



**REMARKS BY EABC CHAIRMAN, HON. GERALD SSENDAULA,
DURING THE EAC SECRETARY GENERAL REGIONAL CEO
FORUM**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2013 AT SHERATON HOTEL,
KAMPALA UGANDA:**

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- ⇒ **Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera, Secretary General, East African Community Secretariat;**
 - ⇒ **Mr. Frank Matseart, Chief Executive Officer, TradeMark East Africa**
 - ⇒ **EABC Vice Chairman Kenya, Mr. Patrick Obath**
 - ⇒ **EABC Members and colleagues from the private sector**
 - ⇒ **Invited Guests**
 - ⇒ **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is my singular pleasure, on behalf of the East African Business Council and on my own behalf, to welcome you to this regional meeting of the **EAC Secretary General Regional Private Sector CEO Forum**, which the EAC SG is hosting in partnership with East African Business Council and TradeMark East Africa.

Secretary General, we are especially grateful to you for establishing this public-private dialogue platform that had already enabled EABC Members and the wider private sector

across the 5 EAC Partner States provide the needed input in the process of diagnosing the EAC business climate problems and in designing the needed policy reforms.

It is through your commitment, last year we managed to hold five National Fora in all 5 EAC Partner States. The matrix of key issues and recommendations we are going to present today are the issues emerging from the five national SG CEO meetings we held last year. Without pre-empting the presenters most of the issues raised during the national meetings were mainly on the implementation of EAC agreed policy and legal instruments such as EAC Customs Union and EAC Common Market. Also the need for improvement of EAC infrastructure in order to lower the cost of doing business was highly featured in all five national meetings.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The EAC integration is an attractive proposition, not only to the business community, but also to the EAC governments. We from the business community see it as a vehicle that can allow businesses to thrive and expand, through increased regional trade cooperation; removal of intra-regional trade restrictions, such as tariffs, quotas and non-tariff barriers; harmonization of rules and regulations and ensuring predictable. The EAC governments see it as a vehicle through which economic growth, wealth creation, employment and reduced poverty can be achieved.

But for these objectives to be achieved, a vibrant business community is needed. And we can only be vibrant if the environment in which we are operating is conducive to trade and investment; is supported through a range of private sector policies; efficient institutions; trade facilitation, infrastructure, access to services, and supporting laws and regulations.

While the EAC integration has achieved several gains, there are still many challenges that continue to frustrate businesses. As a region, our growth is still not attracting enough additional investment and expansion that can transform the lives of the EAC citizens; and the investment climate is not properly suited to scale up trade and investments and act as a catalyst to modernize the regional economy further.

That is why this Regional Forum is very timely. Its overall objective is to discuss with the Secretary General those key challenges facing the EAC private sector in the EAC integration process and **agree on some practical, actions to address them.**

As earlier agreed, we look forward to continue working with you Secretary General to implement the recommendations

and to keep an on-going dialogue on new immerging challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow me in conclusion to thank the TradeMark East Africa for their partnership in hosting this meeting; and their continued support to the EAC integration process.

I thank you all for availing your time and believe that the next three hours will provide insights into how the issues constraining the business community can best be addressed.

Thank you all.