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PRESS RELEASE

TradeMark East Africa, State Dept. of East Africa Community& Busia County Government Launch a Ksh. 37.5 million (US\$350,000) Safe Trade Market in Busia County

25 July 2021 Busia Kenya: TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) and the County Government of Busia have this morning launched construction of a Ksh. 37.5 million Safe Trade Zone at Soko Posta Grounds which were provided by the County Government of Busia. The project is part of TMEA's wider response to the Covid-19 pandemic that has adversely affected cross border traders in the country.

Many traders have had their businesses interrupted, due to mandatory restrictions placed by the Government of Kenya to curb congestion and the spread of the virus. The Safe Trade Market It will minimize disruptions to especially women traders at borders who have been forced to shut down their operations in line with various Covid-19 protocols hence disrupting their once thriving livelihoods.

The project was launched by Principal Secretary in the State Department of East African Community Dr. Kevit Desai and Busia County Governor, H.E. Sospeter Ojaamong. Speaking during the launch Dr. Desai noted the State Department is committed to raise trade in the region from the current 15% to 60%. *"Cross border traders are key to the region attaining the desired levels of inter-regional trade. As a government we are committed to build capacity of cross border traders and facilitate them more. I thank TradeMark E.A and the donors, the EU, Canada and Ireland for the Safe Trade Zones project that is greatly supporting this agenda."* said Desai.

The Busia Safe Trade Zone Market will be constructed and managed in strict compliance of health protocols to ensure trade in them continues without the risk of Covid-19 transmissions to traders, customers and authorities operating within the markets.

The project will be funded by a consortium of donors among them the development agencies of Canada, European Union (EU), Netherlands and Ireland through regional trade agency, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) and is expected to take 4 months to construct and will accommodate 300 traders once completed.

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Speaking during the launch, Governor for Busia County H.E. Sospeter Ojaamong, hailed the project as one that will greatly improve the lot of small-scale traders whose lives have been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“We thank TMEA and her partners for the Busia Safe Zone Market. The market will go a long way in addressing various trade challenges Kasarani women traders have been facing including operating in the open despite the harsh weather conditions” observed the governor.

Jill Clements, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Cooperation, Embassy of Ireland welcomed the continued partnership with TradeMark East Africa focusing on women in trade as part of Ireland’s commitment to gender equality’

TradeMark Country Director for Kenya Ahmed Farah explained that the Busia Safe Trade Zone would enable many small-scale traders continue with their businesses in a safe and hygienic market that observes all Covid19 protocols. *“Whereas the Covid19 pandemic has greatly affected every segment of our economies, the impact among small-scale traders who have to physically carry out their trade has been disproportionate. The Safe Trade Zone we are launching today and other components of Safe Trade Emergency Facility that we have been implementing are geared towards alleviating these interruptions.”* said Ahmed.

The Safe Trade Zones are part of The Safe Trade Emergency Facility (Safe Trade) by TMEA. The US\$23 million program is supporting East African governments mitigate the pandemic’s economic impacts and respond to health risks it poses. Safe Trade interventions are centred on 7 key clusters: **i)** Provision of PPE to critical and frontline operations at ports and borders; **ii)** Technology interventions to keep trade moving (such as the Truck Driver Tracking App; **iii)** Trade Policy Interventions; **iv)** Supply chain support for resilience, relief and recovery in essential goods and exports; **v)** Standards and SPS interventions; **vi)** Advocacy interventions; **vii)** Gender Inclusion and women in trade and Safe Trade Zones.

ENDS...

About TradeMark East Africa (TMEA)

TradeMark (Trade and Markets) East Africa is an aid-for-trade organisation that was established in 2010, with the aim of growing prosperity in East Africa through increased trade. TMEA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by the development agencies of the following countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and United States of America. TMEA works closely with Regional Intergovernmental Organisations, like the East Africa Community, national governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

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The first phase of TMEA (2010-2018) delivered exceptional results which contributed to substantial gains in East Africa's trade and regional integration in terms of reduced cargo transit times, improved border efficiency, and reduced barriers to trade.

We are now in the second phase (2018 - 2023) where we will focus on:

1. Reducing barriers to trade; and
2. Improving business competitiveness.

We believe this will deliver large-scale impact in job creation, poverty reduction and enhanced economic welfare.

TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, with successful operations and offices in EAC (Arusha), Ethiopia (Addis-Ababa), Burundi (Bujumbura), Democratic Republic of Congo (Bukavu), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Djibouti, The Horn (Hargeisa) South Sudan (Juba), Uganda (Kampala), Rwanda (Kigali), Malawi (Lilongwe) and Zambia (Lusaka).

To find out more, please visit our website www.trademarkea.com

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