

Kenya needs business reforms for SMEs

Small businesses should not hesitate to report any policy issues that may be putting them at a disadvantage in the market, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) has said.



Carole Kariuki

According to the lobby group, the dialogue between the private sector and government has improved significantly, providing more cooperation, which is essential in improving the business environment.

“We have seen an increase in the level of transparency and the speed with which state agencies communicate changes to regulations that impact the private sector,” KEPSA chief executive officer Carole Kariuki told the Oxford Business Group in an interview.

However, Kariuki said there is still much work to be done to improve the business environment.

She said they are focusing to influence reforms on the most pressing issues such as the number of procedures for starting a business, transaction costs and delays related to acquiring construction permits.

Other problems that KEPSA is hoping to address include reducing the time taken to resolve commercial disputes and fast tracking the implementation of the National Single Electronic Window System, which aims to facilitate trade with other East African states.

“Lengthy downtime on the e-citizen government portal means that there is an opportunity for government to improve on its ICT infrastructure. All these issues together with strengthening areas where we have registered reforms are where we are focusing our efforts at the moment,” Kariuki said.

She said they expect to see significant progress in addressing these challenges. “We are also working together with the government in its anti-corruption efforts, as we know that the perception of corruption, as well as corruption itself, is a

significant obstacle in Kenya,” she said.

Kariuki said one solution for curbing corruption is the automation of procedures and the gradual movement towards e-government services and implementing a one-stop-shop for investors.

“The government has made great strides in this regard. The one-stop-shop especially should improve the business climate in the country by ensuring that procedures will be simple and efficient. Where compliance is simple, straightforward and inexpensive, everyone is better off,” she said.

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