

## Press Release

### **TradeMark East Africa CEO Frank Matsaert Conferred Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by the Queen of England for Trail Blazing Work in Trade in East Africa**

**Nairobi, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022:** Her Royal Highness the Queen of England has today conferred TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) Chief Executive Officer, Frank Matsaert the Order of the British Empire (MBE) his trail blazing work in Trade and Economic Development in East Africa.

On receiving the news, Frank noted that the award represents the collective work that has been accomplished by working closely with TMEA key stakeholders. *“I am deeply honoured by the Queen and UK Government for this recognition of TradeMark East Africa’s work in supporting trade and economic development in Eastern Africa over the last twelve years. It has been a privilege and an honour to found and lead such a dynamic and impactful organisation.”*

As the founding CEO of TMEA, Mr. Matsaert, has steered the organisation to grow from a modest budget of US\$ 42 million in 2010 to approximately US\$1.2Billion by April this year. The organisation has experienced robust growth over the decade to become the leading Aid for Trade agency globally, with remarkable results in reducing the time and costs of trading across EAC; through investments at the Port of Mombasa, 15 completed One Stop Border Posts across the EAC region, Customs systems at Uganda Revenue Authority, Kenya Revenue Authority, Burundi Revenue Authority and Rwanda Revenue Authority. Mr. Matsaert’s vision has led TMEA to partner with governments across the region to lay the building blocks for a digital trade and transport corridor. Starting out in only 5 countries in East Africa, TMEA has grown to spread her footprint to a total of thirteen countries, as it spread her operations towards the Horn and South African region. Already plans are underway for the organisation to launch operations in West Africa following a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union to support among other areas the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The organisation is credited to have among others, contributed to growth of intraregional exports by about 25%; 16.5% reduction of time to transport a container from the Ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam to Burundi or Rwanda, 10% rise in the value of exports from the region and reduction of time to cross select borders across East Africa by an average of 70%.

An independent evaluation by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom released in 2019 found out that TMEA Interventions had reduced trade costs along East African trade corridors by US\$ 115.9 million in 2017 alone, expecting the figure to accrue many times cumulatively. Frank noted, *“I am indebted to our excellent team, and partners across Eastern Africa, without whom none of the results we have generated for millions of people would have been possible. Sincere thanks also to our excellent Board and Council for their guidance, and to our donors for their unwavering support on growing prosperity through trade in Africa.”*

**ENDS**

**Notes:**

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2. **About TradeMark East Africa**

TradeMark (**T**rade and **M**arkets) 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, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, United States of America as well as the European Union. TMEA works closely with Regional Intergovernmental Organisations, like the East Africa Community, national governments, the private sector and civil society organisations. The first phase of TMEA (2010-2017) delivered results which contributed to gains in East Africa's trade and regional integration in terms of reduced cargo transit times, improved border efficiency, and reduced barriers to trade. TMEA has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, with operations and offices in EAC-Arusha, Burundi (Bujumbura), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Democratic Republic of Congo (Bukavu), Ethiopia (Addis-Ababa), Malawi, Zambia, South Sudan, Uganda (Kampala) and Rwanda (Kigali). To find out more, please visit our website [www.trademarkea.com](http://www.trademarkea.com)