

**REMARKS BY PROFESSOR ADOLF MKENDA, PERMANENT
SECRETARY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EAST
AFRICAN COOPERATION DURING THE CLOSURE OF THE 2ND
EAST AFRICAN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE
& EXHIBITION 16 NOVEMBER, 2017 DAR ES SALAAM SERENA HOTEL**

Mr. Jim Kabeho, the Chairman of East African Business Council;

*Excellencies High Commissioners, Ambassadors and other members
of the Diplomatic Corps present here today;*

Officials from the East African Community Partner States;

Distinguished Members of Business Community;

Development Partners;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I will start with an apology that I have not been able to come in person to deliver my remarks by way of closing this **Second East African Business and Entrepreneurship Conference and Exhibition**. It has been impossible for me to come due to circumstances beyond my control. I want you, however, to know how much honored I feel to have been invited to talk to you and to officiate the closing ceremony of this important Conference for our regional integration agenda.

You know, in Kiswahili, entrepreneurs are called WAJASIRIAMALI, a single word that is derived from the words JASIRI and MALI. The word JASIRI means BRAVE. So we consider entrepreneurs, the business-men and –

women, as brave people who have dedicated their lives to pursue wealth creation. The bravery has to do with risk taking. The East African Business Council is a council of entrepreneurs, of people who chose to take risks by opting out of the comfort zones of normal life and pursue the demanding rigor of wealth creation.

Our core objective in the East African Community is to pursue prosperity to our people. Essentially, we need to create more wealth and encourage its fair distribution. We cannot achieve this objective if we do not support and celebrate the brave men and women - the entrepreneurs, who have dedicated their lives to pursue wealth creation. Our integration agenda will amount to nothing without promoting and supporting our entrepreneurs, our business community in particular micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Women and Youth. In this context, I would say our integration agenda will not succeed if we do not promote, support and celebrate the East African Business Council.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants;

Indeed, if our business community in the region work together and promote integration we will know that the East African Community has a very bright future. It is the business community, collectively, that champion free trade as well as movement of capital and people. I say collectively judiciously because there would be few cases where a section of business community

would push for protectionism even against other sections of business community within our region.

Some of the challenges we have faced recently on cross-border trade have a lot to do with certain sections of business community trying to undermine free flow of goods in order to create some kind of market dominance, some kind of monopoly power. We have worked hard to resolve these issues within the Community and through bilateral discussions. But a lasting solution to these kinds of problems is to have one strong voice from the entire business community, a voice against any attempt to undermine any kind of cross-border trade within our Community.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants;

Our Community is a rule-based Community. It is a Community governed by laws and regulations, some of which are regional through our Community and others are national, operating within each Partner State. It is true that there can be cases where a law or its regulation is not as desirable as one would wish. But a rule-based Community cannot champion any measure or behavior that breaks existing law or regulation.

It is okay to champion changes to the laws that seem to no longer be desirable, but it is wrong and even dangerous to encourage governments and people to cherry-pick the law they want to fallow and ignore other laws that they don't like.

I believe it is the duty of everybody, including the East African Business Council, to promote rule-based Community and to judge any action by the Community and by any Partner State against the existing laws, rules and regulations. We must not condone or encourage anything that break the law no matter how desirable such thing is in the short term. If we must, we can only lobby for changes in the law.

On the part of governments, it is clear that if we want to protect the East African Community and make it even stronger, we must work very closely with you - the business community. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania will always be open to new ideas from you and we welcome continuous interactions with you in all forms. And that is why we look forward to reading the outcome of this Conference. We will read your views expressed during your discussions keenly with the views of identifying what more we can do to strengthen business activities in the region and to speed up wealth creation for our people.

We are happy that these have been productive days for all participants, from 14th to today. We hope that you also had time to enjoy whatever Dar es Salaam has to offer, and of course, I welcome you to extend your stay in Tanzania even beyond today if you can.

But for now, let me declare that the Second East African Business and Entrepreneurship Conference and Exhibition officially closed.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!

AHSANTENI SANA!