

EMRC International partners with Swiss African Business Circle for Africa Finance & Investment Forum

EMRC International and the **Swiss Africa Business Circle (SABC)** announce partnership for the annual **Africa Finance & Investment Forum (AFIF)**, which is to be organised in close collaboration with the **IFC, World Bank** and will focus on "Trade for Growth and Development", held from 13-14 June 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.

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"Switzerland's main trading partners in Africa are South Africa, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Morocco and Tunisia," explains **Michael Rheinegger, Managing Director Swiss-African Business Circle (SABC)**. "According to different studies and our own research, we estimate that around 20% of all Swiss companies with international business activities are doing business in/with Africa," Rheinegger adds to highlight the significance of the partnership with EMRC for AFIF2013.

The partnership will offer participants the opportunity to have access to business leaders from Africa and Europe and gain direct talk-time with leading bankers, financial experts and private sector directors so that real tangible business and trade opportunities are forged during the forum.



Rheinegger also adds that AFIF2013 will allow SABC to "increase its visibility amongst African entrepreneurs, European multinationals and financial investors interested in doing business in/with Africa." He notes that in 2011 Swiss companies employed a workforce of 116'967 people in Africa (up 11% from 2010). Whilst still most of the companies are focusing on the biggest single markets/countries, these markets are more and more also used as hubs for a regional market penetration.

The Forum's focus on trade this year is in parallel with the international community's view that regional trade is indispensable for the long-term sustainable economic growth of sub-Saharan Africa. Geneva, known as one of the world's financial centers and home of the UN in Europe, will provide the appropriate international back-drop for participants coming from across Africa, Europe, Asia and America.

"Europe and Africa have always had important ties and today these ties are moving towards private sector collaboration. AFIF2013 will provide a platform to gain access to leading figures involved in the trade between both continents and provide in-depth analysis of the current and future trends," says **Inês Bastos**, Senior Programme Manager at **EMRC International**.

According to SABC, "despite an increase in competition due to e.g. China, we are convinced that business relations between the two continents will increase, this also partially due to the ongoing crisis in Europe and due to other traditional Swiss export markets. We also hope that the discussion in Europe will turn away from the too strong development

cooperation focus, and concentrate more on the promotion of mutually benefiting business partnerships of European and African companies (especially SMEs)."

Government representatives, experts, business leaders, entrepreneurs and civil society will be represented at the highest level and concrete measures will be proposed for Africa's SMEs with a particular focus on finance and sustainability.

A **pre-forum training** will be held from **11-12 June 2013**, focusing on '*Creating and presenting a business plan to potent investors*', followed by two days of interactive plenary sessions and B2B meetings. The training session is addressed to a limited group of participants with either ongoing businesses or well structured ideas wishing to find financing and other support for their projects. Plenary sessions will focus on *Financial Programmes to Promote Trade Relations, Boosting Trade through Entrepreneurship - Building Export Capacities, Agriculture Trade Finance, Technology Transfer & Innovation*.

With an expected 250 participants attending, the Forum will also provide business-to-business (**B2B**) meetings which are tailor-made to ensure maximum business partnership success. Previous forums have seen over 1,000 of these meetings set up over a 2-day period. In addition, the international media will spotlight the various speakers and interview a select group of participants to highlight regional and local business ideas and trends.

Interested participants are urged to contact EMRC International and book a place for AFIF 2013. Please contact info@emrc.be.

For more information about partnership and speaking opportunities, please contact **Inês Bastos** at ib@emrc.be or visit www.emrc.be.

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About EMRC

Established in 1992 in Brussels, EMRC is a non-profit International Association composed of a network of entrepreneurs, financiers, consultants and officials based throughout the world. EMRC's mission is to lead the private sector in Africa to sustainable economic development and to drive regional change via partnerships.

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About SABC

The Swiss-African Business Circle (SABC), a business-to-business association, is the indispensable partner for business contacts and links between Switzerland and Africa. It provides to its members - all already successfully active in Africa - a efficient and accessible organisation, top quality services and an influential network to promote their own interests.

About AFIF

The Africa Finance & Investment Forum (AFIF) is an annual business event organized in the framework of EMRC International's activities, aimed at strengthening the private sector in Africa, encouraging entrepreneurship and attracting investment to the African continent. AFIF has a double objective: to strengthen the financial capacities of Africa's private sector and to promote the creation of new partnerships through the encouragement of joint projects and trade relations North-South & South-South.

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