



**Republic of Uganda**

**MINISTRY OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

**REMARKS BY**

**Rt. Hon. Dr. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga (MP)**

**1<sup>ST</sup> DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EAC**

**AFFAIRS**

**AT THE 22<sup>ND</sup> MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES**

**EXHIBITION**

**KAMPALA, UGANDA**

**9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2022**

- Honorable Ministers Present;
- The Secretary General of the East African Community Secretariat;
- Honorable Permanent and Principal Secretaries Present;
- Your Excellency's Ambassadors Present;
- The Private Sector;
- Distinguished Delegates and exhibitors;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all Partner States for gracing this 22<sup>nd</sup> EAC Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Trade fair.

Similarly, allow me to thank the EAC Secretariat, the Ministries of Trade and Industry, the East Africa Confederation of Informal Sector Organizations and the Ministries of EAC Affairs for spear heading the preparatory activities prior to this Regional Event (22<sup>nd</sup> EAC MSMEs Trade Fair). I could not hope for anything more apt and transformational than the path that has been taken in this event through partnership between the public and private sector to promote MSMEs manufacturing and in the broader sense industrialization, which has for a long time taken a back seat in the region.

I also must recognize besides policy makers and the Private Sector; members of the international community, ambassadors; members of Civil Society; support the MSMEs and exhibit for the case of the Private Sector to participate in this critically important event for the region and our respective Partner States.

Ladies and gentlemen, the region can no longer remain passive in the quest for industrialization, we must endeavour to become innovative and begin to produce in large scale in order to grow economically. Recognition of talent is another area of importance; I can see here that many of the MSME's have very important skills in all the products on sale/display.

This Exhibition brings together small and medium enterprises from the EAC Partner States commonly known as the Jua Kali/Nguvu Kazi who represent the Informal sector. This sector has the majority of entrepreneurs and is very vital in the region's development process. If handled properly, this sector can be a driver towards achieving middle income status by 2050 as envisioned by the EAC Development Strategy. This underscores the contribution of MSMEs towards ensuring sustainable social-economic transformation in the region from a peasant into viable and sustainable business entities capable of contributing at least 50% of GDP through manufacturing, consequently leading to a prosperous and modern community.

The main purpose of the annual exhibitions is to facilitate the formalization of informal sector activities within the East Africa region by allowing them to meet, share experience, exchange business information, and expand the markets for their products in order to exploit opportunities offered by the EAC Common Market.

These Exhibitions also helps the MSMEs to bridge the gaps in trade, culture and social economic imbalances in the region; create awareness of the sector's potential in producing and providing affordable goods to its citizens; and also create expanded investment opportunities for the regional up-

coming/emerging entrepreneurs; and above all, initiate dialogue between the entrepreneurs who will share knowledge in technology and business techniques.

All this is in line with the EAC commitment to transform the regional economy through industrialization. The region's overriding objective is to create a modern, competitive and dynamic industrial sector which is fully integrated into the global economy.

The EAC strategy going forward as a region is to promote growth of sustainable MSMEs through enhanced business support, access to finance, technical and business skills, encourage and procure locally manufactured products and identify opportunities for upgrading for the development of our entrepreneurs notwithstanding the challenges faced.

Industrialisation in the context of the EAC region depends on how the region strategically leverages from the market created by the Common Market Protocol as a source or stimulus for demand, while simultaneously capitalising on opportunities created by the global as well as fast-growing emerging markets for manufactured goods. The realisation of a fully functioning Common Market and the deepening of regional integration through a monetary union are crucial for providing the much-needed impetus for industrialisation in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we realise that regional integration is desirable and we cannot walk away from it. It is true even today as our founding fathers realized it when they established the EAC, that individually our countries are small and weak but collectively we can become a bigger market and a stronger entity.

Allow me also use this opportunity to welcome our brothers and sisters from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who were this year admitted into the EAC. This presents a massive trading opening for the EAC as we will boost our trade partners by an additional 90Million people. Growing our trade and trading partners is the direction for total independence and economic development

I thank you all very much and wish you good luck.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**