

**REMARKS BY THE RT. HON. ANNE S. MAKINDA (MP) SPEAKER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TANZANIA
AT THE CLOSURE OF THE EALA 10TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM AT
MOUNT MERU HOTEL**

2nd July 2011

Our host the Speaker of EALA;
My Colleagues the Speakers of National
Parliaments of the EAC Partner States;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
The current and former Secretaries General of EAC;
Representatives of ECOWAS and SADC Parliamentary Forum;
Distinguished delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

First and foremost, I wish to sincerely apologize to you the Rt. Hon. Speaker, for not being with you from the beginning of this important symposium. As you are all aware, our Parliaments are currently debating budget estimates for the financial year 2011/2012 as presented by Ministers of Finance on the 8th June, 2011. As for our 10th Parliament, the General Election held in October, 2010 brought quite a good number of new MPs (65%).

So what we have been doing for the past seven months is a combination of two things: orientation and business. As for scrutiny of the Government budget, this is the first time that we are debating budget estimates. In view of this, I was therefore, enjoined to remain behind to counsel and guide them through this important process. I am pleased to learn that in spite of my absence I was ably represented by members from our Parliament who were with you from the beginning.

Han. Speaker, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Allow me to take this auspicious opportunity to heartily congratulate Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Uganda for her recent election to the position of the Speakership of the House. With her election, the EAC region

now has six Speakers out of which three are women. Thus achieving gender balance in the leadership of our august Houses. You will all agree with me that this remarkable trend speaks volumes as far as gender balance in the leadership of our region is concerned. I wish to assure my colleagues, Speakers that the Tanzania Parliament will work closely with other all of you to advance the interests of our region.

Hon. Speaker, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although belatedly, allow me to extend a very warm welcome to you to the United Republic of Tanzania. I hope you felt at home here in Arusha, Tanzania, which is fast becoming a city of international repute. As you all know, Arusha plays host to the headquarters of the East African Community; ICTR; the African Court of Human and Peoples Rights; other UN agencies and International Organisations. It is also very rich in culture and natural resources. I, therefore, hope that you made most of your time while here (with fond memories). You will always be welcome here and in any other part of Tanzania.

Secondly, I am aware that the EALA 10th Anniversary Symposium was well orchestrated primarily because of the Special Sitting of the East African Assembly in which the founding fathers of the EAC addressed all of you. It was indeed a memorable occasion in which they deliberated on their vision for a politically united East African Community. I wish therefore, to extend my gratitude to H.E. President Yoweri Museveni (ably represented by the Prime Minister of Uganda: Rt. Hon. Amama Mbabazi) and their Excellencies: Daniel Arap Moi and Al-Hajj Ali Hassan Mwinyi for gracing the occasion and addressing the participants. Indeed, their fatherly talk set the mood right for your deliberations from the afternoon of 30th June all through to this afternoon. May we take this opportunity to give them a round of applause.

Dear participants, as you may be aware, the EAC has grown leaps and bounds since the establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for Co-operation in 1993. You may also wish to note that our cooperation did not only start yesterday, but it has had a long history which you can read in one of the handbooks you received on facts and figures.

Allow me also to reiterate what the Rt. Hon. Abdirahin Abdi said in his speech: *that collectively we owe the prominent and eminent developments in the region to the founding fathers the great sons of the region.* This resonated well with the keynote Speeches delivered by the Speakers of the Parliament of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda who all pointed to a stronger entity if we unite.

Excellencies, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, There could not have been a better occasion to discuss the topics for this symposium; moreover at a time when all EAC Partner States are represented by their key political stakeholders. In principle, all Partner States should be committed to the integration process and we Parliamentarians should drive the process as we move towards our dream of a Politically United East Africa without pseudo borders.

I wish to congratulate EALA which is turning ten years this year for its steadfast successes as a regional legislature. During this time, EALA has played a fundamental role in strengthening the integration process through its legislative, representative, oversight and budgetary roles. The Assembly has ably performed its role as an organ of the EAC; and on a number of occasions, many people think that it's EAC and EAC is EALA.

Hon. Speaker, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In their consultative meeting held in 1999, prior to the adoption of the EAC Treaty, the Speakers of the National Assemblies of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda emphasized the importance of inscribing in the Treaty, the link between the people of East Africa and the Community. In particular, they recommended that the Treaty should incorporate this people-centred vision of the Community through the following:

- The promotion of social activities such as sports and culture in East Africa;
- The establishment of Sectoral Committee and other mechanisms that would provide social interaction of East Africans and the Community;
- The development of human resources;

- The establishment of research institutions that promote the role of civil society in the region.

I am delighted to learn that most of the above recommendations have been achieved over the past ten years. However, you will agree with me that much still need to be done especially at this time when we are headed for a political federation.

Hon. Speaker, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to emphasize that the role of EALA in driving the project of political federation is critical and in my view, it should be one of the basic functions of EALA in the coming ten years. The independence and operational functions of the EALA and the Assembly's Linkage with the people of East Africa are critical for the survival of the EAC.

As I conclude, allow me to thank you all, for your genuine and frank discussions and special thanks go to the resource persons for their high level of presentations and state of preparedness.

I hope the recommendations emanating from this important Symposium shall feed into the overall integration process and that we shall solidly play the role of a watchdog in deepening and widening the integration process.

I should also like to thank the sponsors of this Symposium, more particularly AWEPA who have been cooperating with our Parliaments in enhancing capacity building to the Members and Staff of our Parliaments. We would like to continue working closely with AWEPA to advance and strengthen our Parliaments in the areas of watchdog, oversight and budgetary scrutiny.

I would like to thank the EALA for the invitation extended to me to participate in the closing ceremony, and I would also like to thank my colleagues and participants for availing yourselves for this important occasion despite of your busy schedules.

Distinguished Guests, ladies and Gentlemen,

Lastly, I wish you all a safe journey back home. With those few remarks, it is now my humble duty to declare this Symposium officially closed.

I thank you very much for your kind attention.

Ahsanteni Sana!