



COMMUNIQUE OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE IGAD BUSINESS FORUM HELD VIRTUALLY ON 27TH AUGUST 2020 AT 11:00 AM.

His Excellency, **Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu**, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), convened and presided over a Special Session of the IGAD Business Forum (IBF) that was held virtually on 27th August 2020.

The Special Session of the IBF was chaired by **Mr. Kent Libiso** representing the Chairperson of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and industry and Chair of the IGAD Business Forum (IBF). Present at meeting was **H.E. Amb. Dr. Amina Mohamed** in her capacity as a candidate for the position of Director-General for the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Six (6) representatives of the respective National chambers of Commerce and Industry that form the apex of the IGAD Business Forum (IBF) were in attendance at the Special Session namely;

- **Kent Libiso** representing the Chairperson of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and industry and Chair of the IGAD Business Forum (IBF);
- **Youssef Dawale**, President of the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce and industry;
- **Yesuf Hagos**, Secretary-General of the Ethiopian Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Associations;
- **Ciise Maxamuud**, Deputy Director-General of the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- **Osama Sidahamed** representing the President of the Sudanese Chambers of Businessmen and Employers;
- **Brenda Tibamwenda Kandaba**, Secretary-General of the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Director Economic Cooperation and Social Development, Mr. Elsadig Abdalla, moderated the session, with the support of Dr. Solomon Munyua, Director of the IGAD Center for Pastoral And Livestock Development (ICPALD), Ahmed Habbane Yunis, Director of Planning and Cooperation, Phillip Gathungu, Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary, Joseph Rwanshote, Program Manager Trade, Industry & Tourism, Abdi Robleh, coordinator development partnerships and Aicha Houssein, Program Assistant Division of Economic Cooperation.

In his opening remarks, the IGAD Executive Secretary hailed the important role played by the IGAD Business Forum (IBF) in its coordination, facilitation and advocacy among the IGAD business community. He pledged the support of IGAD for the candidature of Amb. Amina Mohamed for the position of the Director General of WTO and noted that it would be a bonus for the region should she assume the leadership of the WTO.

In her address to the Special Session of the IBF, H.E. Amb. Dr. Amina Mohamed expressed gratitude to the IBF for spearheading the interests of the private sector in the IGAD region. Amb. Amina pledged to work for the improvement of the multilateral trading system and to advance the cause of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) especially regarding important issues of intra-African trade like the rules of origin and the elimination of barriers to trade. Amb. Amina Mohamed requested for the support of the IGAD Business Forum in particular and that of the IGAD Member States in general in her bid for the position of Director General of WTO.

The delegates of the IGAD Member States represented at the IBF unanimously pledged support and expressed their solidarity for the candidature of H.E Amb (Dr.) Amina Mohamed for the position of Director-General, World Trade Organization.

- The President of the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce and industry commended the role of the IBF and urged the IBF to take a more pro-active stance now that the AFCFTA is being rolled out. He underlined the need to align the activities of the IBF with those of the African Business Council as well as those of the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI).
- The Sectary General of the Ethiopia Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Associations also recognized the importance of the IBF and pledged support for Amb. Amina Mohamed.
- The representative of the Kenya National Chamber of commerce also welcomed Amb. Amina`s courage to contest for the WTO position of Director General.
- The representative of the Somali Chamber of Commerce Mr. Ciise Maxamuud also added his voice to the IBF in support of the candidature of Amb. Amina Mohamed.
- The representative of the Sudanese Chambers of Business men and Employers, Mr. Osama Sidahmed also reiterated his country's support for Amb. Amina Mohamed in her quest for the WTO position.
- The Secretary General of the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ms. Brenda Kandaba noted the adverse impact of COVID-19 on global trade and observed that Member States have to learn how to live with COVID-19.

The meeting endorsed the decision of IGAD to host the proposed investment conference between the IGAD region and GCC, UK, EU, Turkey and Russia.

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