



EAST AFRICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (EPA) NEGOTIATIONS

EAC DEDICATED SESSION ON TRADE IN SERVICES

3RD-5TH JUNE 2009

LAICO REGENCY HOTEL, NAIROBI

NAIROBI

Brief of the meeting

During the EAC Dedicated Session on Trade in Services on the 3rd to 5th in Nairobi, EABC was requested to make a presentation on private sector views on EPA Trade in Services preparations - Priorities for the Private Sector.

Accordingly, EABC made a presentation on private sector priorities on EPA Trade in Services preparations where we reported that we have been active in collation of information in order to bridge information gaps and to secure effective participation by the EAC private sector on EPA Trade in Services negotiations (*attached herein as Annex 1*). In addition, we notified the PS that we had a draft report on '*EAC Regional Private Sector Report on Improved Services Export to Europe*'. The purpose of this report is to contribute to the analytical information needed to backstop the EAC Partner States to formulate a market access request to the EC as well as to inform the preparation of the package of complementary measures to assist the private sector to translate existing and new market access opportunities into commercial benefits. The combination of the above two undertakings culminated to the private sector priorities on EPA Trade in Services.

The meeting noted the priorities and recommendations from the Private Sector in respect of, *inter alia*:

1. Increasing participation of private sector in negotiating Trade in Services
2. Look for modalities on how to best utilize EABC studies on Trade in Services and EAC regional and national studies

3. Mechanism for decision-making whereby the information and knowledge generated in the research could be extracted and translated into a form that could facilitate informed decision-making
4. Establishing mechanisms to ensure the continued engagement of the Private Sector in the decision - making processes and implementation of the decisions.

EABC's presentation generated a lot of heated debate from some of the Partner States. However, with the support from ILEAP, private sector representative-Uganda and the EAC Director General, Customs & Trade, we were able to reach a compromise. The meeting therefore recommended to the Permanent Secretaries to:

- (a) Recognising the importance of private sector to promote services exports and the development of the services sector more broadly, the EPA experts encourage the private sector, coalition of services industry groups at the national and regional level, with a view to pursuing their interests in services reforms and negotiations;
- (b) Recommend the Permanent the take note of the ongoing Study by EABC to formulate a regional CSI and a strategy for export development

EABC is currently working on scoping paper on the establishment a possible regional and national Coalition of Services Industry (CIS) and will be circulated to members soon.

-End-