



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EABC and Women in Business engages International Trade Centre on Increasing Intra-Regional Trade and Promoting Access to the European Market

- **EABC and EAWiBP ready to facilitate EAC business to seize the European Market**
- **Add value to products and access the European Market, EAC business urged**

Arusha, Tanzania: June 20th, 2018: The East African Business Council in collaboration with the East African Women in Business Platform held a round table discussion with Ms. Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Director of International Trade Centre (ITC), ahead of the official launch of the Market Access Upgrade project (MARKUP) at the EAC Headquarters.

The round table offered the opportunity for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as well as women in business to discuss on practical ways of increasing market access of EAC products to Europe, reflect on the successes, challenges, and impact of the ongoing EAC regional integration process to businesses.

The European Union offers market for EAC products such as coffee, flowers, tobacco, tea, fish, vegetables and precious metal ores among others. According to International Trade Centre, the EAC region exported goods worth approx. USD. 2.5 billion in 2017 an increase of 8% in comparison with USD.2.3 billion in 2016.

The discussions highlighted the importance of harmonization of standards in the region, which the EABC has been taking lead in advocating on behalf of the Private Sector in the region, to increase intra-EAC trade, improve product quality and maintain competitiveness in regional and international markets.

“The EAC Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) protocol needs to be ratified by all Partner States to address issues regarding food safety in the region,” said Ms. Lilian Awinja, EABC Executive Director.

“To tap into the EU market the region needs to benchmark standards with the ones of the European Union and East African products should meet the requirements of the European consumers,” said Mr. Jean Baptiste, Director Productive Sectors of the EAC.

“EABC efforts in advocating for the removal of Non-Tariff Barriers such as road blocks, improvement of the transport network in the region and simplification of border procedures has

facilitated cross border trade and improved the transport sector,” said Mr. Kake Dhaliwal, Former EABC Board Director & Manager AVCO Investment.

Ms. Gonzalez urged the region to add value to products, align to existing international Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and standards, improve trade facilitation, and strengthen connectivity all institutions that promote trade as well as capitalize on the power of networks.

Ms. Nancy Gitonga, EAWiBP Regional Coordinator underscored the importance of linking women in business to different market opportunities and improving their skills through trainings.

“EAWiBP has successfully developed a contact database of 10,000 women in business in the EAC region,” noted Ms. Nancy Gitonga.

“ITC has made trade more inclusive through the *She Trade Program* by connecting together over one million women in business from different countries,” said Ms. Gonzalez.

The round table attracted EABC and EAWiBP members working in different sectors and sub sectors including: technology, consultancy, transport, manufacturing, horticulture and agro-processing, among others.

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Notes to Editors

The East African Business Council (EABC) is the regional apex body of Private Sector associations and Corporates from the 6 East African Countries. It was established in 1997 to foster the interests of the Private Sector in the Integration process of the East African Community. Being the representative of Private Sector associations in the region, EABC was granted observer status in organs and activities of the East African Community (EAC). EABC therefore participates in various sectoral meetings, meetings of the Coordination Committee, the EAC Council of Ministers, and the Summit of the EAC Heads of State; with a view to ensure, that the agenda of the Private Sector is well articulated and received by the policy makers.

Vision: Borderless East Africa for business and investment.

Mission: To promote sustainable Private Sector-driven growth.

EABC Membership is drawn from the six East African Partner States and is open to all national and regional associations as well as Corporates with interest in the EAC Integration process or operations in the region. At national level, EABC activities are coordinated through the EABC National Focal Points, who are also the national Private Sector umbrella bodies. These are: Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industries Burundi (CFCIB), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF), Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) and Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU).

For more information about EABC, visit www.eabc.info