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## **At least 2,000 Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to gain digital skills through the KEPSA E-commerce Booster Program**

**Nairobi, Kenya - 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021:** With funding from the European Union and UK's Foreign Commonwealth Development Office, the Kenya Private Sector (KEPSA) today launched an E-commerce Booster Program targeting at least 2000 Micro, Small and Medium sized enterprises (MSMES). The program is being supported by TradeMark East Africa, a leading aid for trade regional body in East Africa while the technical support for this program is being provided by Amari Consulting Ltd.

The program targets businesses with little or no digital presence for training and on-boarding to e-commerce platforms to ensure MSMEs can increase and diversify their revenue streams during this period of COVID-19 pandemic.

As COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause disruptions in the global and regional value chains, it has become clear that e-commerce is an important tool and solution for businesses and consumers. E-commerce can support small businesses in reducing their costs and effectively reaching their customers; it is an economic driver for both domestic growth and international trade thus making economies more competitive. The COVID-19 pandemic has occasioned a spike in business-to-consumers (B2C) online sales and an increase in Business-to-Business (B2B) e-commerce. The increase in B2C sales is particularly evident in online sales of medical supplies, household essentials and food products.

As a result, attention has been drawn to several challenges hindering the full potential of e-commerce across countries. These include price gouging, product safety concerns, deceptive practices, weak delivery logistics, cyber security concerns, exceptionally low consumer digital trust, low basic ICT knowledge by businesses and customers, weak interoperability of payment systems, the need for increased bandwidth, universal connectivity and affordability of internet, and development-related concerns.

The six month long initiative will build the capacity of MSMEs to engage in e-commerce and digital marketing as well as create linkages for domestic and cross-border trade.

The KEPSA E-commerce Booster Program main objectives are:

- Help SMEs gain the digital skills necessary to engage in a digital economy and improve livelihoods.
- Support SMEs in the wholesale and retail sector with little or no e-commerce presence to get on board e-commerce platforms to increase and diversify revenue streams during the COVID-19 period

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- Support Kenyan SMEs to expand their local and cross-border e-commerce presence.
- Build capacity of SMEs to raise their proficiency in implementing effective digital campaigns, and increase their brand awareness, value and sales conversions across multiple digital channels

In her opening remarks, KEPSA CEO, Ms. Carole Kariuki Karuga said that in addition to the e-Commerce Booster Program, KEPSA will seek further engagements on the e-Commerce Policy.

“When Covid-19 hit in early 2020, it re-awakened the digital revolution amid lock-downs, curfews and work from home arrangements. Internet usage surged along with online shopping, social media use, virtual meetings and streaming of online content. Business-to-consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) sales spiked for businesses that were able to provide their products/services through online platforms.” Ms Karuga said.

Speaking during the launch, the Cabinet Administrative Secretary Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade & Enterprise Development Mr. David Osiany, who was the chief guest commended KEPSA for rolling out the initiative.

“One of the many key strategies the ministry is putting in place is development of local talents and roll out of government incentives to make end products cheap with the need for ICT to our enterprises becoming even more critical. As the government, appreciate our partners, Trade Mark East AFRICA, European Union and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office or the continued cooperation in this mandate.”

Giving his remarks before the launch of the event, TMEA CEO Frank Matsaert commended KEPSA and reiterated his organization commitment to support businesses in Kenya and the region saying, “COVID-19 has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world and changed how we conduct business, and this is likely to last. By equipping local businesses with the skills for a new world, we will ensure that Kenya and even the region seize opportunities offered by digitalisation as one of the responses to the pandemic recovery.”

TMEA Kenya Country Director, Ahmed Farah HSC, remarked that “E-commerce is now a key complementary sector that will enable industrialisation- one of the government Big 4 Development agenda- to take off. E commerce provides ways of not only marketing but also for businesses to provide the produced goods effectively to the rest of the world. Supporting the private sector to increase its competitiveness is at the core of TMEA work in the country. We believe this combined approach will contribute to the agenda of creation of jobs, improving incomes, fighting poverty”

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## **Additional Information:**

### **About TradeMark East Africa**

TradeMark East Africa is a multi-donor funded, not-for-profit organization, established in 2010 to promote regional trade and prosperity in East Africa. TMEA combines a regional approach with national-level interventions and works closely with East Africa institutions (e.g., East African Community EAC Secretariat, Corridors Authorities), national governments, and private sector and civil society organizations. TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi - Kenya with branches in Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

### **About KEPSA**

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) is the apex body of the private sector in Kenya, established to drive economic development through year on year improvements in the business environment, by addressing cross cutting business issues, driving investments and addressing socio-economic issues with partners. KEPSA brings together business associations, corporate bodies, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups to speak in one voice, working closely with Government and other stakeholders through structured Public Private Dialogue (PPD) platforms and other engagement mechanisms.

For more information on the Foundation, please visit: [www.kepsa.or.ke](http://www.kepsa.or.ke)

### **About Amari Consulting**

Amari Consulting is a leading e-commerce full service agency and consulting firm based in Nairobi, Kenya whose mission is to support African businesses to harness the power of the internet and scale; through Consultancy, Training and Project Management services in E-commerce, Online Branding & Digital Marketing.

For more information on Amari Consulting, please visit: [www.amariconsult.com](http://www.amariconsult.com)