

## “Local Sourcing, Trade Facilitation and Accessing Regional Markets”



The importance of trade to the Egyptian economy cannot over emphasized for it dates back to the ancient days. Trade in Egypt is an economic driver and a larger contributor of employment statistics. However, more needs to be done to create an enabling trading environment for the private sector so that they become competitive and participate more in regional markets. The Egyptian private sector is faced with several challenges that impede the business community from participating actively

in trade. Among them are excessive bureaucracy, taxation, cumbersome and lengthy border procedures, policies and business regulations that are not supportive to the private sector, lack of access to finance and many more. Recognizing that trade is fundamental and a driving force to the Egyptian economy, it is therefore important to find strategies that will improve on the competitiveness of the private sector. The private sector alone cannot win this hurdle and need more support from various stakeholders.

COMESA Business Council (CBC) is one of such organizations that represents the interest of the private sector in the COMESA region by engaging with relevant stakeholders at national and regional level. CBC has in the past years created innovative services and projects that have addressed impediments to business. Furthermore, CBC supported business facilitation and partnerships and supported technical capacity building of industry to meet the requirements that enable them to access markets across the globe.

As a way of ensuring that the private sector is actively participating in trade, CBC promotes businesses and market linkages by strengthening the technical capacity of the private sector. This is done through encouraging local sourcing initiatives as well as provide trade facilitation instruments that allow easy access of markets in the region. Strengthening the technical capacity of the private sector is achieved through training in standards and quality management systems and ensure the industry players are integrated in the regional markets by facilitating business linkages programs. As CBC we envision a

private sector that is proactive in the regional supply chains of the continent as well as the globe. This is supported by our vision and mission that states; “*Building regional, going global.*”

The CBC mission is to be the leading private sector organization in Africa, that promotes competitive and interconnected industries to actively participate in regional and global markets through advocacy, business facilitation and enterprise development.

It is with this background that on the **6<sup>th</sup> March 2018**, various stakeholders from the Egyptian business community will meet and dialogue on pertinent issues affecting their business operations and provide lasting solutions. The dialogue will be held under the theme “**Local Sourcing, Trade Facilitation and Accessing Regional Markets**” COMESA Business Council has partnered with Federation of Egyptian Industries to host the dialogue in Cairo.

The objective of the meeting will be;

- To provide a platform for CBC’s engagement with the business community in Egypt as a way of introducing CBC and the opportunities within COMESA for increased regional partnerships and trade;
- To understand the trade facilitation instruments available, business impediments faced by Egyptian industries and provide expertise and guidance on the issues;
- To provide basic standard training on food safety management systems for growth enterprises thereby building their capacity to meet national and regional standards requirements which is condition for market access.
- To harmonize the positions of the Private Sector in Egypt on key constraints to cross border trade in the COMESA region

The one-day dialogue will bring together industry players from the Corporate world, industry, business associations, SMEs and various government ministries.