

01st April 2020

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

I hope this message finds you and your families, friends, and communities safe and in good health.

Over the past weeks, COVID-19 cases within the COMESA region have risen, with the most current count of up to 1467 cases as at 31st March. The numbers continue to grow at an accelerated rate. The economic and social consequences have been far reaching, necessitating drastic concerted measures from the government to address the drastic effects on businesses and the economy at large. Several measures have been put in place including travel restrictions, prohibitions on public gatherings and offsite work arrangements at company level. The CBC recognises the need to upscale efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate against the spread of the virus. It is important that as a region, we maintain continued solidarity and cooperation to curb the impact of the pandemic on the lives of our people and fabric of our economies.



The CBC has put specific actions to ensure continuity of our business operations and the safety of our staff. I hereby notify our members and stakeholders that as an organisation, CBC has established the following;

- *CBC operations through remote/offsite work arrangements with limited physical presence in the office. The Secretariat will have one or two critical personnel physically present in the office, from the 1st April to 30th April 2020.*
- *CBC continues the implementation of its activities and workplan through offsite workplace models, that will ensure continuous operations, virtual meetings among other innovative forms of engagement. The Secretariat will continue to deliver its services through digital channels, in the areas of business policy and advocacy, facilitation, advisory and intelligence services as well as online technical skills capacity building courses for enterprises and associations.*
- *Over the next month, the secretariat continues to maintain communication and implementation where possible on our ongoing activities, namely the Regional Code on Anti-Corruption Compliance for enterprises, Business Trader Observer, Policy Survey and Digital Financial Services, Local Sourcing for Partnerships and Business linkages programs at a national level.*
- *The bi-weekly BIZNET newsletter will also be shared with all stakeholders capturing the business news across the region.*
- *While we are unable to serve you in person, we shall engage our workgroups through various sector workgroup structures e-meetings. We have also strengthened communication through social media channels and our website. Related to the current state, CBC will be disseminating its weekly COVID-19 Insider, a special brief capturing the key trends, measures and state of play regarding the pandemic.*

We would like to request our members and stakeholders to continue working closely with us through the alternate digital eco-systems to meet our key targets, in spite of the current limitations. We regret any interruptions caused by these changes. Please be assured that all activities will effectively resume, once official assurance is received that the COVID-19 pandemic is under control.

We look forward to your continued commitment and support towards private sector competitiveness in COMESA.

Warm Regards,
Marday Venkatasamy, CBC Chairperson