



UGANDA HANDS OVER PRESIDENCY OF REGIONAL ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING GROUP TO ZAMBIA AS MINISTER KASAIJA LISTS TOP ACHIEVEMENTS

Uganda, on September 7th, 2021 handed over the Presidency of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) to Zambia during the 21st Council of Ministers virtual meeting.

Finance Minister Matia Kasaija has been the President of the Council since December 2020, after taking over Presidency of the Kingdom of Eswatini. The main objective of Uganda's presidency was to ensure that ESAAMLG continues to be an active and effective member of the Financial Action Task Force global network for combating money laundering and financing of terrorism.

According to Kasaija, there has been several achievements during Uganda's Presidency of the ESAAMLG and they include, finalization and adoption of mutual evaluation reports of Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa, Standards E-Training Course for the ESAAMLG Region, continued review of progress made by countries among others.

"I encourage member states to continue in the fight against money laundering and financial terrorism," he said while handing over Presidency.

ESAAMLG is a Regional Body that adheres to global standards on combatting money laundering and terrorism financing. Established in 1999, it currently has 18 Member Countries across Africa and includes several regional and international observers, such as AUSTRAC, FATF, and IMF. The UK and the U.S. also cooperate with and support the nations of the organization.

Kasaija also lauded the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for the continued cooperation and support extended to ESAAMLG over the years. According to him, this support has enriched the organization as well as our member countries in developing Anti Money Laundering, Combating Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation systems that meet international standards.

"It is our hope that this cooperation will continue into the future. Members of the ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials have been meeting since 26th August to prepare for this meeting. The Task Force has prepared a comprehensive Report with recommendations that will assist us to take decisions on a range of issues in the agenda before us," he said.



‘Mutual Evaluations of Eswatini and Namibia going on’

The Mutual Evaluations (MEs) of Eswatini and Namibia are ongoing and that of Kenya commenced during the Uganda Presidency. According to Kasajja, Pre-Assessment – Training Workshop for Kenya was held in March 2021 to prepare the country for its assessment.

He also informed the Council of Ministers that Eritrea is expected to join ESAAMLG as a member during our meeting following a successful High Level Mission undertaken in June 2021.

“The Task Force adopted the post evaluation Follow Up Reports (FURs) with TC Re-ratings of Botswana, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Uganda and Zimbabwe.”

Good progress in interpretation of money laundering work

The Finance Minister also said the ESAAMLG Secretariat and the Task Force have made good progress in typologies of Money Laundering work.

“The FATF’s global typologies study on Illegal Wildlife Trade and Money Laundering (IWT/ML) was completed and a Plan to Implement the Recommendations of the Report by ESAAMLG Countries was approved.”

‘Compliance to FATF recommendations remains a challenge’

Kasajja said major challenge affecting ESAAMLG is ensuring that countries remain fully compliant with the FATF Standards. According to him, previous assessments focused on technical compliance with the FATF Standards.

“As you all know, in February 2013, the FATF adopted a new Methodology which still includes the assessment of technical compliance, but it goes a step further and focuses as well on assessing the effectiveness of the systems we have put in place to combat Money Laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation.”

He added: “So far 11 of our member countries have been assessed under Second Round of Mutual Evaluations with a schedule to complete the Second Round of Mutual Evaluations by 2024. When we include the Assessment of South Africa adopted by the FATF in June and which we will also approve at our meeting the total number of assessed countries under the second round would be twelve.

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