

PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING THE 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WESTERN KENYA BRANCH

Members of the Federation of Kenya Employers,

Members of the Press

The Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), Western Kenya Branch held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 21st April 2021 to highlight some of the issues that employers have grappled with for the period 2019- 2020.

The AGM was held under the theme, "Covid -19 and the World of Work." Mrs. Hellen Apiyo the Ag. Labour Commissioner, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, gave a keynote address centred on industry experience on managing enterprises in this complex business environment.

STATE OF ENTERPRISES IN WESTERN KENYA

In the discussions, a significant growth of enterprises was noted attributed to the refurbishment of the Port, opening of retail stores like the Game Store, new industries like the Sugar Factory in Busia and Migori, a new medical facility and manufacturing of iron among others.

However, enterprise performance has been adversely affected by political instability and power interruptions. The region decried the dwindling prospects of the Sugar Industry which has been the main economic activity in the region.

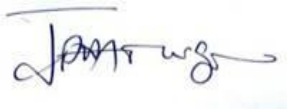
PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

To support the region, members seek government intervention in form of fiscal stimulus package for all businesses especially for business sectors heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This may include temporary reduction of Corporate Taxes, zero-rating of essential supplies, reduction or scrapping of excise duties and Minimum Tax and reduction of PAYE to prevent layoffs and enable businesses to improve their employee benefits during the crisis.

Western Kenya Region needs to tap into the opportunity that the East Africa Community presents through cross border trade. We call upon enterprises in Western Kenya Region to harness the potential of the small scale informal cross border trades to promote growth. The government should support economic opportunities and linkages through Busia- Kampala and Mwanza for more markets for our products and skills transfer.

In view of the challenges that arose from the pandemic, FKE wishes to highlight that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is still valid and that Unions and Employers should rely on the MOU and respect the spirit of Social Dialogue in managing labour and employment issues.

As per His Excellency the President's directive, The Federation of Kenya Employers notes that all Social Partners, including enterprises should work together to develop and implement response measures to the COVID-19 crisis both innovatively and constructively. This is the time for businesses to build resilience but that can only happen with the required support to ensure a stable business and economic environment.



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