



PRESS RELEASE

EAST AFRICA PRIVATE SECTOR HAILS INCOMING EAC SECRETARY GENERAL FOR TRANSFORMING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- *Dr. Mathuki has been instrumental in championing removal of NTBs, implementing the turn-around strategy of EABC and revitalized donor support in the sector among other issues.*

Wednesday, 3rd March 2021, Arusha, Tanzania: The East African business community is hailing EABC CEO Dr. Peter Mutuku Mathuki, the incoming seventh EAC Secretary-General, as a transformative leader who pushed the business agenda and championed free movement of goods and services in the dire pandemic times.

Dr. Mathuki boosted cross-border trade by passionately advocating for the operationalization and functioning of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBP) across the region. His hands-on approach saw him visiting all EAC OSBPs, holding fora with small-scale cross-border traders and Trade Facilitation Agencies to assess trade barriers and in turn advocated for their elimination.

The former EALA member of Parliament has held firm on the business community's appeal to EAC Heads of State to embrace a coordinated approach in handling COVID-19.

At the onset of the pandemic, he successfully urged the EAC Council of Ministers to allow free movement of cargo and drivers, called for fiscal and monetary incentives to cushion East African businesses from the impact of COVID-19 and resumption of air transport services in the EAC region.

Under his leadership, EABC fronted research policy papers and briefs on the impact of COVID-19 in various business sectors and proposed recovery strategies, the majority of which were adopted by the EAC Partner States.

Dr. Mathuki successfully pushed for the formation of the African Business Council and has played a pivotal role in overseeing the coming into effect of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in a bid to reposition the bloc to reap the benefits availed by the continental market.

Dr. Mathuki's diplomatic leadership improved recognition of the role of the private sector in the EAC from Observer Status to a True Partner of the EAC regional integration agenda.

He organized EABC High-Level courtesy visits to the EAC Heads of State who committed to champion an inter-governmental trade dispute mechanism, to eliminate persistent Non-Tariff Barriers in the EAC region.

In 2019, his appeal to have private businesses hold a session with the EAC Council of Ministers, to inform the EAC Heads of State Summit was accepted by H.E. Paul Kagame, the Chair of the Summit, 2019. This high-level dialogue mechanism enabled EABC to put forward cross-border trade and investment bottlenecks affecting the business community, for deliberation and quick solutions by the EAC Council of Ministers and Heads of State.

He has spearheaded many international, continental and regional high-level public-private dialogues aimed at resolving bottlenecks hindering the growth of intra-EAC trade and investment. These include the EABC High-Level East African Business and Investment held in Arusha, 2019, holding of Public-Private Dialogues (PPD) with Trade Facilitation Agencies at the Borders to resolve emerging Non-Tariff Barriers; PPD on Customs and Domestic Taxes, Transport and Logistics and Standards and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In his three-year tenure at EABC, Dr. Mathuki implemented a turn-around strategy for the organization positioning it as a strong voice of the private sector in the region.

In his first year in office, he successfully set up sector-specific desks with experts to respond to the needs of Trade in Services, Manufacturing, Agriculture, Energy, Infrastructure & SMEs and also Women in Business. He rolled out membership engagements by introducing Elite Membership categories and holding EABC CEO Round Table meetings in all EAC Partner States to understand issues affecting companies as they do business across EAC borders. This has enabled EABC Secretariat policy advocacy to be informed by the needs of members and increased membership retention to 100%.

He has revived donor partnerships for EAC centered projects, bringing onboard support from TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), German Development Cooperation – GIZ, Federation of German Industries (BDI), Creating Perspectives Project, International Trade Centre (ITC), IFC-World Bank Group, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Economic Research Consortium among other organizations.

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EABC - The Voice of the Private Sector in East Africa

About East African Business Council: *The East African Business Council (EABC) is the regional apex body of private sector associations and Corporates from the 6 East African countries. It was established in 1997 to foster the interests of the private sector in the integration process of the East African Community. EABC vision is a borderless East Africa for business and investment. The primary mission is to promote sustainable private sector-driven growth in the EAC.*