REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) DEVELOPMENT

State Department for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development

MSEA
MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES AUTHORITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KENYA FLAGS OFF EXHIBITS TO KIGALI FOR THE 26TH EAC MSMEs TRADE FAIR

Nairobi, 25th October 2026

Kenya has today flagged off exhibits from its micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to Kigali, Rwanda, ahead of the 26th East African Community (EAC) MSMEs Trade Fair, set for 30th October to 8th November 2026 at the Gikondo Expo Ground.

The flag-off, led by the Principal Secretary State Department for MSME Development, Hon. Susan Mang'eni, took place at the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority's Kariobangi Centre of Excellence in Nairobi. Held under the theme ***"Advancing Regional Value Chains in Leather and Horticulture",*** the fair is expected to bring together more than **1,200 enterprises** from the eight EAC Partner States.

Speaking at the flag-off, the PS said the EAC market of about **331 million people**, with a combined **GDP of USD 356 billion**, offers Kenyan MSMEs a major opportunity to reach regional buyers and integrate into regional and global value chains.

"**Leather and horticulture** are sectors in which Kenya has both depth and history, and this Fair gives our enterprises a chance to convert that strength into orders," she said. "This event will present an opportunity for Kenyan MSEs to understand emerging market dynamics and business practices, to build the linkages that sustain trade long after the exhibition closes, and to test new and improved technologies against regional demand."

The Micro and Small Enterprises Authority (MSEA), which is spearheading Kenya's participation, is facilitating **600** Kenyan MSEs to exhibit in Kigali. All products headed to the fair are 100% Kenyan-made and meet international market requirements, positioning Kenyan enterprises to compete effectively in regional and global markets.

Kenya goes to Kigali from a position of strength. It ranks among Rwanda's top five sources of imports, with more than **1,300 Kenyan companies** already trading in the Rwandan market. **Kenya is also Rwanda's second-largest agricultural supplier**

and its largest from within Africa, placing this year's horticulture focus firmly within Kenya's proven strengths.

Addressing the press, MSEA Director General, Mr. Henry Rithaa, said the Authority continues to market Kenyan MSE products through its online marketing portal and to champion product aggregation work that runs well beyond trade fairs. This, he noted, enables enterprises to keep trading in the EAC long after the exhibition closes and positions them to tap into the wider **1.3 billion-person African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) market.**

On his part, the Chairman of the Confederation of Micro and Small Enterprises Organizations (CMSEO) Kenya Chapter Mr. John Kihiu, emphasized that access to markets is the prerequisite for enterprise growth, job creation and productive investment in the MSME sector. "When our enterprises find buyers, everything else follows. They grow, they hire, and they reinvest in their businesses. Platforms like this Fair open doors that many small businesses could never open on their own," he said.

MSEA is coordinating Kenya's participation in partnership with Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and Uwezo Fund.

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About the EAC MSMEs Trade Fair

The EAC MSMEs Trade Fair is an annual regional platform designed to promote the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, enhance intra-regional trade, and accelerate industrialisation across the East African Community. It serves as a marketplace, networking forum, and policy engagement platform linking businesses to regional and international opportunities.