Business leaders want EAC govts to own digital tax stamp systems

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Business leaders under the East African Business Council (EABC) have called on East African Community (EAC) governments to rethink the structure and management of digital tax stamp systems across the region.

The call forms part of the resolutions adopted during the East African Business and Investment Summit & Expo 2026, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from February 24 to 25, and attended by more than 450 delegates drawn from government and the private sector. In a statement issued yesterday, EABC said that among the key resolutions, delegates had urged revenue authorities across East Africa to explore ownership of digital tax stamp systems as a way of strengthening revenue administration and improving market oversight.

"Revenue authorities should explore ownership of digital tax stamp systems. Digitalization of the digital tax stamps systems with greater ownership will result in effective monitoring of revenue and improved tracking and traceability of products in the market," the resolution signed by the EAC Council of Ministers, Beatrice Askul Moe, chairperson, and John Lual Akol Akol, Chairperson of the East African Business Councils, reads in part. Beyond ownership, delegates resolved that EAC partner states should adopt a unified regional track-and-trace system to enable interoperability and traceability of goods across the region, emphasizing that a harmonized framework would enhance cross-border trade, reduce duplication, and strengthen efforts to combat illicit trade.

The Summit also called on revenue authorities in EAC partner states to explore opportunities to reduce digital tax stamps-related costs in order to enhance compliance among manufacturers and traders of excisable goods and improve the sustainability of the system.

Delegates noted that lowering compliance costs would promote voluntary adherence while safeguarding industrial competitiveness.

In addition, delegates urged broader public engagement in the design and development of digital tax stamp systems and related technologies, recommending the inclusion of the private sector to create a win-win situation for both public and private actors.

They stressed that collaborative system development would ensure practicality, transparency, and shared ownership of reform outcomes. Participants further urged EAC governments to leverage gains from existing regional initiatives such as the Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System, noting that by building on these frameworks, partner states could develop coordinated regional systems that combat cross-border illicit trade while facilitating legitimate commerce.

The call reflects growing recognition that digital tax stamp systems as strategic trade and revenue infrastructure that would enhance transparency, reduce dependency on third-party operators, and improve long-term sustainability of the systems.

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