



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON. MARGARET NANTONGO
ZZIWA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE ADDRESS OF THE ASSEMBLY
BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SUMMIT, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER
4, 2012, NAIROBI, KENYA.**

**Your Excellency Mwai Kibaki, the President of the Republic of Kenya;
Rt. Hon. Kenneth Marende, Speaker, Kenya National Assembly;
Hon Musa Sirma, Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers;
Hon. Ministers;
The Secretary General of the EAC;
Hon. Members of EALA and Parliament;
Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners;
Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Permit me to welcome you to today's Special Sitting of the House at which you will be the first Head of State to address the Third Assembly; and an opportunity for the Assembly to bid you farewell.

This is the Second Meeting of the First Session of the 3rd Assembly which was inaugurated on June 5, 2012. Your Excellency, we are grateful to you for accepting to host this meeting in the beautiful city of Nairobi. Permit me also on behalf of EALA and on my own behalf to extend our deepest appreciation to you, the Kenya National

Assembly and the people of this great Republic for the staunch and resolute support rendered to our predecessors – the 1st and 2nd Assembly. We look forward to the same collaboration in the coming future.

The Assembly pledges its support to Your Excellency during your tenure as Chairperson of the Summit as I assured you during our brief Meeting on the sidelines of the RIO+20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil recently. We are also confident that you will equally provide us with the necessary support that we shall require in our legislative role.

I note with gratitude that the EAC region has realized a number of successes during the period of your Chairmanship exemplifying your dedication and desire to be a strong advocate for the integration process in all actions and deed. Some of these successes include the fact that EAC has commenced deliberations on the Monetary Union while putting in place far reaching measures to consolidate on the Customs Union and the Common Market pillars respectively. Economic growth has been sustained with notable increases in the GDPs across board and corresponding decrease in the challenges that hinder the free-flow of goods and make the costs of doing business rise-up.

It is during the same period that we also received applications from the Republics of Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia to join the economic bloc. The Assembly on its part is credited with the passage of 13 Bills and it has a strengthened role in the integration process. It is also during your tenure as Chair that we witnessed a smooth transition to the 3rd Assembly.

Your Excellency, having said that I wish to reiterate our commitment to work closely with the Summit, the Council of Ministers and other Organs and Institutions of the Community for the faster realization of the objectives and goals of our region. The 3rd Assembly shall be charged with consolidating the gains made by the 1st and 2nd Assembly and taking the integration process to the next level. We shall in no doubt

need to transact more business in terms of legislation, oversight and representation as the region moves to effect the Monetary Union and sets the basis for the Political Federation.

Since our swearing-in, the Assembly has participated and benefitted from two induction programmes aimed at equipping Members with the information about the EAC and building their capacities to be able to judiciously, effectively and efficiently serve the region.

In this regard, we shall continue to play our part in the search for solutions to the challenges demanding our collective approach as a region to ensure all ranks and file of the people of East Africa enjoy the benefits of integration.

Top on this agenda are the NTBs barring the free flow of business in the region, lack of awareness among the citizens of the EAC and the need to speed-up implementation of the decisions of the Council of Ministers. EALA as the representatives of the people shall enhance its meetings with the *wananchi* through public hearings and sensitization efforts and take into account their feedback while legislating.

Your Excellency, May I take this opportunity to congratulate you for progressively steering the Republic of Kenya. We take cognizance of the fact that notable development has been realized in all areas of the country particularly in the area of infrastructure and mainly on the roads and airport facilities. We recognize the impetus with which you have transformed the road network in the country. One can only marvel at the super-highways that are being built in Nairobi and beyond and that are bound to open up enormous opportunities for the region and spur economic development.

In the same breath, we wish to call on you to throw your weight on the realization of an EAC Railway Authority as a supra-national agency as a pre-requisite for

development of the region, acknowledging the Railway's capacity to transport efficiently and cheaply. In comparison to the road network which can be developed exclusively, the rail network needs ideally to be developed basing on its inter-connectivity in order to enable all Partner States to immensely benefit. We note with concern that since the 1920s limited improvements in terms of rail-lines have been added on to the existing network. So we are banking on Your Excellency for support in the area.

Your Excellency, the discovery of oil in the Turukana region and the institutionalisation of an Arid Lands Development Policy in Kenya's hitherto underdeveloped semi-arid north, deserve acclaim. They will go a long way to realize Article 105 of the Treaty in ensuring food sufficiency within the Community: and indeed the move shall spur further development and create an impetus in the country and the EAC region.

Again, it shall be written firmly in the history books Your Excellency that two years ago under your stewardship, Kenya delivered a new Constitution that has been termed as revolutionary, strong on pillars of democracy of powers, devolution and gives the citizenry a say in ownership and decision making.

We as EALA shall constantly remember you for the free education programme, increased space and freedom of expression, better economy and infrastructural development that has come in with your tenure as the President.

Even as you begin to wind down the clock on your constitutional mandate, EALA is happy to be associated with you following the profound transformation path upon which you have set this great nation.

Finally, I take this opportunity to pray that the upcoming elections shall be free, fair, peaceful and a landmark in the electoral history of Kenya. People all over the world are looking to East Africa as an entity to reckon with in the near future. It is our duty

to ensure that the region is stable and peaceful and a lot of this is hinged on how we conduct our elections.

At the same time, it is important for the country to maintain peace and stability at all times. In this regard, we take the opportunity to commiserate with Your Excellency, the Government and the citizens of Kenya following the loss of lives and casualties arising from the recent clashes in Wajir, Tana-River and Mombasa. We note with appreciation the vital steps taken by the Government to investigate and to contain the regrettable incidents and once again appeal to the citizens to be calm.

Your Excellency, it is now with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty of welcoming You to address this *august* Assembly, today, Tuesday, the 4th of September 2012.

I thank you all for listening.