

### **INTERVENTION STATEMENT: AGENDA ITEM 3: EXPERIENCE SHARING/ THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS: AUTHORISED ECONOMIC OPERATORS**

Zambia has a programme with similar functions as the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) called the Customs Accredited Client Programme whose pilot implementation was done in November 2007 and the Programme was opened up to the importing community on 12 June, 2008. The programme is limited to reliable and compliant traders.

The programme is supported by the Zambia Customs and Excise Act section 188. A checklist (i.e. the due diligence and supply chain security checklist) has been developed to guide both the customs officers and the traders to monitor compliance.

At the regional level, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) has developed draft COMESA Regional AEO Programme implementation guidelines (June 2018) whose objective is to develop regionally harmonised procedures and criteria for granting the status of AEO in line with the COMESA Customs Management Regulations (CMR), WCO guidelines and WTO TFA, and to facilitate the implementation of harmonised and standardised common AEO Programme and MRAs throughout the COMESA region.

As regards implementation of the AEO in the COMESA region, twelve (12) Member States have implemented recognition of AEOs. Namely; Burundi, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, the names of the simplified programme, selection criteria, the scope of the sectors and the benefits accruing to the AEO differ from country to country, hence the development of the COMESA guidelines.