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Tanzania vice president refutes resignation claims : Tanzania has refuted reports that Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan has resigned. In a statement to newsroom, the VP's office said contrary to social media reports, Ms Hassan will continue to assist President John Magufuli in serving the citizens. "The reports which went viral on social media are not true; those who fabricated them want to create tension among the citizens," read part of the statement. [Monitor Correspondent]



Economic competition delaying EAC integration - Kenya MPs

Advice. East Africa Community (EAC) member states asked to address issue of the economic status of the countries to speed up integration.

BY KENNEDY OKWACH
Monitor Correspondent

NAIROBI. Fear of economic competition among East Africa Community countries is one of the barriers to regional integration.

Members of the Kenya National Assembly committee on regional integration said some countries in the region are at a "lower production level" than others.

The committee's vice-chairman, Christopher Nakuleu, said the East

Africa Community (EAC) member states need to address the issue of the economic status of the countries to speed up integration.

"Before the integration was introduced, countries were operating on different production levels. For instance, the GDP of Burundi is 11 times less than [that of] Kenya. This disparity poses a major challenge," Mr Nakuleu said.

They observed that past perceptions that led to the collapse of the EAC in 1977 have also contributed to lack of commitment to the integration among some member states.

"[The] reintroduction of [the] East Africa Community was meant to encourage competitiveness among member states. This will not only im-

prove regional economy but foster unity," said the Turkana North MP.

The committee members also accused some countries of derailing regional incorporation by failing to implement some projects.

They said Kenya is lagging behind

"Before the integration was introduced, countries were operating on different production levels. For instance, the GDP of Burundi is 11 times less than [that of] Kenya. This disparity poses a major challenge,"

CHRISTOPHER NAKULEU, TURKANA NORTH MP.

in putting up some structures to facilitate integration, saying Uganda has completed similar projects.

The committee members were inspecting the implementation of cross-border projects on the Kenya-Uganda border.

Kisumu County Woman Representative Rose Nyamunga challenged member states to educate their citizens on the benefits of integration.

"There are challenges that are yet to be fully addressed like insecurity. Citizens of most EAC countries are yet to fully embrace the integration due to fear of [the] unknown," he said

Other MPs present included David Ochieng (Ugenya) and Emmanuel Wangwe (Navakholo).

S. Sudan submits instruments of ratification to EAC

MONITOR CORRESPONDENT

ARUSHA. South Sudan, the newest member of the East African Community, submitted the instruments of ratification of the Treaty on Accession at the bloc's headquarters in Arusha on Monday.

The instruments were received by the EAC Secretary-General Liberat Mfumukeko, but the country has a grace period of three years to implement the Treaty in order to become a full member of the economic bloc.

South Sudan was admitted to the Community on April 15 this year after signing the EAC Treaty to become the sixth member of the bloc, joining Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

South Sudan will have to ratify various protocols such as the Customs Union and the Common Market, as well align its constitution with the EAC Treaty in the next three year.

The challenge, though, is that Juba, currently suffering from a serious economic downturn with inflation hitting over 600 per cent, will have to cough \$8 million as part of its contribution for the membership.

BY DAVID MUCHUI
Monitor Correspondent

NAIROBI. Five cargo planes destined for Mogadishu, Somalia are stuck in Nairobi with miraa worth KShs60 million following the cancellation of flights to Somalia.

Nyambene Miraa Traders Association spokesman Kimathi Munjuri, however, said other flights carrying the stimulant destined for Somaliland had left the country.

On Monday, the Somali Minister of Civil Aviation, Ali Ahmed Jangali, said the country has decided to temporarily suspend all miraa imports to Somalia starting Tuesday.

Cancellation

In a letter addressed to Miraa Cargo Operators, Mr Jangali said: "While considering special circumstances, Somali Civil Aviation and Meteorology Authority on behalf of the Federal Republic of Somalia is hereby informing all miraa cargo operators and anyone it may concern that miraa cargo flights and its operation into Somalia have been cancelled until further notice."

The minister also said any "violation on the Somali airspace and disregard of this notice will have consequences".

In an interview with the *Nation* on Tuesday, Mr Munjuri said the losses would have been much higher but "it seems some traders were aware and did not transport it [miraa] to Nairobi."

"We are all gearing to use alternative airports in Galmudug State. The flights will be directed to Bosaso and Galcaio airports," he said.

Mr Munjuri said the cargo is still being held at the airport while more

Miraa planes destined for Mogadishu stuck in Nairobi after Somali flights ban



Vehicles transporting miraa from Meru to Nairobi recently. Five cargo planes destined for Mogadishu, Somalia are stuck in Nairobi with miraa worth KShs60 million following the cancellation of flights to Somalia. NATION MEDIA PHOTO

miraa was stuck in Eastleigh and was likely to be returned to Meru.

"Some traders are engaging the Kenya airports management to establish what is happening. We are also consulting Kenyan leaders to know the way forward," Mr Munjuri said.

One plane carries about 90 bags of miraa.

Antubetwe Kiongo MCA George Kaliunga, who is also a miraa farmer, said he is likely to lose KShs100,000 worth of miraa if the market is not restored.

Mr Joseph Muturia, a miraa farmer, said he may lose miraa worth KShs300,000 following the cancellation of flights.

"I was to harvest my crop this week

but it seems I cannot fetch more than KShs20,000.

"The closure of Mogadishu means the local market will be saturated leading to a big drop in prices," Mr Muturia said.

Miraa Taskforce chairman Mwenda Nchooro said they were engaging the relevant authorities to reverse the decision.



South Sudan president Salva Kiir

Rwanda

More doctors needed

Rwanda government remains under pressure to increase the number of medical doctors in the country to meet the desired international health staffing standards, despite recent increment in enrolment. The government has set a target of one physician per 10,000 people ratio before the year 2020. According to WHO recommendations, a minimum of 2.5 health workers per 1,000 people is fair, but the organisation's recommendation of one doctor per 1,000 populations is hardly met worldwide. [Robert Mbaraga, Monitor Correspondent]