



Foreword

Reginald Mengi, EABC Chairman

EABC recognises that it is necessary to leverage issues affecting private sector competitiveness at the EAC level. Energy costs are critical to our competitiveness. All the EAC Partner States are affected by excessive energy prices – for example the price of electricity is 5-10 times higher than our competitors such as Egypt or South Africa) and the low quality of power supply systems. The supply situation is characterized by a high dependency on large scale hydroelectric plants leading to power-rationing as a result of dry spells and erratic rainfalls. As a result a number of industrial sectors are uncompetitive.

EAC Partner States, in recognising the role of energy in the competitiveness of businesses in the region, are working towards availing cheap and reliable energy; through combined development of the EAC power systems as amplified in the East African Power Master Plan (EAPMP) in addition to other national efforts. While EABC lauds these efforts, it does recognize that they are long term and will have to compete for resources with other development needs like education, healthcare and infrastructure to name a few.

It is EABC's contention that we, the business community in the EAC, make a contribution in tandem with efforts of Partner States by developing medium level hydro-electricity plants and other renewable energy systems like wind, biomass, bio-fuel, solar energy and co-generation. This is informed by research that there is huge potential of renewable energy in the EAC region; there is financial support available to develop this energy and given the power intensive economies, investment in the energy sector is has viable returns.

The June Conference, which we have themed **“Energy: A Viable Business Opportunity”** will bring key energy sector stakeholders together and disseminate information on the opportunities available for investment by the private sector. The Conference is aimed at enhancing locally financed investment in the energy sector, both grid and off grid; with a view to contributing to the increased supply of energy, which will result in lower costs of energy and consequently a more competitive private sector. The Conference shall disseminate information to the private sector on the main potentials for investment; it will bring together potential financiers and private sector investors and will establish what policies are needed to incentivise private sector investment in the energy sector.

I invite all energy sector stakeholders, be they energy suppliers, users like manufacturers and industrialists, investors, financiers and consultants to join us in this important event that seeks to leverage this key issue to our competitiveness as the EAC region.

WELCOME ALL!
