



9th COMESA BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS FORUM & LINKAGES FAIR

21-22 & 21 - 26 February, 2014 - Kinshasa, DRC

The Merger Between Business And Innovation; Integrating Competitiveness For Supply And Value Chains In COMESA

Fusion entre entreprises et innovation; Intégrer la compétitivité de l'offre et des chaînes de valeur dans la région du COMESA



REPORT of the 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum and Linkages Fair

*Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
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Report by COMESA Business Council.

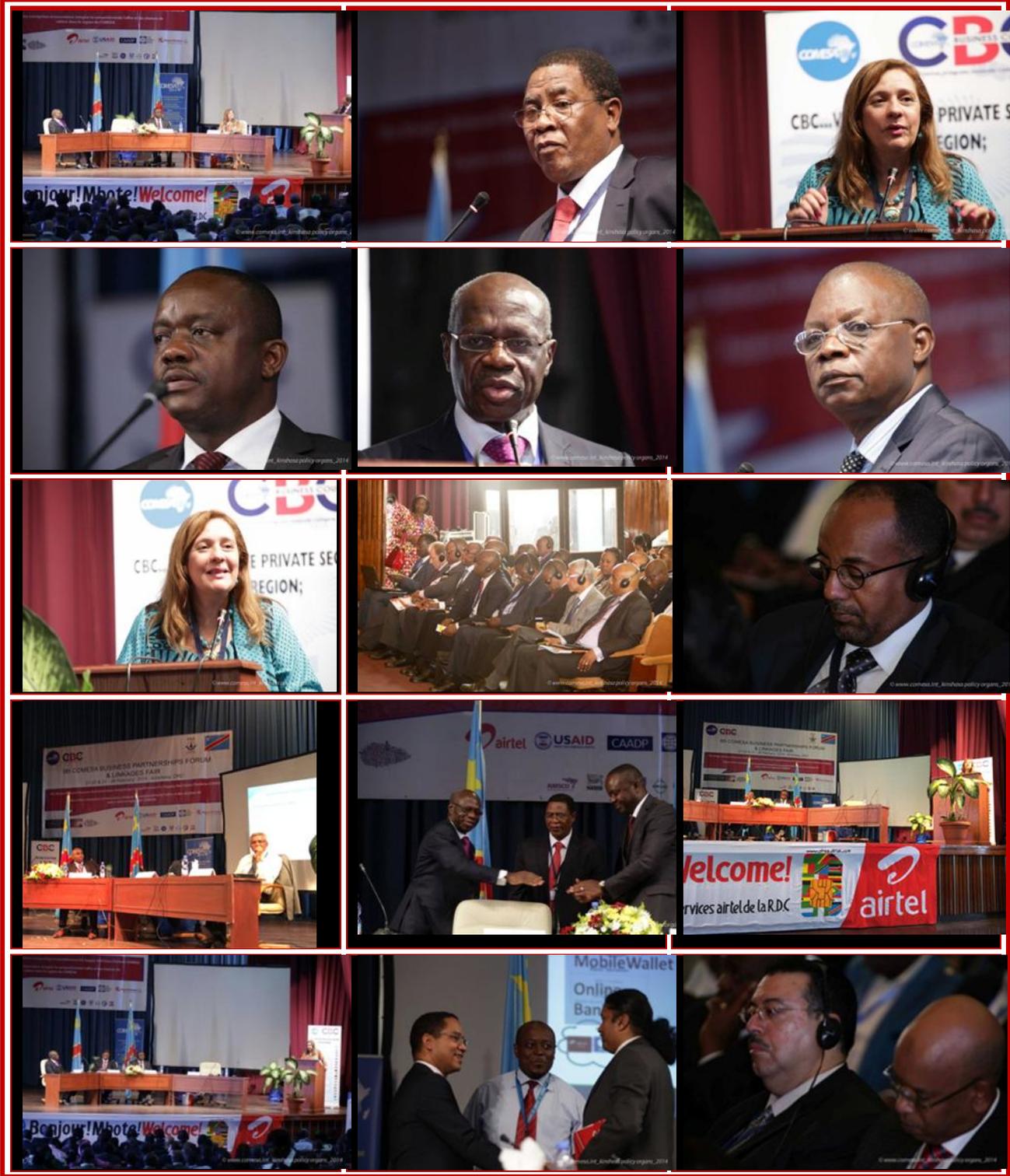




Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Mode of Presentation.....	5
2. THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY	6
2.1 Opening Statement by the CBC Chairperson, Dr. Amany Asfour.....	6
2.2 Opening Statement by the President, FEDERATION OF ENTERPRISES OF CONGO (FEC), Mr. Albert Yuma-Mulimbi	6
2.3 Official Opening Statement, COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya	7
2.4 Official Opening Statement Of The Guest Of Honor, DRC Minister Of Economy & Commerce, Hon. Jean-Paul Nemoyato.....	7
2.5 Plenary Introductions - Ms. Sandra Uwera- COMESA Business Council Coordinator.	8
3. Improving Efficiency and Competitiveness for SMEs- Integrating Global and Regional Value Chains	9
3.1. How localized supply chains have improved Efficiency and value addition for companies (Success Stories from Multi-National Companies).....	9
3.2. The Dynamics of Chains- From product to market – A company perspective; An Approach to the risks of integrating local businesses at firm level	10
3.3. Focus on EFFICIENCY – Can We Be Partners? The criteria for promoting partnerships in business	12
3.4. Regional Debate- Public and Private Sector; the Promotion of Manufacturing Sector In The Region	14
4. Innovation and Technology- Finding the Right Solutions for Your Company	16
4.2. Speed To Market; The Relationship Between Manufacturers And The Distributors, Retail Chains And Consumers.	18
5. The Role Of Economic Cooperation In Enhancing The Efficiency Of SMEs And Contributing To Private Sector Development In The Region.	22
6. Boosting investment in the Agricultural sector	23
7. Approaches On Responding To Partnership For Profit And Competitiveness, Corporate Social Investment (CSI) For Value	24
8. CLOSING CEREMONY	25

1. INTRODUCTION

The 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum and Linkages Fair, was held on the 21- 22 February, 2014, in Kinshasa, DRC. The Forum was held on the sidelines of the 17th COMESA Summit of Heads of State and Policy Organs meeting. The Event brought together key business leaders and companies and government officials from the COMESA Region and the host country, the Democratic Republic of Congo- DRC. Over 200 delegates attended the two day Forum. The businesses present were from Multinational companies, Manufacturing associations, SME associations, distributors and suppliers, development partners, and high level representations from the Policy Making bodies in COMESA. These included Ministers, Permanent Secretaries of the region. The Business Forum was graced with the participation and contribution of Pan African and International institutions such as the AU, EU, UNCTAD, AMSCO, and ARIPO among others.

The Forum also held a five day linkages fair that brought together 14 companies from the COMESA Region to link with regional and local distributors and suppliers present during the forum. The COMESA Business Partnerships Forum and Linkages Fair was officially opened by the Minister of Economy and Commerce, Hon. Jean-Paul Nemoyato. **Annex 1 of this report – List of Participants.**

1.1 Mode of Presentation

Sessions were structured in a panel format, with a Chair/Theme Moderator and three panelists.

The Forum took the format of an “inter-participatory or debate” approach, whereby each presenter was given ten minutes discussion on the selected topic of the respective speakers, and the audience in the Public Private Dialogue was allowed to discuss and openly comment on the speakers’ presentations.

The discussions were structured within the following headline themes and sessions;

- i. Improving Efficiency and Competitiveness for SMEs- Integrating Global and Regional Value Chains
- ii. The Dynamics of Chains; from product to market – A company perspective. An Approach to the risks of integrating local businesses at firm level.
- iii. Focus on Efficiency – Can We Be Partners? The criteria for promoting partnerships in business;
- iv. Focus on Skills Development- Strong workforce as a recipe for success; Role of Technical Capacity to address competitiveness of business
- v. Upgrading Company and product standards to meet Investment opportunities and partnerships
- vi. REGIONAL DEBATE- Focusing on the Manufacturing Potential in the Region
- vii. Innovation and Technology- Finding the Right Solutions for Your Company
- viii. Speed to Market: The relationship between Manufacturers and the Distributors
- ix. Protecting authentic African Products and opening regional markets for quality products and services;
- x. Innovation = Value Addition: Linking Innovation to the efficiency of SME Manufacturers in the region;
- xi. Boosting Investment in the Agriculture Sector;
- xii. PARTNERSHIP FOR PROFIT AND COMPETITIVENESS-Corporate Social Investment for Value.

The recommendations of each Session form part of a Declaration which is annexed to this Report as Annex 2. Key amongst them included the policy, regulatory, institutional and financial mechanisms

to support the integration of SME's into industrialization processes at national and regional platforms; and their inclusive integration into regional and global supply and value chains. This report captures the discussions and recommendations of the said meeting.

2. THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

2.1 Opening Statement by the CBC Chairperson, Dr. Amany Asfour

In her opening remarks, the CBC Chairperson welcomed the participation of the private sector from DRC, COMESA and international representation to the 9th COMESA Business and Partnerships Forum and Linkages Fair. She thanked the Host government of the DRC and the CBC focal point, the Federation of Enterprises in Congo- FEC for their generosity in hosting the event. She called the business community to note that Africa has the potential to be its own largest consumers of quality standard product manufactured within the region. She further noted that Africa accounts for only 1 per cent of global manufacturing value added and global manufacturing exports. Africa accounts for less than 4% of global trade, due to its low level of competitiveness. She requested the dialogue to come up with practical recommendations that will address the key issues that are detrimental to enterprise growth. She requested the meeting to further enhance this strategies that address product diversification and structural transformation at an enterprise level. Lastly, she requested the business community to have a mindset change and think in terms of quality production and technical efficiency- in order to effectively participate within the regional and global value chains.

Dr. Asfour acknowledged the support of the various stakeholders in the organization of the Business Forum and to private sector development in the region, namely, COMESA Secretariat, DRC government, FEC, USAID, CADAAP, AIRTEL, Kenya Airways and ECOBANK.

2.2 Opening Statement by the President, FEDERATION OF ENTERPRISES OF CONGO (FEC), Mr. Albert Yuma-Mulimbi

In his address, Mr. Yuma welcomed the regional business community to explore possible partnership opportunities with DRC's vibrant SME sector. He highlighted some of the key challenges faced in DRC related to infrastructure development in the country. He further noted that there is a strong interest in improving the mining sector and invited the private sector to take an interest in this area.

Mr. Yuma noted that there is a need for participatory effort in the region. He expressed appreciation towards the fact that DRC is now eligible to accessing Small and Medium Enterprise Development funds and improve on the livelihood of the said sector. . He further requested the Multi National Companies present to invest in the line industries within the SME community, so that they can be part of the larger regional and global supply chains of the said companies present in DRC.

Mr. Yuma made a special note to express the strong support of FEC towards the entry of the DRC into the COMESA Free Trade Area. He commended COMESA for building the capacity of the countries.

2.3 Official Opening Statement, COMESA Secretary General, Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya

In his address Mr. Ngwenya recognized the active role of the private sector in the regional integration Agenda and further reiterated to the business community his keen interest in having the participation of the business community in national delegations that come to discuss policy agendas in the policy organ meetings. He noted that the CBC should be part and parcel of influencing policy decisions through their memberships at the national level, and also inclusively as per the regional policy organ meetings and agendas at national and regional level.

Further to this, the COMESA Secretary General recognized the presence of the newly elected Chairperson of the CBC and Board of Directors present at the Forum. He expressed his confidence in the strong leadership that will accelerate the development of the regional private sector agenda. . He further recognized the role of domestic investments, mergers and acquisitions as a measure for investment and industrial growth in the region. He cited the multi-billion dollar worth of business involved in mergers and acquisitions facilitated by the COMESA Competition Commission since January 2013 as unprecedented.

In his final remarks, he implored the business community to discuss and present key issues to the Heads of State Summit- specifically; the implementation on the protocols relating to free movement of persons and the right to establishment, with particular emphasis on the free movement of business persons, the increased participation of the private sector in policy making at national and regional level not as observers but as part of national delegations of the member states and regionally as part of the COMESA Business Council; and the need to create networks and platforms amongst the private sector for increased business and trade in the region, and for promotion of Public Private Partnerships for investment and to support infrastructure development.

2.4 Official Opening Statement Of The Guest Of Honor, DRC Minister Of Economy & Commerce, Hon. Jean-Paul Nemoyato

In his address to the forum, Hon Nemoyato outlined steps that DRC has taken to promote regional integration and consolidating peace and security in the region. He recognized the importance of SME's to the economy in the DRC and their country strategy for the development of five economic zones in the DRC to promote industrial growth and value chain addition.

Furthermore, he spoke on the importance of investment in energy, and how DRC is mobilizing resources through Private Public Partnerships PPPs to construct the Inga dam 3 and the grand Inga dam which have a significant potential to address the energy constraints in the whole region. He recognized the importance for DRC's active participation in COMESA, to note the requirements and benefits of the regional trading agenda.

He thanked the National and regional business community, the COMESA Secretariat and all government officials and development partnerships present for their active participation in the meeting. He further requested that the participants should enjoy the warmth and hospitality of the People of DRC. On this note, the Minister for Economy and Commerce declared the 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum and linkages fair officially open.

2.5 Plenary Introductions - Ms. Sandra Uwera- COMESA Business Council Coordinator.

Ms. Uwera introduced the CBC as a regional business member organization, established by the COMESA Treaty, to provide a consultative committee for the private sector- in-order to ensure inclusiveness and effective representation in influencing policy formulation processes within our respective governments, and the region. The CBC offers key services of business and policy advocacy, business linkages and partnerships, trade information and intelligence and technical and productive capacity building to its membership. The institution which was operational in 2010 is currently being housed within the COMESA Secretariat, as a Private Sector Institution of COMESA.

Ms. Uwera introduced the newly elected Board of Directors and their representatives, as follows;- Chairperson- Dr. Amany Asfour, President of the Business and Professional Women-Egypt and the Egyptian Business Women Association, 1st Vice- Chairperson- Ms. Mulu Solomon, President, Ethiopia Chamber of Commerce, 2nd Vice Chairman- Mr. Benjamin Gasamagera, President, Rwanda Private Sector Federation, Board Director- Mr. Govindaswami Ramalingum, President, Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Board Director- Ms. Amna Mohamed Ibrahim El Nour, Director General, Sudan Trade Point, Board Director- Mr. Polycarp K. Igate, Chairman, Kenya Association of Manufacturers, Board Director- Mr. Bright Chunga, Chairman, Zambia Association of Manufacturers, Board Director- Mr. Menghis Samuel, President, Eritrean Chamber of Commerce and the Immediate Past Chairman- Mr. Mathews Chikankheni, Chairman, Malawi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

She further noted the key tones of the dialogue which focused on the very core of private sector development in Africa, on how to build our manufacturing base in the region, and take advantage of the existing technological innovations in our industries to capitalize on increased profitability and competition in our businesses. She informed the meeting that the two day Forum would capitalize on the experiences, lessons learnt and potential partnership solutions that can increase competitiveness of our industries. She invited participants present from the region to engage in business to business linkages and partnerships. She informed the meeting on the diversity of the audience, ranging from food and beverages sector, health care sectors, electronics and lighting equipment, agro- suppliers, distributors, retail manufacturers in furniture, agro-foods and industry, textile and garments industries, financial services sector, telecommunications, business advisory services, trade logistics, freight forwarders, Intellectual Property among others .

The meeting was introduced to the moderator of the event, Mr. Dennis Matanda of Manchester Trade, a business advisory company working with the COMESA Secretariat to support key government and business interests between COMESA and USA.

3. Improving Efficiency and Competitiveness for SMEs- Integrating Global and Regional Value Chains

COMESA Manufacturing potential lies in its ability to compete and produce competitive products juxtaposed to the other regional international producers. The region is dominated by Small and Medium Scale enterprises (SMEs) who constitute about 90% of the private sector of the member states in the COMESA region. Participation in regional and global supply and value chain has become an essential, to integrate SME's into mainstream business if any meaningful economic benefit is to be realized where regional and global value chains control the vast percentage of global production and trade. Integration into these value chains represents one of the most effective ways of promoting the upgrading of developing country SMEs since such integration can provide them access to markets, access to finance, upgraded technology, improved management practices and other benefits.

The discussions will be focused on understanding and promoting localizing supply chains to improve efficiency and value addition for competitiveness. This is achieved through addressing efficiency, skills development, standards compliance for SME's to effectively integrate and input into supply chains.

3.1. How localized supply chains have improved Efficiency and value addition for companies (Success Stories from Multi-National Companies)

1. The General Electric(GE) Local Supply Chain Development, An African Success Story” Mr. David Kirubi, Executive Sourcing Manager, GENERAL ELECTRIC Africa

Mr. David Kirubi presented on GE's operations as an investment company with a local presence and participation in Africa's supply chain. He highlighted their physical presence in manufacturing bases in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Angola. GE has a footprint in the following key sectors; Power, healthcare, transportation, oil and gas. GE prides itself in developing local supply chains to distribute their products. The mode of identification of these companies is in citing key local suppliers to whom the company invests in and builds their capacity. The suppliers will most likely within the said sectors. The presenter noted that according to their research on Sub-Saharan Africa, 90

Billion US\$ per year needs to be spent in infrastructure for it to be developed, the middle class is to increase to 528M by 2030, 70% of the population will be leaving without electricity, 10% Increase in MW capacity will be needed annually, and Air traffic is likely to grow by 6.5% per annum through 2020.

He noted that challenges faced on the continent include;

- Technical expertise – whereby industrial companies are still maturing and lack current facility gaps, and there is a lack of engineering skill-sets to operate facility investments.
- Management- suppliers operate in a silo environment without global reach, and there is inexperience in managing world class facilities;
- Access to Finance; Infrastructure and products are capital intensive and have a

long cycle, and financing institutions are unable to raise affordable funding.

Mr. Kirubi noted that the requirements needed are;

- A supplier development and localization approach which includes supplier identification, baseline compatibility assessment and supplier selection and development. This will feed into a commodity localization approach.
- Leadership development approach which will develop programs targeting emerging talent and develop future leaders;
- Financial support for local development; having a corporate approach to increasing purchases from African suppliers into its regional supply chain- and providing project finance to ensure a win – win for beneficiaries and financiers. GE

Recommendations:

- *SMEs must ensure that they are a professional organization with technical capacities that allows them to compete regionally and internationally. This includes the need to recognize that trade means global competition, and the need to measure up with the technical capacities of your global competitors. In this regard it was recommended that the necessary criteria needed to work with corporate such as GE should respond to these questions; Are you technically competent, are you a professional organization, do you have the engineering capability?*
- *Management. The need to have strong management systems in place, and do away with a one business person concept where one person manages his whole business, therefore increases risk to partners or investors.*

- *Access to finance. SME's need to package their ideas into bankable ideas that can be financed by banks or through partnerships.*

2. Mr. Siddharth Ramaswamy , Vice President Manufacturing for East, West and Southern Africa, UNILEVER

Mr. Ramaswamy spoke on the role of UNILEVER as a multinational company which has a presence in 13 countries in Africa but distributes all over the continent. He noted that Unilever employs about 30 000 people and 2000 suppliers. Their supply chain includes sourcing from countries within their manufacturing bases. Some examples included working with small holder farmers in Kenya, helping them to become certified and produce products like grape seed oil and adding value to their products so that they supply semi processed products into GE's supply chain; bringing the factory to the people. He further noted that upcoming investments are in Ethiopia showing their commitment to expanding in Africa. He further highlighted the UNILEVER is a manufacturing company within the sectors of food and beverages, home and personal healthcare.

Mr. Ramaswamy emphasized that in order to work within the larger global value and supply chains in the region, there is a need to ensure that local industries meet the minimum standard requirements to participate in such a highly competitive market.

Recommendations:

- *SMEs need to integrate amongst themselves so that they can supply into the chain as a singular entity or a cluster.*
- *The need for SMEs to invest into a certain level of technology and technical expertise in*

management, and skills such that they are a professional organization as some of the key criteria for partnerships in supply chains.

- *Government and private sector needs to build technology and skills institutes or Innovation hubs in Africa so that multi-national companies can transfer the technology and, “know how” to African industries instead of exporting raw / semi – processed materials to other manufacturing bases.*

3. Understanding the supply chains and value chains in the COMESA region, Mr. Frank Mugenyi, AU Industrial Development Advisor- African Union

Mr. Frank Mugenyi echoed the importance of SME’s participation in regional and global value chain, and the development of industries in Africa. He highlighted some of the key ways in which supply chains can support the SME’s in the region:

- Local Content Policy; ensuring that all multinational manufacturing companies procure a certain percentage of their inputs locally.
- Transferring technology; ensuring that multinational companies locate some of their manufacturing bases in Africa to transfer technology and expertise.
- Promoting the services industries, particularly where SME’s can also provide services into value chains; for example looking into an agriculture value chain- from seed to extensions services, etc., a lot which can be supplied by SME’s.
- Regulatory and Policy environment should favor local and regional

- Content requirements for the manufacturing sector, in a manner that support SME’s development. For example; the export of raw and unprocessed products, e.g. leather, should be discouraged but policies should rather promote value addition.
- The need to comply with quality standards to be able to fit into supply chains.
- Cluster development lessons from best practices like the Silicon Valley in the US. This reduces the cost of production, can also lead to investment in technology and human resources capacities.
- Investment in quality infrastructure; including alternative and renewable energy sources as key to industrialization.

Recommendations:

- *There is a need to Support SMEs and private sector development through an enabling policy and regulatory environment, infrastructure and investment in research and technology.*
- *Investment regulation that promote value chain development in important and integral to industrial growth. This includes local content requirements for investors and a preferential procurement policy that obliges multi-national companies and investor to procure a certain percentage of their goods from local or regional suppliers.*

3.2. The Dynamics of Chains- From product to market – A company perspective; An Approach to the risks of integrating local businesses at firm level

4. The Dynamics of Chains- From product to market – A company perspective. An Approach to the risks of integrating local businesses at firm level; Mr. Franck Otete, Regulatory & Scientific Affairs/Corporate Affairs

Mr. Otete gave a brief overview of NESTLE DRC's profile, and how with the help of Federation of Enterprises in Congo and the government of the DRC were able to set up one of the largest factories in the DRC. Their supply chain includes various small holder farmers in the DRC that supply into their factories. The key to their success includes internationally accepted standards and management systems (ISO Certification systems) so that their products can have competitive edge in the region and globally.

The presenter noted that there are challenges where manufacturers are forced to import due to local inefficiencies including poor quality, unsustainable supply, poor price competitiveness, Importing industries are charged/penalized high taxes, leading to further loss of competitiveness of locally manufactured products. He emphasized the collaborations by governments, development partners, private sector & other stakeholders in promotion of value chain standards (enhance farm to fork standards) to raise quality & quantitative output of finished goods or raw materials. Africa must build capacity to produce high quality agricultural food products to supply local industries and tap into the huge export market. He noted the obligation of businesses to ensure that local producers and suppliers can be more

competitive in local, regional & international markets. High quality outputs from the agricultural value chain will enable local industries to source locally, e.g. milk powder, industrial sugar, wheat flour, soya flour, etc....for manufacturing and hence promote local value addition plus associated benefits.

Recommendations

- *There is a need for collaborations government and all stakeholders in promotion of value chain standards to raise quality & quantitative output of finished goods or raw materials*
- *The need to invest into quality and standards compliance, benchmarked on international standards to be able to be competitive.*
- *Strengthen regional industry/private sector bodies e.g. COMESA Business Council and or Food Industry bodies to drive advocacy/engagement with governmental bodies to promote favorable business environment.*

5. Addressing Production and supply side constraints- Leaping from Lifestyle SMEs to growth SMEs; A focus on Efficiency and speed for profit ; Mr. Oswell Chakwanda, President, FARM TO YOU

Mr. Oswell Chakwanda spoke on the various potential of agriculture production offering a great opportunity for investment in Agriculture. Globally, the revenue in agriculture is growing because of the growth in population, and agriculture industry is set to be a trillion dollar industry by 2030. As Farm to You, the company has identified a niche into farming of potatoes & onions, butternuts, watermelon, soybeans and maize,

as high value products. The company supplies to the biggest fast food chains and companies in Zimbabwe and all the major retail outlets and informal markets throughout the country.

The presenter explained that his company is a growth enterprise due to the advantage of having reasonable financing costs at the time, though this has changed to-date. He also invested in building the entrepreneurial skills of the farmers so that they are able to work as cooperatives in the farming business. These skills included business planning, strategic management, human capital management, financial and technical management. This has slowly improved the capacity of farmers to become more entrepreneurial and have a growth enterprise mindset. There has also been a focus on efficiency and speed, especially when looking at the daily costs of business and how important it is to manage the clientele well, to meet these costs. Farm To You's current approach to meeting tenders requests for retail outlets and buyers; Exploring the approach of providing direct distribution to retail outlets instead of supplying to a wholesaler.

Challenges faced as a company are;

- Technical inefficiency – in terms of having only one staff managing an entire irrigation system;
- Poor trade facilitation in terms of lack of information on potential markets and exports procedures;
- Poor harvesting processing and storage technology;

Recommendations

- *The need to invest in technology and certification, in particular GLOBAL GAP certification for*

success and market access in large retail chains and for exporting within the region. Furthermore, that organic product creates a higher value and the ability to participate in value chains.

- *There is a need for a certain percentage of GDP that needs to be invested in agriculture, and be utilized in a manner that supports small holder farmers' ability to actively participate in agriculture market at a national and regional level.*
- *The importance of investment in technology and standards for agricultural competitiveness.*
- *The development of a virtual trading platform in the COMESA Region, as a means of technology to promote access to information and regional integration in the COMESA region.*

6. Upgrading Company and product standards to meet Global Standards. Mr. Morgan Nzwere, Chief Executive Officer, SEED Co

Mr. Nzwere gave an overview of the SEEDCO group, a seed company which is listed on the Zimbabwean stock exchange and operates in 15 African countries. His presentation highlighted the importance of seed to food security and agriculture trade in the region. Furthermore, asserted the role of standards and quality in ensuring efficiency in agriculture production. Seed standards harmonization is also necessary for increased intra-regional trade.

Recommendations

- *The need for market, market liberalization policies in the agriculture sector to encourage increased trade in agriculture commodities in the region, and to boost agriculture production.*
- *The importance of Harmonization of standards and seed regulation across the COMESA*

Region. To ensure that all Member states and countries sign and implement the Protocol on the Seed Harmonization to facilitate intra-regional trade in seed.

- *The need to develop measures to upscale the use of quality seeds and fertilizer by small scale farmers and SME's in agriculture production so that we boost agriculture growth in Africa.*

3.3. Focus on EFFICIENCY – Can We Be Partners? The criteria for promoting partnerships in business

7. A strong workforce is a recipe for success. Mr. Abraham Lanor, Regional Manager, African Management Services Company-AMSCO

Mr. Lanor outlined AMSCO's key operations and how they work with development partners' to support SME's through skills transfer and technical capacity to boost businesses in Africa. He highlighted that Human resources is a company's most important asset- AMSCO's work with enterprises, identify skills gap, source professionals to capacity built the technical expertise of various enterprises. He offered examples of how they work in Southern and East Africa Training with companies and Associations on entrepreneurship training, customer service training, business and financial technical skills capacity enhancement.

The presenter cited growing importance of Regional and Global Value chains in international trade, resulting from the acceleration of globalization, and the rapid developments in information and communication technologies, provides a unique opportunity for SMEs in COMESA to increase exports of indigenous and other products to demand markets across the globe.

Challenges highlighted are;

- Inability to Meet Quality Standards consistently;
- Inefficiencies (Low productivity) due to Size (inability to achieve economies of scale - Individual SMEs are constrained from achieving economies of scale in the purchase of inputs such as equipment, raw materials and finance, resulting in their inability to take advantage of market opportunities requiring large volumes);
- Use of inadequate technology; Inefficient management; Inability to identify potential markets; Inadequate logistics and inefficient time management;
- Constraints in accessing IT, market intelligence and technology and Constraints in accessing training;
- Lack of affordable capital for the SMEs.

Recommendations

- *The need to establish a regional capacity building institution at COMESA level, for training of SME's;*
- *The need to establish an SME Development Bank to deal with SME's financial needs and schemes that are specifically tailored for SMEs.*

8. ANAPI (DRC INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY)

He highlighted how ANAPI provides economic statistics, information and facilitation services to companies which seek

to invest in DRC. He implored the business community in the region to invest in DRC, and highlighted the various economic opportunities that lie in the manufacturing sector, energy, infrastructure and mining sector.

Recommendations

- *To increase information sharing amongst the members and business community in the COMESA, and to create a regional database or informational portal at COMESA, linked to chambers on the various businesses in the region.*
- *Increase business to business linkages in the region, so that Member states become aware of the various opportunities that exist in the region.*

9. The criteria for promoting growth of indigenously owned Manufacturing company; Addressing the importance of Accountability, Economic opportunity, Due diligence, Presence in market and Financial responsibility. **TRADE KINGS ZAMBIA: Dr. Bright Chunga**

Dr. Bright Chunga gave an overview of the growth of Trade Kings, a partnership venture in Zambia that has grown to become the largest indigenously owned manufacturing company in the country. He asserted the need for multinational companies to procure services and products from local companies instead of internationally, not only to boost the industry, but also to be able to sell competitively priced products for local consumers. He cited the example of the mining industries in Zambia that can procure

some of their products such as uniforms and boots from the local SMEs to boost their capacity, and at more affordable rates, and similar quality.

Recommendations

- *Harmonization of the legal and policy frameworks at national and regional levels.*
- *Government should ensure and permit the private sector to participate in policymaking.*
- *The need for policy frameworks to encourage local manufacturing through local content or procurement arrangements that promote SME' development.*

3.4. Regional Debate- Public and Private Sector; the Promotion of Manufacturing Sector In The Region

Below is a summary of the discussions in the Regional Debate.

10. Increase the involvement of corporate companies in upgrading the performance of Industry in Africa; IAPRI, ZAMBIA: President, Mr. Chance Kabaghe

Mr. Chance Kabaghe spoke on the need to structure financial instruments in a manner that can offer facilities to SMEs, and to establish policy mechanisms like empowerment programmes to set aside financial resources that can support SME's and industrial development in the region. In his discussions, he emphasized on the need of strategic partnerships between corporate and small holder farmers that would increase the availability of seeds as the agricultural sector embarks on the diversification path, and in this case, there has been a low supply of high demand agricultural products that can be grown in Africa.

11. Practical Interventions To Address Efficiency In SMEs; Kenya National Federation Of Jua Kali Association: Chief Executive Officer Mr. Richard Muteti

Mr. Muteti highlighted some key underlying competitiveness issues for the SMEs, –

- Lack of standardization and quality (Poor production methods and poor finish,
- No deliberate intervention mechanisms or legislative mechanisms that develop SME's,

- Limited skills and technical capacity- as a result of the mismatch between technical and skills curriculum that exists.

12. Practical Interventions To Address Efficiency In Manufacturing Sector; Rwanda Association Of Manufacturers: Chairman ,Mr. Robert Bayigamba

Mr. Robert Bayigamba echoed the need to learn from best practices and adopt some of the models that have been used in both developing and developed world for SME development. He cited examples of Netherlands and Swedish business development centers and incubation facilities that help grow the technical and business skills capacity for SME's. Mr. Bayigamba further requested that a facility should be set up in the associations that can support businesses to put in place bankable projects that can attract financing from commercial and development banks at the national level

13. What you should know as a business when seeking trade financing to expand a company at a national and regional level. PTA Bank: President Mr. Admassu Tadesse

Mr. Admassu Tadesse gave an overview of the operations of the PTA Bank as a COMESA financial institution with an authorized capital of 3 billion USD, offering trade finance, and project infrastructure

finance in the region. He highlighted some of the obstacles for the accessibility of finance by SME' as; - The mismatch between the loan required and equity that SME's can offer. Equity is one of the key requirements when dealing with access to finance; Lack of formalization of SME's accounting systems in place, human risk issue, management, organization, control mechanism. Mr. Tadesse asserted the need for the following;

- Streamlining existing institutional frameworks at national to be able to efficiently service SMEs. This includes resuscitating financial institutions at national level that service SMEs.
- Dealing with feasible issues such as registration of companies- to promote doing business in COMESA and to attract investment.
- Governments to support SMEs through procurement but also to pay for services or products on time.
- To develop alternative funding that is specially tailored for SMEs.

Recommendations of the Debate;

- *There should be measures to upscale the utilization of seeds and fertilization, so that they can input into the Agricultural market.*
- *Develop financial mechanisms that are specifically tailored for the needs of SMEs in the region, including the establishment of a COMESA SME Fund or Bank.*
- *Streamlining, Resuscitating and Resourcing of financial and institutional mechanisms for SME' development at national level.*
- *Regulatory and Policy frameworks should favor and promote industrial development*
- *Development of skills and technical capacity of SME's so that they can effectively participate in global and regional value chains; through various strategies including mentorships programmes by large corporates.*
- *Develop stronger Public Private Platforms at national and regional levels.*
- *To ensure implementation of programmes and policies at national and regional level, perhaps develop a monitoring mechanism.*
- *Increase government investments in regional financial institutions, for example Sovereign funds for Africa are being invested in Europe and America for a limited benefit, these could be invested in Africa.*
- *To invest in technology and innovation as one of the keys to industrial development.*

4. Innovation and Technology- Finding the Right Solutions for Your Company

Competitiveness in the services and manufacturing industries is to a large extent tied to innovation and technology development. The capacity of African countries to compete in the global market depends more and more on their ability to innovate and apply the relevant technology to industries and productive sectors. Investments in Research and Development and Infrastructure that supports science, technology and innovation are a necessity for most COMESA member states. Science, technology and innovation are essential ingredients in the industrialization, where technology has become an important tool for quality, efficiency and new innovations in the manufacturing and services sector. However, the focus on innovation policy particularly in developing countries is a relatively limited. Most states do not have the business, policy, regulatory and investment framework and human capital necessary to promote innovation and the benefits of technology remains low as well. COMESA has recently launched an Innovation council to promote technology and innovation in the region. The plan is that all member states devote at least 1 per cent of their GDP for research and development to stimulate innovation and technology development and solutions in the region.

Though there is a limited interest by SME manufacturers in investing in the sophisticated forms of technology is low, it is important to note the benefits such investments have in making a company more competitive. The discussions below focus on tailoring technology to our African situation to effectively provide solutions to the African social and economic situation will improve productivity and sustainable development. Information technology and mobile solutions can translate to competitiveness in African economies.

14. Innovative Technology Solutions; The clever way to improve your business today; Mr. George Shine, Director-AIRTEL MONEY, AIRTEL DRC

Mr. Shine gave an overview of AIRTEL, one of the largest telecommunications providers operating in 17 African countries. He spoke on increasing access to finance for the unbanked, using collaborative and innovative methods to address tailored needs of the community. The world has become cashless, and mobile money offers an African solution to the issues of access to finance and calls for collaboration of the banking sector and the telecommunications. He specifically highlighted the example of mobile money

which increases financial inclusion, enables formalization of SMEs accounts, and other solutions such as salary payments systems and mobile insurance that can be utilized by SMEs. He noted the need to highlight the key success factors in the region, in order to encourage increased awareness on the readily available markets that can benefit from practical business solutions.

15. Innovation to reduce transaction costs and Improve Financial Inclusion; leveraging on technology for banking services across Africa. Director, Alternative Channels, Mr. Anicet Kabasele, ECOBANK DRC:

Mr. Anicet Kabasele gave an overview of ECOBANK including its presence in 34 countries in Africa and some of its innovative financial solutions including cooperating with telecommunications operators for mobile money transfers. He highlighted that banks have an SME banking platform but most SMEs do not efficiently use it. There is need to maintain proper standards, and package ideas for SMEs to be able to access finance from the banks. Furthermore, it is important to be financially intelligent when accessing loans from commercial banks, because a bank has the obligation to guarantee to its depositors that they will get their money back. In this case, the stringent rules to providing loaning facilities are tied hand in hand with the risk mitigation and due diligence records that show the performance of a bank at the end of the year. He emphasized the need to recognize that banks have to be lending institutions have a level of confidence when offering finance.

16. CEO of Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique au Congo (BIAC) and President of the DRC Bankers Association: Mr. Michele Losembe

Mr. Losembe highlighted that there are 18 banks in DRC, and an average of 3 million accounts out of the population of about 60 million, resulting in one of the lowest banking inclusion and ratios in the world. The mobile financial solutions are some of the ways that

can increase financial inclusion in DRC and in the region. There is need to increase awareness on financial inclusion in the DRC, which includes confidence and trust in the banking sector. Furthermore, is it necessary to ensure strong policy and regulatory frameworks that will instill confidence from the consumers and encourage the agenda of banking the unbanked. Mr. Losembe emphasized the need to improve the cooperation between banks and Bankers Associations, and to encourage increased networking amongst bankers associations in the region.

17. Regulatory frameworks for Mobile Innovative solution; Challenges and opportunities for cooperation between financial services and telecommunications; Director, Research and Policy, Kenya Bankers Association: Mr. Jared Osoro

Mr. Osoro highlighted that indigenous banks are now spreading into regional markets. He noted that mobile banking and payment systems have become a huge success in the region and has become even more innovative. As an example, he cited that the mobile money service has now accelerated to become a savings account which also gathers interest. 35% of the Kenyan population is in the formal sector as of 2010. . To date, mobile money solutions have grown to reach out to about 60% of the population. He noted that on a daily basis, about 2Billion Ksh (about 23MN\$) goes through the mobile systems. If one starts thinking more about innovation alongside regulation, then tailored products for consumers would be established that facilitated rather than hampered from growth. He further noted that mobile money is not a

product, but a platform that provides innovation for products and business solutions for households, government and private sector. . There is need to encourage innovation through less or complementary regulation and increase telecommunications liberalization in the region.

Recommendations

- *The need to make a conscious decision as a population- building the ecosystem for mobile money and financial literacy in the region.*
- *Need for supportive legislative and regulatory frameworks for banks and telecommunications providers for mobile money and other innovative solutions.*
- *There is need for collaboration and complementary relationships between the*

- *Telecommunications service providers, the financial institutions plus the regulators in both sectors.*
- *SMEs should develop their technical capacity and management skills so that they can effectively tap into and access financial services from the banking sector.*
- *There is a need to provide education and raising awareness for SMEs on formalizing a relationship with banks so that they can utilize financial services, and access loaning facilities.*

4.2. Speed To Market; The Relationship Between Manufacturers And The Distributors, Retail Chains And Consumers.

18. The relationship between Manufacturers and the Distributors, Retail Chains and Consumers, CAPITAL FISHERIES ZAMBIA: Mr. Chance Kabaghe

Mr. Kabaghe Capital Fisheries – explained how the company grew from a small mentorship program managed by youth, to a fully commercial enterprise that distributed fish to 80% of the Zambian market. He highlighted that this growth process was a result of mentorship, leadership and technical and business management skills that boosted the young entrepreneurs to take the company to then next level. He also discussed the importance of business leadership programs as an instrument to develop competitive business models, such as the one that created and established CAPITAL Fisheries. He noted that at the time, the company

purchased two fridges and targeted markets at the border of DRC and Zambia, because they couldn't export into DRC. Finally, they began to sell their products through Shoprite as a solution to accessing the DRC Market. This demanded a high quality product that met all the standards and requirements for export. To date, the company supplies to about 80% of the market in Zambia and is now exporting fish into exporting into DRC, Tanzania, and Malawi.

19. Focus on efficiency in logistics at a national and regional level; President of GECOTRANS, DRC: Mr. Dieudonne Kasembo

Mr. Kasembo gave an overview of GECOTRANS, a freight forwarding company operating from DRC, with partnerships and offices across the region. GECOTRANS also

presents the advantage of facilitating businesses who have an interest in expanding in the DRC. The company has partnerships with agencies along all the borders surrounding DRC, and this has facilitated the fast tracking and shipments of goods within DRC and in the region. He highlighted the need for the following to facilitate greater trade facilitation and movement of goods in the region;

- Harmonization of procedures and trade policies that is applicable to the freight forwarders across the region.
- Need for investment to improve the road and transport network to reduce costs of movement in the region.
- The importance of partnerships amongst service providers in the region to facilitate movement and transit of goods.

20. An industry position on constraints faced by freight forwarders, Federation Of East Africa Freight Forwarders Association (FEAFFA): Chief Executive Officer Mr. John Mathenge

Mr. John Mathenge highlighted some of the challenges that hinder the smooth flow of products into the region- 40 % of costs of goods is costs of transportation and moving the products. These include; 1. Policy & Regulation 2. Infrastructure (right quantity in the right place), 3. Human capacity (lack of skills) 4. Lack of technology (need to integrate technology such as cargo tracking), 5. Finance-; need the capacity and skills to harness the resources.

21. ACADEMIA DRC: Professor Marie Claire Yandju

Professor Marie Claire highlighted the importance of research in product development and industrialization and some of her research into cassava and flour production in DRC. She outlined some of the key constraints to trade in the region as;

- Noncompliance with standards especially in the food industry making it difficult to distribute the goods across the region.
- Alfa toxins make it difficult for food stuff to be traded across the borders, especially for cassava.
- The technology and methods used for processing cassava- low- usually impedes the quality of the products. The need to resort to technologies that are well suited to our local conditions.

Recommendations

- *The need for producers and retailers to invest in packing and branding to increase the visibility of their products.*
- *Innovation is a cost, especially at a very low scale; innovation can increase the cost of production- becoming a constraint. There is need for Member states to find ways of supporting and financing innovation and also offering seeding capital.*
- *There should be collaboration between research institutions and economic operators, and there is also need to create a research center at COMESA- linked with the research centers at universities.*
- *Visa regime. Let's work towards the creation of a visa free zone; particularly for traders and business persons.*

- *Trade facilitation. Private sector need to develop appetite for compliance with regulations as well. Noncompliance usually leads to corruption, bribery and even increases the cost of doing business.*
- *Member states need to develop transport infrastructure that connect our countries together to facilitate more intra-regional trade.*

4.3. INNOVATION = VALUE ADDITION, Linking Innovation to the efficiency of SME Manufacturers in the region

22. Linking Innovation to the efficiency of SME Manufacturers in the region: AMBASSADOR- GARMENT AND TRADE PLC, Ethiopia: General Manager Mr. Getuk Kebede

Mr. Getuk Kebede gave an overview of AMBASSADOR Garments, a company based in Ethiopia with over about 60 outlets and employing a large number of women tailors. He emphasized that the company specialized in Men's' suits and recently expanded to women's' suits. The company is currently looking for market opportunities in the region. Through various marketing advantages, there have been linkages in countries in sub-Saharan Africa. He emphasized on the importance of ICT as a marketing tool, the company has grown and is looking into regional opportunities, which has improved on the online efficiencies of the company and also on advertising in social media forums such as Facebook and twitter. He noted one of the key constraints to business being the cost of energy and infrastructure and requested that additional investments should be made by government and private sector, so as to boost industries and reduce the high production cost within the manufacturing industry.

23. The Forgone Opportunities and how to harness them" The Case of the COMESA Regional Leather Value Chain, COMESA Leather and Leather Products Institute : Mr. Nicholas Mudungwe

Mr. Mudungwe illustrated the work of the COMESA Leather and Leather Products Institute in improving the leather value chain and promoting intra trade in the region. He highlighted the potential from the leather trade which is a 100 billion dollar industry with a value addition threshold at twelve times from the initial value- highlighting the importance of value addition and desisting from export of raw leather. He emphasized that the key services of the industry are; Facilitate formulation of comprehensive strategies and their implementation ,Capacity building in production and business management skills, Facilitate the formation of Service and incubation centers, Promote intra trade – Support SMEs participation in regional fairs, Support Technology transfer , Knowledge packaging and dissemination .

24. Promoting authentic African Products- Supporting COMESA origin products into regional markets ;NESTLE DRC: Mr. Franck Otete

Mr. Otete spoke on the importance of coordination, collaboration and harmonization of standards across the region as a method to boost competitiveness of local products. He further emphasized that based on high quality standards it was important to promote 'Africa Origin' products via e.g. special logo or symbol that is linked to a high level conformity assessment process. He gave an example of Kenya where local manufacturers who have acquired the KEBS 'Diamond Mark' certification and are being encouraged to apply 'Brand Kenya' logo on their products to facilitate international recognition of Kenyan products & Kenyan quality. He requested that this could be carried out at a regional level for COMESA Origin manufactured products.

25. Protection of innovation- Building a strong foundation for the growth of Customized African products and services; Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO): Director General, Dr. Fernandos Dos Santos

Dr. Dos Santos echoed the importance of protecting authentic African products and using methods such as geographical indications and branding to add value to African products. His is particularly so where there are certain unique products or services; for instance rhumba dance can be protected as a geographical indication. He also cited an

example of cocoa and suggested that companies should not aim at selling cocoa but on selling branded chocolate; to highlight the importance and extra value that intellectual property can bring to products and services.

Recommendations

- *SME Development strategy should be anchored by Policy, Institution and Finances to actually support the frameworks that Member states put in place.*
- *The importance of compliance with standards, branding also add reputation to be a high value product. To benchmark best practices within the region, including harmonization of standards.*
- *The need to integrate intellectual property into business strategies, from issues like branding and relying on innovative approaches to protection of innovations such as geographical indications for protection of creative industries products. Furthermore, the need to integrate intellectual property into industrial and development and manufacturing plans at national and regional level.*
- *The importance of business linkages and big African trade fairs to promote and increase regional awareness on African products.*
- *The importance of technology to advance the manufacturing sector, and the need to adopt information technology to advance marketing and trade of African products.*
- *The need to implement the voluntary standard regionally such as the COMESA origin label for authentic African products*

5. The Role Of Economic Cooperation In Enhancing The Efficiency Of SMEs And Contributing To Private Sector Development In The Region.

Africa's International partners engage with the private sector on practical approaches, lessons learnt and experiences in making partnerships more effective to address the competitiveness of the local industries and SME's in the aid receiving countries.

26. EUROPEAN COMMISSION **Directorate General for Trade: Ms.** **Sandra Gallina**

Ms. Gallina reiterated EU's continued cooperation to private sector development and trade in the African region, through various partnerships including, with COMESA, Leather & Leather Products Institute and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization. She further stated, the key focus and current support of EU is on supporting investment and growth in Energy efficiency, Connectivity and infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, business climate and regional integration.

Ms. Gallina highlighted the importance of integration and liberalization, and Economic Partnership Agreements and reiterated EU's support that is attached to the signing of EPA's.

She emphasized on the need for partnerships with the private sector to boost economic development. She made a call for the participation of the private sector at the 5th EU-Africa Business Forum is scheduled to take place on March 31st and April 1st, 2014 back-to-back with the 4th Africa-EU Heads of State Summit in Brussels, Belgium. She invited businesses to present bankable projects for investment through the member countries. This is one of the initiatives of the

EU to support the agenda of boosting Africa's private sector development.

27. AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION: **Mrs Treasure Maphanga**

Mrs Treasure Maphanga recognized the cooperative role of EU and developing partners in promoting development in the African region.

She highlighted that AU has a partnership to partnership framework across the continent, and this also expands into a continent to continent partnership with the EU. She noted that the international community has realized that there is a movement in Africa on boosting intra- trade in the region which goes beyond boosting trade relationships but also providing practical solutions to the gaps of industrializations within Africa's value chains. Africa needs to negotiate better deals to boost the growth rates of the continent, and also promote the export of international standards African products. This has to start by promoting the interest of consumer preference for homegrown goods and services.

Recommendations;

- *The importance to have an African focus and vision, and recognize the importance of intra African trade- and the vast opportunities that lies within the continent.*

- *The need for partnerships and collaboration and coherence amongst ourselves, our partners at national, regional and international level.*
- *The value of integration as it strengthens the voice and the ability to negotiate with partners. Furthermore, that EPA's need to be aligned to our development agendas. Trade agreements are an important tool but they should be adjusted and take into account the development levels of Africa.*
- *The need to have business linkages and continental Fairs- All African Trade Fair being revived for concretizing opportunities at the regional level.*
- *We need coherence amongst ourselves, our partners at national, regional and international level.*
- *The need to relook at Bilateral Investment Treaties (BIT's) as they reduce the ability of government into policy making space as they have huge risks and do not necessarily increase investment flows.*
- *Strengthening our regulatory environment, technical capacities and product quality, standards and design to accelerate industrial development.*
- *Moving towards the development of African Business Council to increase impact to continental levels.*

6. Boosting investment in the Agricultural sector

28. Investment opportunities in Commercial Agriculture; the GUANOMAD Success Story - Chief Executive Office, Mr. Eric Rajaonary, Madagascar

Mr. Eric Rajaonary gave a brief insight into his company; Guanomad is a leading producer of organic fertilizer and manure products which are usable in organic agriculture. The company is based in Madagascar and their products have been highlighted as affordable and effective alternatives to the traditional chemical fertilizers. The company's main trading partners are European companies, and Guanomad would like to gain access into COMESA markets. He further highlighted some SPS and non-tariff barriers Guanomad is encountering in accessing regional markets. He proposed the need for Agriculture investment, especially bio agriculture which is

key to food security, and environmental protection.

29. Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program, CAADP- Dr. Nalishebo Meebelo

Dr. Meebelo gave an insight into the CAADP program; as a multi sectoral stakeholder platform to input and participate into policy making in the agriculture. Key things in CADAAP framework relating to market access and trade as follows:

- Sustainable land management-conservation agriculture, land policy issues
- Improving rural infrastructure and expanding market access
- Rural livelihood, Food security.

She further echoed the need for greater private sector participation in the CADAAP

process and into National Agriculture Investment Plans so that their challenges can be effectively addressed.

Key Recommendations

- *Increased Public Private Partnerships and dialogue to enhance intra-regional trade in the region.*
- *The need for removal and elimination of non-tariff barriers hindering intra-regional trade.*
- *To move towards the implementation of a Business visa for COMESA member states.*

7. Approaches On Responding To Partnership For Profit And Competitiveness, Corporate Social Investment (CSI) For Value

30. African Management Services Company (AMSCO): Regional Manager East Africa Mr. Kofi Andah

Mr. Kofi Andah elaborated how AMSCO operates as a joint venture to provide skills and capacity building to enterprises including supporting the development of value chains in Africa. AMSCO's approach to value chain development emphasizes a number of key principles:

- Stakeholder involvement in planning and design (off-takers, beneficiaries, governments and regional bodies, service providers, etc.);
- Partnerships/collaboration with other players in implementation (service providers, DFIs, donor institutions); and
- A strong focus on delivering measureable development impact to beneficiaries.

AMSCO proposed a model approach on how to work with COMESA Business Council on implementing the key programs to address institutional and technical capacity building of the industries. In the model, AMSCO in

partnership with institutions such as the CBC plays a coordinating and catalytic role, allowing different partners to focus on what they do best. Typically, funding for this model will be from the Government, Donors or the Private Sector (as part of their CSR/CSI). He called on businesses to support the process

It should be noted that AMSCO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with COMESA in July 2013 to provide training programmes to strengthen project support for Private Sector development in COMESA Member States. AMSCO is therefore able to play a key role in the design and implementation of value chain development programmes in COMESA member states. The process will be undertaken in partnership with the COMESA Business Council, COMESA Secretariat, relevant Government institutions and Private Sector Associations in the Region.

31. IAPRI: Mr. Chance Kabaghe

Mr. Chance Kabaghe echoed the need for private sector and large corporates to have inclusive programmes and use their CSI to meaningfully invest in technical capacity building of the SME's and enhance their participation in regional supply and value chains. Following the presentation by AMSCO, he summarized the final recommendations of the meeting as follows;

Recommendations

- *Large corporates to work with SMEs in their value or supply chains, to build their capacity and allow them to feed into their respective chains.*
- *Large corporate to work with the COMESA Business Council on technical and productive capacity building programs directly injected into enterprise development in the region.*
- *The need for institutional frameworks at national and regional level to support the skills and technical capacity of SMEs that includes hands on training and education and vocational skills aligned with production needs of the manufacturing sector.*
- *The need to adapt innovative ways to promote SMEs skills development including curriculum outside normal working hours, use of vocation and technical colleges at nights or weekends to train SME's.*
- *The need to adopt Clustering strategies in industrial development at national and regional level to create economies of scale and the ability to input into regional supply and value chains.*
- *To consider and address the cultural and education constraints of female entrepreneurs in effectively participating in industrial development and trade in the region.*
- *Development finance especially from the development partners should be specifically tailored for SMEs and even though channeled through commercial banks, special lending frameworks should be made applicable for SMEs*

8. Closing Ceremony

COMESA Business Council: Chairperson, Dr. Amany Afour

Dr Amany Asfour invited the CBC Board Members present or representatives to the podium. These were from Ethiopia: Mrs Mulu Solomon, Zambia: Dr. Bright Chunga, Malawi: Mr. Chancellor Kaferapanjira, Sudan : Ms. Hanan Ahmed Abd Elrahman, Rwanda: Mr. Robert Bayigamba. She expressed her appreciation for the members support in private sector development in the region, and to the success of the Business Forum. She recognised the importance of the recommendations and the engagements of the two day forum and thanked the private sector for their participation and proposals for SME development in the region. Furthermore, she recognised the support of the sponsors and partners who contributed to the success of the Business Forum, and implored them to continually support private sector development in the region.

On that final note, the 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum was declared officially closed.

Closed at 1800 HRS, 22ND February, 2014, Kinshasa, DRC.

ANNEX I- List of Participants;

ANNEX II- Summary of recommendations of the 9th COMESA Business Partnerships Forum, 2013.

ANNEX III- The 9th COMESA Business Forum Regional Declaration, 2014.