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COMESA

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was formed in December 1994 to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA) which had existed from the earlier days of 1981. COMESA (as defined by its Treaty) was established 'as an organization of free independent sovereign states which have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people' and as such it has a wide-ranging series of objectives which necessarily include in its priorities the promotion of peace and security in the region. Read more <http://www.comesa.int>

ECCAS

was established on 18 October 1983 by the UDEAC members and the members of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes States (CEPGL) (Burundi, Rwanda and the then Zaire) as well as Sao Tomé and Príncipe. Angola remained an observer until 1999, when it became a full member. ECCAS aims to achieve collective autonomy, raise the standard of living of its populations and maintain economic stability through harmonious cooperation. Its ultimate goal is to establish a Central African Common Market. For more on ECCAS, click on <http://www.ceeac-eccas.org/>

ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, founded in 1975. Its mission is to promote economic integration in "all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters. For more on ECOWAS, click on <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/>

IGAD

At an Extraordinary Summit of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the Heads of State and Government of the East Africa sub region held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 18 April 1995, leaders met and resolved to revitalize the Authority by expanding its areas of regional co-operation. This would create a full-fledged regional political, economic, development, trade and security entity similar to the South African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). One of the major motivations for the revitalization of IGADD was the existence of many organizational and structural problems that made the implementation of its goals and principles ineffective. On 21 March 1996, the Heads of State and Government at the Second Extraordinary Summit in Nairobi, Kenya approved and adopted an Agreement Establishing the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. For more on IGAD, click on <http://igad.int/>

SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) started as Frontline States whose objective was political liberation of Southern Africa. SADC was preceded by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was formed in Lusaka, Zambia on April 01, 1980 with the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration (Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation). On August 17, 1992, at their Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, the Heads of State and Government signed the SADC Treaty and Declaration that effectively transformed the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The objective also shifted to include economic integration following the independence of the rest of the Southern African countries. Currently SADC has a membership of 15 Member States, namely; Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For more on SADC, Click on <http://www.sadc.int/>

UMA

The first Conference of Maghreb Economic Ministers in Tunis in 1964 established the Conseil Permanent Consultatif du Maghreb (CPCM) between Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia, to coordinate and harmonize the development plans of the four countries as well as intraregional trade and relations with the EU. However, for a number of reasons, the plans never came to fruition. It was not until the late 1980s that new impetus began to bring the parties together again. The first Maghreb Summit of the five Heads of State, held at Zeralda (Algeria) in June 1988, resulted in a decision to set up the Maghreb High Commission and various specialized commissions. Finally, on February 17, 1989 in Marrakech, the Treaty establishing the UMA was signed by the Heads of State of the five countries. For more on UMA, click on www.maghrebarabe.org