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## U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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### **USTDA SUPPORTS COMESA REGIONAL AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

NAIROBI, KENYA – Increasing trade capacity through enhanced regional air safety and efficiency is the goal of USTDA grant funds awarded on May 19, 2007 to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The funds will be used to support Phase II of a USTDA grant awarded to COMESA last year on regional airspace management. Specifically, Phase II involves the establishment of the operational, political and economic feasibility of implementing a regional COMESA air traffic management system for upper and lower airspace.

The funds, totaling \$443,300, were conferred during a signing ceremony at the COMESA Forum that took place last week in Nairobi. U.S. Ambassador to Zambia Carmen Martinez and COMESA Assistant Secretary General Sindiso N. Ngwenya signed the agreement on behalf of the U.S. government and COMESA, respectively.

COMESA is one of the eight recognized Regional Economic Communities in Africa. The organization's goal is the promotion of regional integration through trade and investment. Consistent with this objective, COMESA is seeking to coordinate approaches to Control Navigation Surveillance/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) by its member states. Such coordination will increase capacity and safety by simplifying much of the complex interaction between today's smaller national systems, and will facilitate investment in fully compatible, leading-edge technological systems.

The USTDA funds awarded Saturday build on work undertaken in three prior agency-supported activities. Previously, USTDA has funded similar regional airspace integration studies, which are currently on-going, for the East African Community (EAC) and South African Development Community (SADC). The USTDA-funded technical assistance to COMESA last year assessed the technical and professional capacity of the air traffic management systems in eight COMESA member states, who are not also EAC or SADC members. Those countries, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Seychelles, will now be the subject of the Phase II assessment funded by USTDA.

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COMESA has selected DORS International of Washington, DC, to conduct the study. As it carries out the assistance, DORS International will develop an organizational structure and architecture for the management of the CNS/ATM system, an economic and financial analysis to determine revenue generation potential, and a plan to provide for the sustainability of the lower airspace. Previously, DORS International was chosen by the EAC and SADC, following separate open competitions, as the contractor for their respective USTDA-funded studies. The selection of DORS International by COMESA will ensure consistency, coordination, integration and harmonization of all three studies.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

-30-

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