



THE KENYA- DRC TRADE MISSION COMES TO AN END AFTER FOUR CITIES WITH THE CONCLUSION OF THE MBUJI-MAYI LEG

- *The 15-day Trade Mission attracted investors, entrepreneurs and SMEs who interacted through business forums, networking and matchmaking sessions and business site visits in all 4 cities.*
- *The events began in Kinshasa on 29th November and thereafter moved to Lubumbashi and Goma and finally ending in Mbuji-Mayi on 13th December.*
- *The Kenya-DRC Trade mission was a collaboration between the Government of Kenya, the Government of DRC and was facilitated by Equity Group*

Mbuji-Mayi 21st December 2021... H.E Jeanette Musuamba, Governor Kasai Oriental Province hailed the Kenya-DRC Trade Mission as a milestone for development and praised the choice of Mbuji-Mayi as the final leg of an initiative where entrepreneurs and business owners were able to showcase the investment opportunities in the Great Kasai Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Governor was speaking at the official opening of the final leg of the Kenya-DRC Trade Mission held in Mbuji-Mayi town, some 1,600 kilometers northwest of the capital Kinshasa, where the first meeting took place on 29 November.

“It is an honour to welcome you to the Great Kasai region. We express our gratitude for your delegation’s arrival. This is a historic moment. The Trade Mission shows that Kasai has potential and has given our people hope that together we can explore avenues for business development. EquityBCDC's decision to choose Mbuji-Mayi as the final stop for the Trade Mission is a clear indication that the Bank is a great catalyst of development in the Great Kasai region,” she said.

The visit to Mbuji-Mayi by the delegates from Kenya and DRC was a culmination of a bilateral agreement signed by President H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and his counterpart President H.E. Felix Tshisekedi of the DRC in April 2021 to create closer ties between the two countries, particularly along the issues of trade, manufacturing, and agriculture. The MOU was signed during a State visit of the Kenya President to the DRC, where he also commissioned the opening of the EquityBCDC tower in Kinshasa.

Governor Musuamba shared a comprehensive profile of the province in Central DRC that has the longest section of the mighty Congo River, illustrating the opportunities for investment that exist in infrastructure development, agriculture, mining, tourism, energy, internet connectivity, water utilities and other sectors.

“With a population of 55 million people whose average age is 20 years old, employment can be created by stimulating production through consumption. We have a tropical climate that is conducive to farming. Most of our land is arable. Among crops that can be grown here are cassava, corn, soya, peanuts, sweet potatoes, and fruits like pineapples, papaya, and avocados. With the adequate arable land and two rainy seasons, farming potential in Great Kasai can enable DRC to achieve food self-sufficiency,” she said.

Beyond agriculture is mining of diamonds, iron, gold, cobalt, and other minerals, which provides a lucrative investment opportunity. “Serious exploitation can be explored for processing diamonds and other minerals at an industrial level. We also have massive deposits of construction materials like sand and granite, which exists in many areas,” said the Governor adding that the demand for suitable housing remains insatiable.



However, said the Governor, these opportunities come with challenges. She cited transport and reliable energy as needs and urged investors from both the DRC and Kenyan entrepreneurs to work with EquityBCDC (the DRC subsidiary of Equity Group Holdings) that has already established itself as the largest financial institution in the province, despite the challenges.

“To invest, be ready to tackle challenges. There is the challenge of electricity or more particularly lack of it and poor roads that inhibit transport to and out of this province. These challenges are not insurmountable given the benefits that are certain upon investment,” said H.E Dieudonne Piemme, Governor Kasai Province.

“By partnering together, we can solve challenges that affect the African continent including hunger, health issues and poverty by allowing businesses to be the driving force for continental change. This is the first time that businessmen and women of our two great nations have come together to purposefully explore business opportunities,” said Equity Group Chief Commercial Officer, Polycarp Igathe, as he implored delegates to take advantage of the physical attendance of the meeting by the Kenyan delegates to connect.

To reciprocate the visit of Kenyan entrepreneurs to the DRC, Equity is looking forward to hosting DRC business leaders on a similar mission to the Kenyan cities of Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu in early 2022 to seek cross border opportunities for investment for the benefit of developing the two countries.

Kenya’s Ambassador to the DRC, Ambassador George Masafu said, “The mission by the Kenya Government to the DRC, in partnership with Equity Group was not in vain and indeed, the meeting in Mbuji-Mayi was a turning point for Kenya and the DRC. The trade mission was a labour of love that seeks to fulfill the objective of President Kenyatta’s bilateral agreement signed in April, putting words into action for our two great nations.” He added, “A political goodwill was built when President Uhuru Kenyatta and President Felix Tshisekedi shook hands in April this year. The political goodwill by our two presidents is fueling interest and growth for business opportunities in the DRC and by working together, we set pace for other African countries to partner with DRC,” said Amb. Masafu.

EquityBCDC Managing Director, Celestin Mukeba said, “This Trade Mission was organized with the sole purpose of unlocking trade, tourism and investment opportunities in DRC and this is already bearing fruit. Equity’s vision and mission is to transform lives and livelihoods, and to give dignity through wealth creation. It is in this vein of expanding wealth that Equity has brought more than 300 Kenyans to DRC in four cities for networking and matchmaking.” Celestin urged the investors to tap into the USD5 billion availed to companies and small and medium sized enterprises by Equity, as part of efforts to integrate the region through trade and investments. “We want the DRC to be the first to utilize the liquidity that Equity has to resolve mammoth challenges in energy, food security and mining,” said Mukeba. He added, “Remember development cannot happen unless people synergize with the government, especially for infrastructure. For the private sector it is important to tap into the opportunities.”

The Kenya-DRC Trade Mission 2021, a partnership between the Government of Kenya, the Government of the DRC and Equity Group Holdings saw cumulatively over 300 Kenyan investors and business people visit DRC and a delegation of over 7,000 attend the conferences and business networking sessions across the four cities

About Equity Group Holdings, Plc:

Equity Group Holdings (EGHL), is a Pan-African financial services holding company listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange, Uganda Securities Exchange, and Rwanda Stock Exchange. The Group has banking subsidiaries in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and DRC



and a representative office in Ethiopia. It has other subsidiaries in investment banking, insurance, telecom, fintech and social impact investments.

Equity Group is the largest bank in the region in assets of Kshs 1.2 trillion (USD 12 billion). It is also the biggest bank in deposits, market capitalization of USD 2billion and with a customer base of over 15 million customers. The Group has a footprint of 337 branches, 56,772 Agents, 32,269 Merchants, 697 ATMs and an extensive adoption of digital banking channel.

The Banker Top 1000 World Banks 2021 ranked Equity Bank 761 overall in its global ranking, 149th in soundness (Capital Assets to Assets ratio), 71st in terms of Profits on Capital and 39th on Return on Assets. The Banker's Top 100 African Banks 2020 placed the Bank in position 7 overall among the top 10 Banks in Africa, 5th place on soundness, position 9 on growth performance, 8th on return on risk and position 6th in terms of profitability and on leverage category.

In the same year, Moody's gave the Bank a global rating of B2 with a negative outlook same as the sovereign rating of the Kenyan government due to the Bank's strong brand recognition, solid liquidity buffers and resilient funding profile, established domestic franchise and extensive adoption of digital and alternative distribution channels.

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