

## Mr Keli Kiilu's Speech

### **East African Business Council Vice-Chairman**

Good evening Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman.

It is my great pleasure to welcome to the first ever Bank M East African CSR Awards 2010. This ceremony marks a momentous occasion in our region's history.

East Africa's private sector over the last 10 years has grown at strong rates, even despite the recent challenges of the global financial crises and climatic effects such as droughts and water shortages that have hit our region. The resilience of our private sector to continue operating and contributing to the economy is testimony to the strength of businesses. Indeed, East African businesses have continued to increase their investment in community projects, employee welfare, and environmental stewardship.

Over the years, we have seen a shift in these investments from ad hoc and isolated donations, to grant giving which involves company employees, serves a broader business benefit and is more integrated in the company.

As Vice-Chairman of the East African Business Council, we are proud to be part of this change and to be encouraging this positive mindset in business. It is EABC's mission to foster an enabling business environment for a sustainable and competitive economy. And we believe in the power of the private sector to be a positive driving force for sustainable development and growth.

Businesses have always been an integral part of the fabric of our society. Not only does the private sector provide taxes, but also employment and is a driving force behind poverty alleviation. No country or region has developed and lifted itself out of poverty without a thriving private sector. If businesses ensure that they operate responsibly and ethically within their own operations and begin to address development challenges outside of their company gates, businesses can play a very strong and positive role.

This event gives us the opportunity to recognise the private sector's contribution to our society. It gives us an opportunity to learn from each other and share best practice across the region so that better business practices can be encouraged and implemented.

Even in its first year, we received a high number of entries, around 40, which were then shortlisted down to 22 entries. The variety we received reflects the growing and more sophisticated nature of corporate social responsibility, going beyond detached philanthropy to strategic responsibility and stewardship.

And now, before I hand you back to our Master of Ceremonies, I want to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to my fellow judges. These individuals have drawn on their significant experience and given their time to select tonight's worthy winners.

Dr Judy Muthuri, Lecturer at the International Centre for CSR, Nottingham Business School, Ms Jane Nelson, Senior Fellow and Director of the CSR Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School, Mr Stephen Kenzie, Senior Programme Manager for the International Business Leaders Forum, Dr William Kalema, Country Managing Director of BDO East African Advisory Services, and last but not least, Mr

Elvis Musiba, a founding member of EABC, the Tanzanian Private Sector Foundation and the Tanzanian National Business Council, and tonight's chairman of the Bank M East African CSR Awards secretariat.

I thank you.