



## **AIDE MEMOIRE**

### **THE AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM**

***“Creating new business opportunities in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis”***

**Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort, Kampala, Uganda, 22-23 July, 2010.**

#### **Introduction**

The Commission of the African Union, in collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the UN Global Compact (UNGC), African Export-Import Bank, the Government of Uganda and the Ugandan private sector, will organise its next African Private Sector Forum on the theme *“Creating new business opportunities in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis”*. The Forum, organised as a pre-Summit event, will take place in Kampala, Uganda, on 22-23 July 2010, just before the next AU Summit taking place at the same venue.

#### **Background**

After the 2008-9 economic and financial crisis, global businesses and governments are re-assessing the systems governing global cooperation, financial architecture and policies linked to trade and investment partnerships. These important issues are now a major part of Africa’s planned economic resurgence. Despite greater national level successes in macroeconomic stability, increased openness to trade and investment, and sustainable global partnerships formed through multilateral and bilateral agreements, African countries are in a relentless search of a game-changer that will enable the continent prosper in a changing world. The road ahead is complex but the evolving landscape of managed and market-driven economies is creating new business opportunities in Africa, with emerging markets in infrastructure and the agriculture sector developments being among the first to show signs of a recovery and are forecast to increasingly contribute to economic growth in the next decade. New Business Development Corridors, Transport Corridors and plans for energy grids are on the drawing boards of both the private sector and government agencies. The business culture is changing and a better understanding of the global trends in international business partnerships has been shaping sectoral and industrial developments in many of the countries in Africa.

The main concern now is about the strength and shape of the emerging economic recovery, and also how a balanced approach by policy makers could foster economic development. As Africa joins India and China in crossing the billion person mark, its regional markets, natural resources and market potential for technology-based products/services are catalysts for any significant future economic growth and development. Even if, as appears likely, a double-dip recession is avoided, African business leaders, by sector or industry, are seeking partnerships in addressing this challenge and using the experiences of the still lingering financial crisis as an opportunity to redesign a sustainable roadmap for Africa's future within the new global economy. The debate has always focused on the US-China potential to pull the developing countries out of the staggering recession. But even then, there is recognition by the World Bank and others that in the absence of full participation by the developing countries in shaping the road to recovery, once again Africa's industry and commerce would be left behind, something Africa refuses to accept. Consequently, African business leaders have to step-up and take leadership in making this roadmap a global business partnership.

## **Objectives**

The forum will aim at achieving the following objectives:

- i. Forge sustainable partnerships between the African private sector leaders and their counterparts from other parts of the world in respect of enhancing Africa's share of global trade and investment flows;
- ii. Create an opportunity for business leaders to explore the challenges and opportunities in areas such as energy, transport and communication infrastructure, manufacturing and agri-business and agro-industry;
- iii. Provide a platform for business leaders to directly meet with leaders of the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States of the African Union to shape the business development agenda for industry and commerce at continental, regional and national levels and create opportunities to engage in the development of a mutual programme of business development;
- iv. Create the opportunity for business leaders to discuss ways of enhancing competitiveness by exchanging views on issues such as Aid for Trade, access to finance and external markets as well as the contentious subject of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs);
- v. Create the opportunity for business and political leaders to obtain real industry and business policy intelligence and create a platform for translating that global business knowledge into sustained high rates of business connectivity, sustainability and growth;
- vi. Consider a draft proposal for the establishment of an effective mechanism to follow-up on the implementation of private sector recommendations, in accordance with the 2008 African Private Sector Forum's Declaration and the Executive Council Decision of June 2008 (EX/CL/414(XIII)) on Private Sector Development.

## **Link to other activities**

A high Level Investment Roundtable of Heads of State and Government and selected key business leaders focusing on ***investment in transport and energy infrastructure in Africa*** is scheduled to take place in the margins of the AU Assembly session in Kampala on **25 July 2010** with a view to discussing vital business and economic development issues. The conclusions of the private sector forum will be presented to the Roundtable to shape the deliberations at that level. A number of selected business executives at the private sector forum will also attend the Investment Roundtable. The Roundtable will take the form of a working lunch.

In parallel with the two events, an exhibition will also take place at the venue of the meetings.

## **Participation**

The Private Sector Forum places the business community at the epicenter of trade and investment decision making processes and will bring together champions of industries seeking larger markets and better business investment opportunities in Africa, and multinational companies that seek to achieve business success with African partners. We expect high level participation from the Energy, ICT, Agriculture, Transport, Services (Finance & Logistics), and Manufacturing sectors, among others, as well as Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion Agencies. These will be joined by Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of international companies, International Agencies and investors from a wide range of countries. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) will also play an important part.

## **Cost Participation**

Participation at this event is free but delegates are expected to bear the cost of travel to the event and subsistence during their stay in Kampala. A limited number of SMEs will be sponsored to the event.

## **Contacts:**

Information on logistical arrangements for the Forum can be found on the AUC, ITC and UNGC websites: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org), [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org) and [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org), respectively.

## **Contacts persons are:**

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