



COMMUNIQUE OF PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS ON FREE MOVEMENT OF CARGO ACROSS BORDERS IN THE EAC REGION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

(National Focal Points Chief Executive Officers Meeting coordinated by the East African Business Council on 28th April 2020.)

We, the Chief Executive Officers of National Private Sector Apex Body Associations in the EAC region held an online meeting on 28th April 2020 to assess the status of transport and logistics sector in light of the outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the EAC region.

Noting, the region has reported 953 cases of COVID-19 as of 27th April 2020 and a recent increase in the number of positive cases is being attributed to cross border cargo movements across the EAC partner states.

Acknowledging, the paramount importance of protecting the health, and safety of the East African people during this pandemic. The East African business community appreciates and commits to support the efforts and measures by the governments of the EAC Partner States in a bid to curb the outbreak of COVID-19 in the region.

Appreciating, the EAC Secretariat for coming up with COVID-19 Administrative Guidelines geared to complement national measures against the COVID-19 pandemic; to ensure smooth & uninterrupted movement of goods & services in the EAC during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Given the geographical nature, proximity and trade inter-linkages of the EAC region, and the importance of a harmonized approach towards reducing cost, time and resources needed to curb the outbreak of Covid-19 in the EAC region,

Noting, the importance of the free movement of cargo across the EAC Partner States during COVID-19 pandemic, we recommend as follows:

- i. EAC Partner States should agree and implement a coordinated regional approach on COVID-19 in regard to facilitating free movement of cargo across the EAC region.
- ii. EAC Partner States to harmonize measures on COVID-19 and ensure the health measures do not cause unnecessary cost and time burden to the free movement of goods and services across borders in the EAC region.
- iii. EAC Partner States to facilitate free movement of cargo from the point of origin to the destination.

- iv. EAC Partner States to fast track clearance of cargo at the borders to avoid long queues and congestions by:
 - Ensuring cargo is seamlessly flowing without restrictions and where a relay system and transshipment of cargo is adopted, the process does not lead to exorbitant costs that could adversely affect transporters and consequently consumers.
 - Issuance of certificates to truck drivers valid for a period of at least two (2) weeks. The certificate notwithstanding the drivers will also undergo mandatory temperature checks at the designated checkpoints.
 - Ensuring that all clearing and forwarding services, loading and offloading equipment, as well as warehousing facilities, are available at the borders to reduce border clearance time.
 - Embarking on rapid testing and joint border management, this will build confidence and fast-track movement of goods in the borders.
 - Increasing the number of testing kits for truck drivers
 - Increasing the number of health staff and other staff at the borders.
 - Harmonize working hours of trade facilitation agencies and essential services at the One-Stop Border Posts in the EAC.
- v. EAC Partner States to benchmark best practices from other regional economic blocs.
- vi. National Transport Associations coordinated by the Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Association (FEAFA) to work closely with EABC to ensure the private sector coordinated approach for smooth movement of cargo across the region.
- vii. Private Sector in collaboration with the government to create awareness and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), sensitize the public to avoid misinformation and stigmatization.
- viii. Truck drivers and all operators to observe the laid down guidelines on health by the respective Partner States.

In conclusion, we appreciate and salute Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA) in their role in promoting trade facilitation for increased trade and investments in the EAC region.

Signed on this 28th Day of April 2020.

Dr. Peter Mathuki
CEO/ Executive Director, East African Business Council (EABC).

Mr. Stephen Ruzibiza
Chief Executive Officer, Private Sector Federation- Rwanda (PSF).

Mr. Godfrey Simbeye
Executive Director, Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF).

Mr. Gideon Badagawa
Executive Director, Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU).

Mr. Denis Nshimirimana
Secretary General, Federal Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture – Burundi (CFCIB).

Ms. Carole Kariuki
Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA).

Mr. Hamad Hamad
Executive Director, Zanzibar Chamber of Commerce (ZNCC).

Mr. Simon Deng
Secretary-General, South Sudan Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (SSCCIA).