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PRESS RELEASE

HON. SAM K. KUTESA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, LAUNCHES THE 1ST UGANDA-DRC JOINT BUSINESS FORUM, AND CALLS FOR INCREASED BILATERAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

5 / 11/ 2019

KAMPALA

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Hon. Sam K. Kutesa, today officially launched the 1st Uganda – Democratic Republic of Congo Joint Business Forum at the Ministry Headquarters. The Forum under the theme “*Promoting Bilateral Trade, Investment and Connectivity for Mutual Peace and Prosperity*” is being co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development; in partnership with Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), Trademark East Africa and KTA Advocates

While speaking to the members of the Press, the Minister informed the Meeting that Uganda and the DRC enjoy fraternal and excellent bilateral relations. This is evidenced by the high level exchange of visits including at the level of Heads of State, Ministers and Senior Government officials. The two countries have established cooperation frameworks including the Joint Permanent Commission which have enabled the two sisterly states to achieve common goals and objectives.

He further noted that the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the key export markets for Uganda’s exports. Total exports for 2018 stood at USD 531m, with formal trade standing at USD 221m (Two Hundred and Twenty One Million) while, informal trade currently standing at USD312 (Three Hundred and Twelve Million).

The 1st Uganda – DRC Business Forum will be presided over by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The objective of the Joint Business Forum is to provide a platform that affords an opportunity to the members of the private sector of the two countries to share experiences; create business to business networks, identify opportunities and challenges and agree common solutions that advance their collective objectives. The Forum will take place on 09 November 2019 at the Serena Hotel Kampala starting at 0900hrs.

Hon. Kutesa observed that the Forum is expected to bring together over 200 participants including the Business Community from Uganda and DRC, Senior Government officials; policy makers and political leaders; International Organizations, multinational agencies and development partners, leading local and regional media houses to mention but a few.

It will be a one day private-sector led event to discuss trade and investment opportunities between Uganda and DRC in order to facilitate trade between the two countries. Among the key bilateral issues that will be discussed include Promotion of cross border Trade, Customs co-operation, Elimination of non-tariff barriers, Harmonization of standards; cross border infrastructural development; energy including power generation, among others.

Also in attendance at the Media launch was Hon. Werikhe Kafabusa, Minister of State for Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Hon. Evelyn Anite Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Planning; Officials from the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Uganda, Government Officials from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA's), members of the Business Community and interested participants.

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