ABEC

AFRICA BUSINESS ETHICS CONFERENCE

Africa Business Ethics CONFERENCE 2021

CONCEPT NOTE

BUSINESS ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY; A CASE FOR SELF-REGULATION

DECEMBER 7TH - 8TH 2021 | NAIROBI, KENYA

Conference Background

Group Photo- stakeholders during the ABEC 2019 conference held in June 25th&26th 2019 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi Kenya

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The Africa Business Ethics Conference (ABEC) is a business-community-led global forum for convening a broad stakeholder group that for the first time includes the private sector in Africa to address the complex and peculiar challenges posed by corruption in the host country and in the region. ABEC takes place annually in one African country convening global and regional experts, civil society, the media, and policy makers along with the organized private sector.

The first ever regional Africa Business Ethics Conference was held on June 25th - 26th 2019 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi Kenya. It was hosted jointly by Milestones Resource Solutions (MRS), Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI). The theme of the conference was, *'Best Practice for Better Business; The role of the Private Sector in Promoting Transparency & Accountability'*. The event was sponsored by CIPE, Adrian Kenya, The Blue Company, CPF Financial Services, Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) and The Standard Group.

Ms. Fatma El-Maawy, MD Milestones Resource Solutions speaking during the ABEC 2019 conference held from 25th-26th June2019 at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi Kenya.

The goal was to bring together members of the private sector, government, media and the civil society to discuss practical solutions for the private sector in Africa to combat corruption and explore opportunities for collaboration with a view of the private sector taking a lead role. This was part of the ongoing efforts around the Ouagadougou Declaration, developed in partnership with the World Movement for Democracy and the US Chamber of Commerce.

ABEC 2019 brought together over 222 delegates; 116 women and 106 men. Six Countries were represented at the conference including; Kenya, United States of America (USA), Nigeria, Zimbabwe, France and Mauritius. The Government of Kenya (GoK) was well represented by government agencies including the office of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) and the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK).

The participants included representatives of important decision-making bodies such as the civil society, development partners, religious organizations, academia, private sector advocacy bodies such as KEPSA and KNCCI as well as individual business owners including small and medium enterprises (SME's).

Some of the key topics at the conference were, among others: Private sector, the unexplored key to reducing graft and corruption; The role of media in the fight against corruption; Strengthening Legal & Regulatory frameworks in Africa to embolden the fight against corruption; and Political, social, and Economic advantages of a successful fight against corruption.

The key outcome from ABEC 2019 was to raise standards of business practice for efficiency to drive cross-border trade, business growth, economic stability, and sustainability of SMEs. The conference also sought to reduce business and financial risk among enterprises and make Africa an attractive destination for foreign direct investment.

The private sector was mobilized to play its role in creating ethical enterprises, forging partnerships with the public sector in eradicating graft, and liaising with global anti-corruption agencies for benchmarking on the best anti-corruption practices. The platform further created an opportunity for CIPE to launch the *"Ethics First Initiative in Kenya"* that aims to create awareness on the ethical risks of corruption on businesses.

The conference rallying call was given by Kenya's Central Bank Governor Dr. Patrick Njoroge who gave a good example of people that advertise the institutions as corruption free zones but on the contrary, the people working in those places are the most corrupt.

Lastly, Dr. Njoroge noted that corruption has become a well-paying profession, so how do we turn it around? He quoted a book, ***That Used to Be Us,*** where Thomas Friedman offers, *"we can write a happy ending, but it is up to the country-to all of us- to determine whether it is fiction or nonfiction."*

ABEC 2021 Conference Overview

Dr. Patrick Njoroge, Central Bank of Kenya Governor (6th from left) poses for a group photo with participants during the ABEC 2019 conference held from 25th-26th June 2019 at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi Kenya.

This year, ABEC 2021 will take place in Nairobi Kenya from 7th – 8th December, 2021 and the theme will be Business Ethics & Sustainability; A Case for Self-Regulation. The conference will take place prior to the International Anti- Corruption Day and will be a hybrid event that will allow both in person and virtual participation.

Although the ongoing efforts to fight corruption in Kenya are to be applauded, they are however still nascent as it was noted during the conference that 'Corruption is at the vanguard of development in Kenya causing distrust in the business environment, unequal economic opportunity and affects the health of citizens. Further, corruption leads to high costs of living e.g. providing education to citizens as well as leads to unemployment that in turn leads to increased crime rate and insecurity/ instability.

Therefore, building on the strong foundation and gains of ABEC 2019, and recognizing the need for sustainable behavior change in the business sector so as to entrench a culture of Ethics & Integrity, the partners; Milestones Resource Solutions (MRS), Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), KEPSA Foundation- Multi-Sectoral Forum (MSF), Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI) and Blue Company will together hold ABEC 2021.

The event organizers for this ABEC 2021Conference will be Wezesha Biashara Network.

The conference will focus on the following objectives:

- Provide information and practical tools on successful business solutions to reduce corruption and promote self-regulation.
- Highlight the importance of ethics and integrity in developing economic opportunity.
- Provide a platform for constructive dialogue and engagement towards greater responsible business engagement and practice in delivering SDG 16: promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.
- Provide business and networking opportunities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- An open conversation about corruption by both the private sector and government.
- A collective action by the private sector through Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) to self - regulate.
- A commitment by the private sector to build capacity on business ethics and integrity through training.

CONFERENCE FORMAT:

ABEC 2021 will be a two day hybrid event that will discuss Business Ethics & Sustainability: A Case for Self-Regulation through plenary and panel discussions with key local and international Anti-corruption experts, civil society, private sector, development partners and government.

The conference will feature side sessions that will bring out perspectives on public - private sector sessions as well as exhibitions to showcase innovative ideas. It will also feature and award exemplary companies small or big that have endorsed the Ethics 1st model.

Ms. Lola Adekanye- Senior Program Officer, Africa, Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)makes her remarks during a panel discussion at the ABEC 2019 conference held from 25th-26th June 2019 at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi Kenya

Session Topics

01	THE STATUS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION SINCE ABEC 2019
02	PRESENTATION OF THE 2ND CORRUPTION RISK MAPPING REPORT
03	ROLE OF BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS (BMOS) AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS) IN SELF-REGULATION
04	THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN COMBATING CORRUPTION IN STATE AGENCIES AND SUPPORTING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SELF REGULATE
05	MEDIA AND SOCIETY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION
06	ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE: A FOCUS ON THE ANTI-BRIBERY ACT, ITS DRAFT REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES
07	ETHICS 1ST- A ROADMAP TO COMPLIANCE CAPACITY FOR BUSINESS
08	BEYOND COVID-19: HOW TO MITIGATE CORRUPTION IN A PANDEMIC
09	MAINSTREAMING YOUTH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION
10	BENEFICIAL OWNERS' TRANSPARENCY
11	CORROSIVE CAPITAL VS CONSTRUCTIVE CAPITAL
12	LEVERAGING ON TECHNOLOGY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION; A TOOLKIT FOR BUSINESSES

The conference will be addressed by leading authorities, thought leaders from across the globe and high-ranking officials/representatives from government, business leaders, development partners, the youth and the media among others through a mix of keynote addresses, break-out sessions and panel discussions.

ABEC 2021 will provide immense opportunities for sponsors to position themselves as key influential business and thought leaders in Africa on business ethics. Moreover, sponsors will get networking opportunities that will generate new leads as well as get an opportunity to showcase their latest products, innovations and solutions to an industry that is eager to learn.