



SPEECH FOR MR. JAMES MUREU, BOARD CHAIRMAN OF THE
MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES AUTHORITY DURING THE KENYA
DAY CELEBRATIONS AT THE 22nd EAC MSME EXHIBITION AND
TRADE FAIR

Chief Guest, Hon. Simon Chelugui

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies, and Gentlemen,

1. We are pleased to participate in the 22nd edition of the EAC MSMEs Trade Fair. Kenya's participation in this manifestation has always been guided by the fact that the Trade Fair provides a forum for building linkages and partnerships between businesses in our respective countries in particular, and in the region at large.
2. It is for this reason that the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority (MSEA) is excited to coordinate the participation of Kenyan MSMEs at this International Trade Fair. We firmly believe that this fair provides an excellent platform for exposing brands of both merchandise, and services, thus giving further impetus to the EAC integration process.



3. Implementation of the EAC customs union and common market protocol has greatly contributed to the upsurge in the volume of trade between Kenya and the other EAC member countries. The volume and value of Kenya's exports to Uganda form a significant portion of Kenya's total exports. Uganda is a key export destination for Kenyan exports and was ranked 1st in 2021.
4. Kenya's main export products to Uganda in 2021 include; Cement, Palm oil, Flat-rolled and non-alloy steel, Petroleum oil and oil products and Salt. Over the same period, imports from Uganda to Kenya grew from Kshs from USD 299.3 million in 2020 to USD 305.2 million in 2021. The major import products into Kenya comprised Cane/sugar, milk and cream, plywood, veneered panel and similar laminated wood and electrical energy.
5. Kenya's participation in the EAC MSMEs Trade Fair is not only in line with the theme *"Buy East African to Build East Africa for Resilience and Sustainable Development,"* but also supports the actualization of our manufacturing agenda of offering high-value manufactured products both to the domestic and regional markets. Kenya's participation is therefore geared to narrow this deficit and is a commitment to continually expand trade and utilize other opportunities presented by other participating countries for Kenyan



products including fostering economic cooperation among the EAC member countries.

6. The products and services on offer by the Kenya MSMEs are varied, of very high quality and no doubt meet the requirements and tastes of most discerning buyers and consumers not only in Uganda but in the regional markets as well. We look forward to interacting with customers and providing sampling opportunities for some of the best and finest quality products Kenya has to offer. Regulatory and research agencies, namely Micro and Small Kenya Industrial Property Institute and the Strathmore University are also represented at this Fair to offer advisory services in their respective areas of focus.
7. The expansion of the East African Community is undoubtedly a clear indication that there is a growing need for fostering intra-African trade and enabling each country to address the production and supply challenges that have for a long time hindered the development of the export sector.
8. This calls for Kenyan companies to position themselves to network with participants from AfCFTA member states and aggressively market their goods and services beyond EAC, and COMESA, in the spirit of embracing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)



ideals.

9. A vibrant MSME sector plays a crucial role in unlocking growth in all the other areas of trade and economic growth. Globally, enterprises are drastically transforming due to a variety of reasons including advancements in technology, the rise of global value chains, outsourcing by multinational companies, global competition, and regional integration. This demands the growth of competitive enterprises that can compete against the rising emerging markets and developed countries, which are currently the leading exporters in the manufacturing sector.
10. Kenya and East Africa are endowed with diverse resources including human capital, raw materials, and renewable energy sources, among others, that have the potential to transform the country towards shared prosperity.
11. Even so, it is paramount that we continue to achieve holistic socio-economic transformation as a region. This calls on each one of us to build, create, add value, and take pride in our local industries. This is best demonstrated by the supply challenges that emanated from the disruption of the global supply chain that has called for a resilient value chain to support our economies and the importance of intra-regional trade and investment. Additionally, it means that we must



consume and promote what we locally produce as a region.

- 12.** We are delighted to be part of this trade fair that seeks to showcase the ingenuity of our local industries. We hope to leverage our collaboration with Partner States across the EAC and the continent, at large, to grow our economies.
- 13.** Indeed, we have an enormous potential to improve the livelihoods of our people. By working together, we shall have a stronger impact than as individual countries.

Thank you.