



State House
Lusaka
Republic of Zambia
Press Statement

For Immediate Release

PRESIDENT LUNGU SUPPORTS SMES

NAIROBI, Kenya (**Wednesday, 17th July, 2019**) - **His Excellency Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia**, today participated in a roundtable discussion at the Source - 21 COMESA High Level Business Summit.

President Lungu told delegates that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are in a position to thrive under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) if supported by individual States.

"Their smallness make it impossible to meet market requirements in terms of quantities that make economic sense to sell small at Continental level, as in most cases, they are not even in a position to satisfy the domestic market," President Lungu said.

He said most small industries struggle with meeting acceptable product quality and packaging due to either lack of skills or financial resources.

President Lungu added that if there is no political will to help SMEs then the free trade area will be an exercise in futility.

The Round Table Discussion also included the host, President Uhuru Kenyatta, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, and the President of Mauritius Paramasivum Pillay Vyapoory and the COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe.

President Kenyatta said African States should discover how they can work together and take advantage of individual strength under the FTA.

President Yoweri Museveni said Africa's mistake is the narrow-dimensional approach towards trade.

He asked why Africa is so rich yet so poor.

"China has three billion people, yet they still look for business elsewhere. Our market in Africa is fragmented and we need to integrate more," he said.

Ms Kapwepwe said Africa and organisations like COMESA are building blocks for integration.

She said for FTA to succeed laws need to be harmonised. She added that Gender disaggregated data shows more women than men in cross-border trade.

"Continue to intervene." Digitalisation, ecommerce, and logistics will support trade," she concluded.

Issued by

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STATE HOUSE