



**KEPSA CHAIR'S REMARKS DURING THE EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY  
SECRETARY GENERAL ROUNDTABLE ON 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024 AT  
SERENA HOTEL, NAIROBI**

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**Salutations**

**Ms. Veronica Nduva**, Secretary General, East African Community

Captain of industries,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Good morning!**

1. Allow me on behalf of the Kenya Private Sector Alliance, the apex body for private sector in Kenya, to welcome you to Nairobi, **the Green City in the Sun**, where vibrant culture meets breathtaking landscapes, and the warmth of our people ensures that every visitor feels right at home.
2. I am delighted to join this year's East Africa Community Secretary General Roundtable. Let me start by congratulating you for being appointed the East Africa Community Secretary General to lead this great East Africa economy and also for joining the RoundTable.
3. Because I wear many hats, today I want to speak on behalf of the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), the national focal point of the East Africa Business Council (EABC). To start with, the East African Community (EAC) has made impressive strides in economic growth over the past

decade. The region is projected to grow by 5.1% this year and 5.7% in 2025, outpacing the global and Sub-Saharan African averages.

4. However, the EAC still faces challenges in industrialization. The region remains under-industrialized due to factors like low electricity access, high costs, poor infrastructure, and protectionist policies. Addressing these issues is crucial for boosting competitiveness and reducing trade deficits.
5. As the largest economy in the EAC, Kenya has greatly benefited from regional integration. The service sector, particularly travel and other services, has been a key driver of growth, accounting for over two-thirds of total trade in services.
6. The EAC is strategically positioned to be a powerful industrial hub, given its large population, land area, and proximity to major trade routes. However, the region's share of continental trade remains limited due to the aforementioned industrialization challenges.
7. The emergence of a new global order presents opportunities for the EAC to attract investments and expand trade. The region's stability and growth potential make it an attractive destination for businesses looking to diversify their operations.
8. KEPSA stands ready to collaborate with the EAC Secretariat and Partner States to address the private sector's concerns and unlock the region's economic potential. **We call for:**
  - ⇒ Harmonization of Policies and Regulations - The EAC has made progress in harmonizing policies and regulations, but more work is needed to create a truly seamless business environment. KEPSA proposes the establishment of a regional task force to identify and address regulatory bottlenecks, with input from the private sector.

- ⇒ Infrastructure Investments - Investing in infrastructure is crucial for reducing costs and improving efficiency. KEPSA recommends prioritizing projects that enhance connectivity within the EAC and with neighboring regions, such as the Standard Gauge Railway and the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor.
- ⇒ Capacity Building and Skills Development - To enhance the competitiveness of local industries, the EAC should invest in capacity building and skills development programs. KEPSA suggests establishing regional centers of excellence in key sectors, such as manufacturing and agribusiness, to provide training and support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- ⇒ Promotion of Trade - Promoting intra-regional and international trade is essential for growth. KEPSA proposes the creation of a regional trade facilitation platform that provides information, matchmaking services, and dispute resolution mechanisms for businesses.

9. As I conclude, by working together and speaking with one voice, I believe we can position the EAC as a global economic powerhouse and improve the lives of our citizens. This roundtable provides an excellent platform to discuss these issues and forge a way forward. I look forward to fruitful discussions and actionable outcomes that will take the EAC-Private Sector collaboration to greater heights.

**Thank you.**

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