

EAC on right industrial path, says Sezibera

By **SAMUEL SANYA**

East African Community (EAC) states registered marginal growth in industry in 2012, but experts have tipped the sector to do better this year with increased energy supply and improved infrastructure.

Ambassador Richard Sezibera, the EAC secretary general, noted that collaborative efforts between governments in the region with the private sector are necessary to bring down costs of production, making goods and services competitive on the global markets.

"I am glad that several projects aimed at building a reliable transport and power supply capacity across the region are currently underway," Sezibera said at a luncheon at the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) show grounds in Kampala.

"I am also glad to inform you that the EAC has a Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan of Action for 2012-2016, which guides the partner states towards evolving an efficient and effective pharmaceutical manufacturing industry," he added.

The action plan sets out approaches for production and distribution affordable drugs for HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases

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and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

Rwanda had the highest per capita spend on health in 2010 at \$48 (sh127,200) per person each year, closely followed by Uganda at \$43, with Kenya and Tanzania spending \$33 and \$25 per person respectively.

The US has the highest per capita spend on health at \$8,362 (sh22m) per person each year, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) data. Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan,

and Qatar spend only \$4 (sh10,600) per person each year.

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Sezibera said EAC partner states are expected to come up with strategies for formalising the inter-agency approach at the EAC regional level to establish a legal and regulatory framework for the protection of intellectual property and the elimination of counterfeit products.

He noted that manufacturing offers a wide range of opportunities in the EAC partner states and that heads of states across the region have expressed commitment to the development of the sector through promotion of micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

Burundi registered the highest share of contribution to GDP by industry at 13.4% in 2011, up from 12.8% the previous year, with Uganda registering an 8.5% jump from 7.6% in 2010.

Sezibera said local manufacturers should take advantage of opportunities in the pharmaceutical, beverage, vehicle spare-parts production and assembling as the EAC integrates deeper.