



## Government is a partner, not a sponsor - Lopes tells private sector

Lusaka, Zambia, 25 June 2015 (ECA) - We need a proactive and creative public sector says ECA Executive Secretary Carlos Lopes. Speaking at a private sector event in Lusaka last night, Lopes said Africa's private sector needed to be proactive by initiating, engaging and advising government. "We need a proactive and engaging private sector to advise government on the direction of policy based on prevailing and future trends." He said that the role of the state was to create enabling conditions for business and not to generate funds and ideas. "Government is a partner and not a sponsor, the private sector needs to understand this" Said Lopes who echoed the importance of the private sector in development "The private sector is the engine for economic development, we need a creative public sector that can see ahead and provide the leadership to government."

On their part, the private sector said lack of predictability by government was costing them business "One of our major challenges of doing business here in Zambia is government unpredictability, there is no way of knowing what government is going to do or thinking at any given time, such an environment is costly for business" said Zambia Association of Manufacturers Chairperson, Mr. Bright Chunga calling for predictability.

Mr. Chunga also called for harmonization of policies stating that the current environment involved duplication of processes across public institutions "I have to go through eleven export clearance check points from different ministries, all of them asking for the same documents" he bemoaned.

Earlier, Lopes met with the Ministers of Finance, Agriculture, Commerce and high-level officials from ministries of Mining and Transportation discussing extensively on value chains, agro processing, land administration and natural resource management.

The recurring theme over and over was value chains, the need for countries to identify fewer and specific commodities to master their value chains. The central theme in all discussions evolved around youth and jobs; how to create wealth and jobs for young people who are most hit by unemployment. The age group 0-45 years constitute 90 percent of Zambia's population.

Mr. Lopes also toured the Lusaka South Multi-Facility Economic Zone, a 2000 hecta facility developed by the Zambian government providing infrastructure including roads, electricity, water and solid waste to enable the private sector set up industries and enterprises. The facility has five phases of development and is expected to be fully developed within a 30 year time plan. As of March 2015, 11 investment proposals totaling USD120.5 million have been approved from a total of 125 applications.

Mr. Lopes toured several projects including the USD32.6m Zambian Breweries plant, which will

be producing malt from barley. It is expected to employ 35,000 people along the value chain when completed. The economic zone also has a national park currently home to 500 animals including four rhinos, and plenty of giraffes, impalas and Zebras.

In concluding the two-day official visit, Mr. Lopes held a one-hour live television interview with MUVI TV, Zambia's biggest private television station. He made a case for continental free trade and urged Africans to pat their own back and tell their own story. Over 30 reporters were present during the live broadcast.

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