

VP Touray: Gov't believes in private sector led growth

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Dr. Isatou Touray, vice president of The Republic of The Gambia has said that they firmly believe in private sector led growth and as such will implement recommendations made at the policy implementation forum on “Supporting Micro Small and Medium Size Enterprises (MSMEs) in the post covid-19 era promoting MSME formalisation.

VP Touray who made these remarks on Monday at the Sir DawdaKairabaJawara International Conference Centre added that they will do what is necessary in implementation under the leadership of The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment organised the formalisation forum with support from Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSDG/DESA) and United Nations Development Programme.

She added that as a country, we made a commitment to support the development of the MSME eco-system in recognition of the very important role of MSMEs as main drivers of economic growth.

“In The Gambia, MSMEs contribute approximately 20% of our GDP; thus, as a government we recognize the significant contribution and untapped potential of MSMEs to our economy”, she also said.

She pointed out that the MSME sector has been particularly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, noting that recent assessments have shown a significant drop in revenue for these enterprises with some closed altogether, especially the sole proprietorships.

She further said that whilst government has taken some measures, it is important that ‘we take sustained actions to get the MSMEs back on track, which is a must if the Gambian economy is to rebound.’

Dr Touray further said that government is steadfastly working on developing and consolidating the MSME Eco-System, adding that the formalisation of the MSME sub-sector is key in this regard.

“I anticipate and hope this forum will come up with concrete recommendations which will inform the re-designing of a more business friendly regulatory environment for MSMEs to thrive in order to create employment and wealth within The Gambia”, she added.

She also said that they will work with partners to syndicate and speed up the reform processes for the formalisation of businesses across The Gambia.

Seedy Keita, Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment assured the private sector of his ministry’s mandate and commitment to continuously work towards improving the business environment.

He added that The Gambian economy is characterised by a dominance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged across all sectors.

However, he said with the limited employment opportunities available in the public sector, coupled with weather-related shocks in the productive sectors such as agriculture, a growing number of Gambians are turning to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector for employment and daily livelihood.

He noted that increasingly MSMEs could play a very important role in the economy of The Gambia, not just as a source of gainful employment but also as a major contributor to economic growth, a deciding factor for economic diversification and transformation hence become a powerful driving force for innovation and a deciding factor for domestic investment in the long term.

He also said that MSMEs help reduce poverty by creating jobs for the country’s growing labour force particularly youth and women.

He said the Nationwide MSME Mapping Study conducted in 2018 gives an estimated total of 115,680 MSMEs in the country; of which over 90% operate as sole proprietorships. Over 77% of the said sole proprietors are unregistered making them informal and largely invisible. The same MSME Mapping 2018 estimates that formal MSMEs contribute up to 26% of total employment and up to 20% of GDP; the numbers would surely increase when MSMEs in the informal sector are included.

He also said that we must all recognise the need to create the enabling environment to support MSMEs formalisation for a sustainable economic growth and development.