improving the coffee making skills of local Baristas. The winner of the national competition will travel to Sweden for the World Barista championship in June 2007 sponsored by Brussels Airlines. EAFCA is also sponsoring Barista competitions in Kenya, Zambia and South Africa, the newest chapter of EAFCA. EAFCA is focusing marketing efforts on greatly increasing Eastern African coffee exports to the South African market.

As a result of the large turn out for the conference, EAFCA netted approximately US \$270,000 in revenues from conference registrations and booth rentals. In addition, private companies provided over US \$150,000 in sponsorships for social and educational events. With this income, EAFCA is well on its way on covering its operational expenses for next year. The sixth Annual Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition will be held in Kigali, Rwanda in February, 2009.



Signing deals was the name of the game at the EAFCA conference. EAFCA members expect to sign deals worth at least \$20 million as a result of contacts made at the conference

### 2.3 Cotton/Textiles

The African Cotton and Textiles Industry Federation (ACTIF) is RATES' key partner in carrying out the cotton textile program. This regional organization is still in its infancy but making significant progress on improving the enabling environment for the cotton/textile sector. The ACTIF board and membership has been very proactive in this regard. The ACTIF subcommittee for Global Trade Initiatives has been a leader in addressing global and regional issues such as the European Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) trade agreements. Below is a summary of major activities during the quarter:

#### Support to the EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) process.

As a sign of ACTIF's growing relationship with the regional organizations, ACTIF has continued to provide input into the on-going EPA negotiation process during the second quarter. (see detailed discussion under policy). The principal issues being addressed for textiles and apparel are the rules of origin and product transformation criteria. ACTIF held consultations with its membership and has obtained consensual input for incorporation into the negotiation round with the EU. Due to the complexities of the negotiations and the need to obtain, where possible, a balanced position catering for the interests

of the various sub-sectors, a transitional agreement has been reached between the EU and the east and southern Africa ACP grouping, the provisions of which will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. This interim agreement will be sufficient to enable companies to continue to trade with the EU under preferential terms. During the course of 2008, further negotiations will take place with the aim of producing a more comprehensive EPA, which will give more time to produce and conclude a more all-embracing trade arrangement.

*ACTIF as a major player in the international cotton textile arena.*

With RATES support, ACTIF participated in a number of important industry meetings during the quarter. Below, is a summary of these events:



**ACTIF Chairman, Jas Bedi (right) shaking hands with COMESA Secretary General, Erastus Mwencha, after signing an MOU between the two organizations**

- *African Cotton Association (ACA) Meeting (AGM).* The ACTIF Secretariat participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the African Cotton Association recently held in Lusaka, Zambia. ACA is an African-wide organization mainly focused on the production end of the cotton value chain. Although members of this organization are mainly comprised of West African companies and cotton associations, this year's annual meeting was held in Lusaka as a way to encourage the development of an African wide association. ACTIF took advantage of the meeting to network with a number of key international and regional cotton players who attended the meeting. ACTIF and ACA have agreed to collaborate and develop a MOU outlining mutual interests and objectives.
- *1<sup>st</sup> African Global Competitiveness Hub Meeting.* Barry Fisher, RATES cotton/textile advisor, attended the 1<sup>st</sup> African Global Competitiveness Hub Meeting held in Accra, Ghana from March 3-5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to promote knowledge sharing among the three African Global Competitiveness Hubs and their stakeholders. Mr. Fisher gave a presentation on ACTIF and status of the regional cotton textile industry. The meeting was hosted by the USAID Knowledge Sharing and Analysis project (KSA) and the West Africa Trade Hub.

Developing the regional cotton/textile value chain. ACTIF is exploring opportunities for expanding the supply chain and searching for niche markets where African companies can successfully compete in the world market. Below is a summary of work in this area:

- *Regional Organic Cotton Supply Chain Forum.* RATES staff are continuing preparations for a major regional forum on organic cotton to be held in Kampala in June 08. RATES has engaged Ludovica Bellingeri as the event coordinator. Ms. Bellingeri is working closely with Organic Exchange and ACTIF to develop a conference web site and finalize the program. Pre-registration will be available later in April.

The California based Organic Exchange (OE) will co-host this event in collaboration with ACTIF and Uganda stakeholders. The Kampala forum will immediately follow the IFOAM Congress in Italy. OE and others key players involved in organic cotton who will be attending this meeting in Italy will then travel on to Kampala for the forum.



**Organic Exchange will co-host the upcoming organic cotton conference with RATES and ACTIF**

- *Investment/Finance survey completed.* The regional investment and finance survey conducted by RATES has been completed. This survey has identified possible facilities and sources of finance options with an aim of increasing opportunities for financing available to ACTIF members. Based on the survey findings, ACTIF is now developing an electronic database to be made available to its membership next quarter.
- *COMESA's Regional Industry Strategy for Cotton, Textiles and Apparel.* RATES cotton/textile team is working closely with ACTIF to provide input and direction to COMESA on developing a comprehensive regional strategy for the cotton, textile and apparel industry. During the last two weeks of March, RATES engaged a facilitator to work with the ACTIF team to review the draft document and develop a revised strategic plan to submit to COMESA for review during the next regional strategy meeting.

## **2.4 Dairy**

The RATES dairy program is focused on the removal of extra/inter-regional export market trade constraints and promoting intra-regional exports of dairy products. RATES works primarily through the Eastern and Southern African

Dairy Association (ESADA), the regional dairy association created with RATES support.

During the last year of the program, RATES has provided ESADA with a Partners Fund grant and has dedicated additional resources for providing technical assistance to ESADA and the national associations through our consortium partner, Land O' Lakes. Below is a summary of progress to date:

#### Fourth Annual Dairy Conference and Exhibition

ESADA has announced the rescheduling of the 4th African Dairy Conference and Exhibition now to be held in Nairobi from August 6-8<sup>th</sup> at the Safari Park Hotel. The conference (that was originally scheduled for June 08) was re-scheduled as a result of the recent post-election problems in Kenya. This conference and exhibition is a first class dairy trade show that provides an opportunity for regional and international dairy industry players to meet, network and share the latest information on the global and regional dairy industries. Special sessions will also address the recovery of the Kenya dairy sector. Registration for the conference is now up on the [www.dairyafrika.com](http://www.dairyafrika.com) website.

#### Regional Dairy Promotion

ESADA is now producing a number of publications to promote the regional dairy industry. These include a newsletter, Dairy Splash, and the quarterly publication, Dairy Mail. This quarter's edition has a focus on the Ugandan and Zambian dairy industries.



**ESADA is now producing a number of publications to promote the regional dairy industry**

## **2.5 Policy**

RATES has identified a number of trade policy issues that affect regional trade flows and has initiated a process of change through the regional policy making structures (COMESA, EAC and SADC) with the active participation of the regional trade associations (ESADA, EAGC and ACTIF).

#### Harmonization of a number of product standards.

This effort is building upon the earlier RATES policy work that has led to regional harmonization of a number of product standards. These include:

- *Regional Dairy Standards.* The final round of negotiations aimed at completing the COMESA regional dairy standard harmonization process was held in October in Lusaka at the COMESA Secretariat. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, RATES policy team worked with COMESA to circulate the joint COMESA/EAC standards to the stakeholders for purposes of enlisting their support ahead of the scheduled meetings of the EAC and COMESA Standards Committees in April 2008. Additionally, COMESA provided a progress report on the implementation of regionally harmonized standards at the Joint Meeting of Ministers of Trade, Industry and Finance held in Addis Ababa on April 4, 2008. The Ministers reiterated the need for the COMESA Secretariat to expedite the adoption of regionally harmonized standards in readiness for the Customs Union and noted in particular the progress achieved for maize and dairy standards.
- *Dairy SPS Protocol.* In March, the RATES policy advisor, Bernard Kagira, attended a COMESA-sponsored regional SPS meeting held in Kampala, Uganda to finalize a dairy SPS protocol that will spell out the framework for enacting and implementing harmonized dairy SPS standards. The draft protocol covers the implementation mechanisms for developing sanitary standards, disease surveillance systems, emergency preparedness and control procedures, certification and accreditation guidelines and animal health and safety protocols.



**RATES policy advisor, Bernard Kagira (right), is leading RATES effort in assuring private sector participation in regional and international policy formulation**

The protocol was presented just after COMESA SPS Committee adopted the COMESA SPS Protocol which provides for commodity specific protocols as the basis for the COMESA Green Pass System. COMESA and EAC are looking into dairy as the commodity to be used in fast tracking the introduction of the green channel.

*Promoting global market access for African cotton, textiles and apparel (C-T-A) Products.*

- *Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiations.* With RATES support, ACTIF has played a key role by providing input on the C-T-A sectors to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiations that took place during the quarter. RATES policy advisor, Bernard Kagira, attended all EPA meetings and provided technical assistance to the EAC. Mr. Kagira has worked closely with ACTIF on getting input on a number of key provisions in the agreement.

- *Adoption and Implementation of the COMESA simplified trade regime (STR).* The COMESA-STR is intended to mainstream informal cross-border trade (ICBT) into the mainstream of formal trade in recognition of the fact that this trade is a significant component of intra-COMESA trade. A number of milestones were achieved during the quarter with respect to the implementation of the COMESA-STR:
- All the ten pilot countries, with the exception of Rwanda, have established National Working Groups (comprising relevant public-private sector institutions) as focal points for coordinating the implementation of the STR at national level
- A bilateral meeting was held between DRC and Zambia during February 2008 to explore modalities for fast-tracking the implementation of the STR at Kasumbalesa (the common border between DRC and Zambia). This effort was done in collaboration with the Trading for Peace Program, a USAID and DFiD funded initiative targeted at the Great Lakes countries.
- A User Handbook on the STR, targeted at traders and border officials was finalized and translated into French and Kiswahili. It will be printed and distributed to stakeholders during the quarter April-June 2008.
- The Joint COMESA Ministers of Trade, Industry and Finance reviewed the STR and made a number of decisions to move this process forward.



**Dr. Joyce Cacho, Director of the CCA's Agribusiness Initiative's Program speaking with EAGC Board member Ben Moshi at the recent COMESA Association Roundtable held in Lusaka**

Support to COMESA on CAADP. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) was launched in 2004 as part of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). RATES is providing targeted support to COMESA in this effort. Progress to date includes:

- *CAADP Partnership Platform meeting.* RATES participated in a COMESA-sponsored workshop held in the Seychelles in March aimed at updating partners on the progress of implementing CAADP. Participants included donors, policy makers, NGO's and other stakeholders involved in food security, agriculture and economic growth programs.

During the meeting, the CAADP coordinators updated the group on the progress towards creating an Alliance for

Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA). ACTESA will be a multi-donor effort led by COMESA to build regional cross-border alliances that will strengthen innovative market institutions and link chronically food insecure smallholder farmers with growing national and regional markets for staple foods.

- *Building Public Private Partnerships.* RATES and COMESA hosted a partner's sustainability roundtable for the four regional trade associations (the Eastern African Fine Coffees Association (EAFCA), the African Cotton and Textiles Industries Federation (ACTIF), the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) and the Eastern and Southern African Dairy Association (ESADA) at Chaminuka Lodge in Lusaka, Zambia from March 4<sup>th</sup>-March 5<sup>th</sup>. The objective of the roundtable was to strengthen the newly created public private partnerships between COMESA and the regional trade organizations in support of regional integration.



EAGC Executive Director, Ms. Anne Mbaabu, giving a presentation on the EAGC at the recent COMESA Roundtable meeting held in Zambia

The executive director and chairman of the board of each association were invited to speak at the roundtable. COMESA was represented by the Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Nygala El-Husseiny and all the COMESA Secretariat department heads. USAID East Africa staff and RATES project personnel attended the roundtable on behalf of USAID. CAADP advisor to COMESA, Mr. Cris Muyunda gave an update on the regional CAADP program and Dr. Joyce Cacho, head of the Agribusiness Initiatives Program of the Corporate Council of Africa gave a presentation on the CCA's upcoming US Africa Business Forum to be held in June 2008 in Chicago. The roundtable group focused on developing strategies to improve private sector involvement in trade negotiations and policy formulation. These recommendations were submitted to the Council of Ministers Meeting held in the Seychelles in March and these will be formally incorporated into the COMESA programs and departments.

### **3.0 Association Capacity Building**

Over the last month, the RATES team has provided intensive training to each of regional private sector trade associations (EAFCA, EAGC, ESADA and ACTIF) on how to develop marketable funding proposals using different approaches such as a Logframe matrix and Results framework. With the help of a professional facilitator, senior staff from each association worked with the RATES commodity specialists to identify a

number of problems/issues that could be addressed with additional funding and developed the proposal concepts and budgets for addressing these constraints. As a result of the training, EAGC has already submitted a revised proposal concept paper to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for supporting a more structured grain trading system. EAFCA has submitted a revised proposal concept to the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) to support efforts aimed at increasing the region's capacity to meet coffee quality certification requirements. The other two associations will be completing proposals in the near future and ACTIF has revised its input to the regional cotton textile strategy for COMESA based on this exercise.



**Group photo of the COMESA/ Regional Association Roundtable held in Zambia**