



**THEME: BRINGING BUSINESS TO THE TABLE- COLLABORATION FOR GROWTH**  
**5<sup>th</sup> April, 2017**  
**Lusaka, Zambia**

## **1. Introduction**

The COMESA Business Council (CBC) is the formally recognized apex business member organization of COMESA, representing private sector interests to the highest levels of decision making in policy, at the regional level. The CBC provides services in advocacy, business linkages and partnerships and membership development through addressing specific interests of industries on a sector by sector and enterprise basis.

Under the Business Policy and Advocacy Pillar, the CBC is mandated to provide support to the business community in the following areas;

- Encouraging national business organizations to join forces and identify key obstacles to business growth
- Setting priorities on the legislative and regulatory instruments that can stimulate investment and business growth
- Preparing evidence-based position papers
- Mobilizing political will and actions within the region to initiate and implement policy and institutional reforms so as to create an enabling environment for competition and investment.

This agenda is covered under the Strategic Objective 1 of the CBC which is; “*To provide strategic advocacy platforms for the private sector in at least 70% of the priority sectors within COMESA region, by ensuring effective representation of sectorial interests in COMESA decision making processes in at least 3 priority sectors per year.*”

## **2. Rationale;**

It is well known, that the private sector is the engine of economic growth, the largest employers and also a significant contributor the GDP of any given economy. In this regard, that business interests are important in influencing the policy formulation processes at a national and regional level.

As the year begins, businesses must be given a platform to put together their common agendas that should be addressed at the highest levels of decision making.

The Zambia Private Sector Alliance is a National apex platform of all business associations and companies in Zambia. During the first half of the year, this platform will be meeting the highest office of decision making in a round table dialogue to address business costs and how they can be solved.

To inform this process, the CBC is supporting and partnering the ZAPSA through our National focal Point- Zambia Association of Manufacturers- ZAM, to hold a one day National Business Dialogue, on key sectoral roundtables to cover the following;

- Address business constraints in the said sectors;
- Discuss the regulatory, administrative processes that can be adjusted as proposals from business
- Dialogue with political will in line with the said sectors to support the agendas of the business sectors.
- Agree on common recommendations to be taken to the ZAPSA roundtable meeting with highest office.

The composition of each roundtable will have a number of companies in the said sector, government officials and COMESA and COMESA Business Council as facilitators of discussions.

Each high table discussion will also cover key companies and regulatory authorities. The dialogue will offer a unique opportunity to private sector businesses to interact with the government officials and regulators involved in policy making at national level.

Prior to the dialogue, companies will also be given an opportunity to send briefs on the issues they would wish to be addressed so as to inform the discussions of the PPD.

## **3. Implementation/ Approach ;**

- One day Public Private Dialogue in Zambia.
- Engage Corporate Companies in Zambia to partner with CBC
- Have 10 sector based round tables; the tables will consist of the key stakeholders from a particular sector; i.e. Government Ministers, regulators and the private sector companies.

- Have an audience that will include; financial service providers, cement manufacturers , tourism , telecommunications, agriculture, ICT, energy and consumer goods and government officials
- Offer sponsorship package for each of the tables as per attached sponsorship form

#### 4. **Objectives :**

- To harmonize the positions of the Private Sector in Zambia.
- To convene a Dialogue for the private sector in Zambia for increased advocacy and business networking.
- Share business opportunities and create networks for national businesses
- Establish Business Linkages and platforms for partnerships between Zambia and the COMESA region through joint ventures and partnerships

#### 5. **Expected Outcomes :**

- Support the Zambia Private Sector Alliance in engagement with business community
- Increased awareness of COMESA Business Council ,
- Common Recommendations of the private sector in Zambia adopted to be presented to the Head State.
- Common Recommendations of the private sector in Zambia adopted to be presented to policy organs regionally
- A number of business linkages and partnerships made

#### 6. **Sectoral focus- Key Topics**

##### **✚ Agro- Industry; Tobacco Producers**

- Absence of Policy and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable agriculture production and marketing.
- Disconnect between international policy proposals and socioeconomic realities, regional & national strategies/laws on tobacco production and marketing.
- Lack of evidence and science based regulation that takes into consideration both health and trade obligations of Zambia
- Lack of proper consultative mechanisms involving all stakeholders with fair representation and participation of affected sectors at local level

##### **✚ Agro- Industry; Beef Industries**

- Prevalence of Livestock Diseases
- Vaccine Quality Assurance;
- Inadequate Sources of Breeding and Replacement Stock
- poor infrastructure such as roads, and a lack of processing facilities in the form of abattoirs and milk collection centers, among others;
- high energy costs;
- shortage and high cost of feedstock;

#### **Agro- Industry; Horticulture**

- Post-Harvest Losses;
- Lack of Processing Facilities;
- Poor Infrastructure
- Few Capacity Building Programmes of employees;
- Lack of information to harmonize markets;
- Market access
- Standards and quality compliance

#### **Banks**

- Limited profit margins.
- Demanding Consumer expectations.
- Increasing competition from financial technology companies.
- Regulatory pressure.
- Financial Inclusion
- Curbing illicit financial flows

#### **Steel and Metal Fabricators**

- Opening up markets across the region;
- Development of National quality assurance system;
- Revision of Procurement guidelines by government;
- Import Duties
- Reducing manufacturing costs
- Regulatory and policy issues

#### **Cement Producers**

- high cost of production
- opening up markets across the region
- National and regional competition issues

#### **Tourism**

- Divisions within tourism sector;
- Diversification of Tourism area;
- Access to the country's tourism destinations is affecting the Zambian industry.
- Inclusion of Private Sector,
- Environmental protection;
- Improved Marketing Strategies

#### **Movement of persons-**

- visa issues.