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Building Consensus on Services Reforms and Negotiations: the Private Sector and the Role of Services Coalitions

Aide Memoire

2-3 October 2009

Imperial Royale Hotel – Kampala, Uganda

Background

Services constitute the most dynamic area of international trade, offering significant opportunities both in terms of increased exports and imports, aimed together at enhancing competitiveness, stimulating economic development and reducing poverty. At the same time services reforms and negotiations remain understandably contentious due to their potential to expose vulnerable stakeholders to a variety of risks.

Part of the difficulty in harnessing services reforms and negotiations to promote development results from the expansive nature of the sector. In reality there is no single ‘services sector’ to speak of, but rather a collection of sectors covering significant swathes of economic activity and impacting a diverse range of stakeholders. Coordinating such views and employing them to promote and develop the various sectors has proven challenging, both for governments and the private sector.

In light of this, firms in a number of sectors (notably in professional services) have tended to group themselves into industry associations. Such associations can play a myriad of roles. Externally, they often advocate on behalf of the sector, especially with governments, regarding policy reforms, trade barriers, negotiating positions and strategies for enhancing exports in their sector more generally. Internally, roles include raising awareness on the impact/relevance of services negotiations, basic information and knowledge sharing amongst members, and facilitating coordination and harmonization on standards, qualifications and licensing. Responsibilities can also include self-regulation (with vested authority to confer specific qualifications), as is often the case in a number of qualified professions, such as lawyers. Being adequately situated in the country’s/region’s broader institutional decision-making framework is an essential ingredient for success.

Such sectoral associations also operate at different levels. This can include national (or sub-national) representation, regional groupings, as well as participation in international bodies.

Over the past decade, there has also been a move to pool together a range of cross-sectoral associations, bodies and firms into national and regional services coalitions, themselves often associated with global bodies, such as the Global Services Network (GSN).¹ Such national and regional (and global) groupings can lend additional weight to positions being taken and help further promote private sectors interests in services reforms in the region and at varying national levels.

Objective

Despite the acknowledged role such coalitions can and should play in harnessing services for development, their existence in Africa is virtually non-existent (including in East Africa). As such, the broader objective of this workshop is to help create awareness about the role of services coalitions in pursuing services reforms and negotiations, as well as to promote information and knowledge sharing amongst stakeholders of national/regional experiences with services associations. Building consensus for such coalitions is thus a key expected outcome. By helping to elaborate on how such coalitions can be properly situated within the existing institutional landscape, the ultimate aim is to help catalyze the formation of national coalitions in the EAC Partner States, as well as the formation of a regional body that can represent the region's diverse interests at the regional and global stage.

Organisation and participants

The meeting is being organised by EABC and ILEAP, with a focus on laying the groundwork for the possible establishment of an EAC CSI organisation. Participants will be chosen from selected sectors, covering private sector professionals and association representatives within the region, as well as relevant public sector ministry and regulatory agency representatives. A select number of non-EAC representatives will also be in attendance, both to share experiences and act as advisors.

As such, target participants will include:

- Private sector operators and representatives of services associations;
 - Government officials from relevant ministries and regulatory bodies involved in the development of services export strategies and/or services negotiations; and
- Researchers in academia, think tanks and regional research networks concerned with trade and regulatory policies, as well as export development and promotion

¹ The Global Services Network is an informal, private sector-led, forum which gathers the global services community of business people, government officials, academics, and others who are committed to increased trade and investment in services, and a rules-based, multilateral trading system.

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Agenda

2 October 2009	
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:30	<p>Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerald Sendaula, Vice-Chair (Uganda), EABC • David Primack, Acting Executive Director, ILEAP • Ambassador Julius Onen, Permanent Secretary, Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 12:30	<p>Session I: The role of services coalitions in international trade</p> <p>This session will provide an overview of the role of service coalitions, focussing in particular on the different needs between larger firms in advanced countries and relatively smaller firms in developing countries. A case study of the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries (BCSI) will be offered.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramesh Chaitoo, Advisor, ILEAP <p>Q&A</p>
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch

13:30 - 15:00	<p>Session II: A proposed EAC Coalition of Services Industries</p> <p>This session will provide an overview of preliminary research on the formation of an East African Coalition of Services Industries.</p> <p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Yegella, EABC-ILEAP Fellow, EABC <p>Discussant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoffrey Bakunda, Senior Lecturer, Makerere University <p>Q&A</p>
15:00 - 15:30	<p>Coffee break</p>
15:30 - 17:00	<p>Session III: EA national services associations in action</p> <p>This session will delve into the salient features of a pair of existing national services bodies. Attention will be drawn to issues such as objectives, activities, membership, and structure, etc., as well as the manner in which they interact with partners at the national, regional and international level.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Walusimbi-Mpanga, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Services Exporters Association (USEA) • Vincent Oluoch, Convenor (Public Affairs Committee), Association of Professional Societies in East Africa (APSEA) <p>Q&A</p>

3 October 2009

9:00 - 10:30	<p>Session IV: EA regional services associations in action</p> <p>This session will delve into the salient features of a pair of existing regional professional services bodies. Attention will be drawn to issues such as objectives, activities, membership, and structure, etc., as well as the manner in which they interact with partners at the national, regional and international level.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bobi Odiko, East African Law Society (EALS)• Vickson Ncube, Eastern Central and Southern African Federation of Accountants (ECSAFA) <p>Q&A</p>
10:30 - 11:00	<p>Coffee Break</p>
11:00 - 12:30	<p>Session V: CSIs in sector development – options for ICT/BPO</p> <p>ICT/BPO is a new and burgeoning sub-sector in East Africa, one that virtually all Partner States have prioritised in their national development plans. While both the public and private sector are involved in efforts to better organise the sector at the national level, there is as-yet no EAC-wide BPO Society. This session aims to take the BPO sector as a case study of what a regional (and/or national) CSI could do to support the sector.</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gilda Odera, Chairperson, Kenya BPO and Contact Society• Abubaker Luwaga, Chief Executive Officer, Cayman Consults Ltd (Uganda)• Fiona Asonga, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunication Service Providers Association of Kenya (TESPOK) <p>Q&A</p>
12:30 - 13:30	<p>Lunch</p>

13:30 - 15:30	<p>Session VI: Roundtable discussion: CSIs at the national and regional level</p> <p>This session will be held in roundtable format, with invited discussants asked to comment on the proposed regional EAC CSI, including on how a regional CSI might situate itself within existing national and regional structures. Questions surrounding the value and potential challenges of catalyzing national CSIs (as a new body or within an existing one), as well as how such a national body might relate to the regional umbrella are also to be addressed.</p> <p>Discussants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carole Kariuki, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Kenyan Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) • Moses Ogwal, Director of Policy, Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) • Adam Zuku, Senior Chamber Development Officer, Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA) • Lucas Murenzi, Director of Trade Policy & Advocacy, Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF) • Econi Nijimbere, President, Association of Manufacturers in Burundi (AIB) <p>Q&A</p>
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 - 17:00	<p>Session VII: Way forward</p> <p>This session will draw together insights and recommendations on forming coalition-type services bodies at the national and regional level in East Africa.</p> <p>Q&A</p>