

Statement By Hon. Betty Maina, EGH – Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade & Enterprise Development During The Media Briefing On The Joint Kenya –DRC Congo Trade And Investment Mission At Serena Hotel, Nairobi on Monday 1st November, 2021

Salutations

- Equity Group Managing Director and CEO Dr James Mwangi;
- Kenya’s Ambassador to DRC Ambassador George Masavu;
- Representative from the DRC Embassy in Kenya, 2nd Secretary Mr Botuli Bosaw Geoffrey;
- Chief Administrative Secretary in my Ministry Hon. Lawrence Karanja;
- Director General, Bilateral and Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Amb. Galma Boru, MBS;
- Principal Secretary, State Department of Trade & Enterprise Development Amb. Weru;
- Members of the Fourth Estate;
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government and on my own behalf and that of my Ministry, I wish to welcome everyone to this Media Briefing on the proposed joint Kenya – DRC Trade and Investment Mission.

As you are aware, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo have a long history of cordial bilateral relations spanning back many years. I am glad to inform you that the planned Trade, Tourism & Investment Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was conceived in April this year during H.E. the President visit to the DRC. On the margins of the visit, HE the President noticed the huge potential in DRC and challenged the Ministry of Trade, Equity Bank and private sector to immediately explore the business opportunities and increase market share of Kenya’s goods and services in DRC and in the Great Lakes region.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To give effect to the aforementioned Presidential directive, my Ministry together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been meeting with top management of Equity Bank firstly to tap into its extensive network of branches in DRC. The same framework has been extended to other Kenya trade facilitation agencies and other corporations with current and potential commercial presence in DRC including Kenya Airways, Kenya Railways, Kenya Revenue Authority and Kenya Ports Authority.

Since July 2021 to date, **ten joint technical and policy preparatory GoK/Equity meetings** have been held. An advance exploratory team comprising officials from the; Ministry of Industrialization, Trade & Enterprise Development; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (KEPROBA) and Equity Group top management team visited DR Congo from the 15th to 25th August 2021. Their main mission was to reconnaissance the logistical complexes of the DRC economy and evaluate the technical requirements for the Trade Mission.

The advance team interaction with Government officials and Private sector executives gave us an opportunity to pick essential information that has helped us plan well and organise our private sector for this mission including equipping them with measures to address any emerging challenges. My Ministry continues to offer technical support to Kenya's private sector and negotiate market access opportunities and to increase their contribution to the Government economic transformation agenda

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Kenya and DRC have a cooperation agreement that provides a framework for the joint promotion of economic, technical, scientific, and socio-cultural programmes. Economic and Political Geostrategic Positioning of Kenya. The economic sectors targeted by the broad framework are agriculture, education, health, sports, and tourism. Others are environment, SME's, housing, energy, and infrastructure development.

Kenya and DRC have continued enjoying cordial relations over many decades and the strong bilateral ties have strengthened trade between the two countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo is the 6th leading export destination for Kenyan products in the world which include agricultural and manufactured goods, mineral fuels and oils. In 2020, Kenya exported to Congo goods worth Ksh 14.9 Billion (USD 134.35 million).

Over the last five years, **the trade balance between the two Countries has been in favour of Kenya. In 2016, we exported goods worth Ksh 22.3 Billion (USD 200.4 Million) and imported goods worth Ksh. 232 Million (USD 2.083 Million).** These mainly consisted of copper, slag and ash, pearls, precious stones, inorganic chemicals, wood products, diamonds, gold, coltan, bronze, coal, iron ore, silver, uranium and zinc, Kenyan exports however decreased to **Ksh 15.9 Billion (USD 142.9 Million) in 2020**, while our imports totalled **Ksh 12.9 Billion (USD 115.4 Million)** over the same period.

Today I am happy to note that trade between the two Countries is set to improve following a decision by Jambo Jet to launch a direct flight from Nairobi to Goma in Eastern DRC, with two flights per week on Fridays and Mondays. In addition to this,

Kenya Airways has also leased two Embraer 190 aircrafts to Congo Airways and continues to expand its network into DRC and in the neighbouring countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure today to announce that the Government of Kenya and Equity Group have agreed to send a delegation of over **200 companies from both private and public sector** to DRC for a two-week trade and investment mission starting **28th November to 14th December 2021**. This mission will involve business forums as well as exhibitions showcasing Kenyan goods and services in four major cities of **Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Goma and Mbuji-Mayi**. It aims to fully exploit the Provisions of the Multilateral and Regional Trading Framework under the African Continental Free Trade Area and the East African Community.

The process of selection and registration of the 200 exhibitors is ongoing and will be concluded soon. A registration platform has been developed which will capture personal data for the participants. We are targeting Kenyan companies producing and trading in goods and services like; Finance and Financial products, Education especially tertiary and University education, Tourism- hotel chains, tours and travel etc, Livestock (Milk, Meat Products, Fish, Eggs, Chicken etc), Beauty & Cosmetics, Manufacturing (farm equipments, electrical cables, Motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals), Transport (KQ, Port), Professional services (Legal, Architectural, engineering etc), Medical Services, Insurance, Telecommunications and General services.

In conclusion I am happy to announce to Kenyans that preparations for the Kenya – DRC Trade, tourism and Investment Mission are underway and invite them to participate. A joint Secretariat between my Ministry and Equity Bank has been set up with offices on 18th floor TelPosta Towers.

With this media conference and in other information that we shall supply, you will find essential information on how to register and participate.

***THANK YOU & GOD BLESS YOU
GOD BLESS KENYA***