

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
SENATE

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS SEMINAR (NANYUKI VIII)

WELCOME/OPENING REMARKS

H.E. BERNARD MAKUZA
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

31 OCTOBER 2014

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- Rt Honorable Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly,
- Rt. Honorable Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda,
- Hon. Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers;
- Honorable Ministers here present,
- Honorable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly,
- Honorable Members of Parliaments of Partner States,
- Honorable Secretary General of the East African Community;
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

On behalf of the Rwanda Parliament, I wish to warmly welcome to Rwanda all members of the National Assemblies from East African Community Partner States, who attend this 8th Inter-Parliamentary Relations Seminar, known as NANYUKI. For our colleagues from East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), who have been in Rwanda for a number of days, I wish that the days ahead bring you more inspirations and better constructive interactions.

I would like to let you know that it is a great pleasure to have you all around, and the Parliament of Rwanda really appreciates the opportunity to host this important Seminar, and may our hospitality be a perfect tone to set for what is going to be hopefully a very innovative session.

Rt. Honorable Speaker of EALA,

[I would like once again to thank you, for the good wishes you expressed on behalf of the EALA family on the occasion of my election as President of the Senate of Rwanda.]

It is my duty to renew, on behalf of the Parliament of Rwanda, the commitment to continue to foster stronger collaboration with EALA, and with National Assemblies of Partner States, in order to fast-track the process of regional integration, for sustainable development.

- Excellencies,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

This occasion is an opportunity to share some views on the inter-parliamentary relations among Partner States, and on the role of regional and national parliamentarians in EAC integration in general.

To begin with, the choice of theme of this Seminar: “INSECURITY AND TERRORISM AS THREATS TO EAC INTEGRATION: HOW CAN EAC DEVELOP A COMMON POSITION?” recognizes that peace and security are pre-requisites to sustainable social and economic development, and responds to the need to ensure that the achievements we realize are safeguarded.

And it is imperative that parliamentarians at national and regional level exchange views and ideas, in order to articulate a common position on insecurity and terrorism issues, as threats to regional integration. It is equally imperative that we have a common understanding of the surrounding context of insecurity and terrorism in the region and globally, apprehend the problems of insecurity and terrorism in the region and globally, their root causes, their consequences, and the appropriate solutions, always keeping in mind that all relevant mechanisms and positions, should serve to advance regional integration agenda, and not the opposite.

- Excellencies,
- Honorable Members of Parliaments,
- Distinguished guests,

As we well know, one of the fundamental principle that must govern the success of the objectives of the Community, is good governance,

including adherence to the principles of democracy, the rule of law, accountability, and transparency.

Good governance is provided in the EAC Treaty, and it is our duty, as parliamentarians, to actively bring our contribution in this regard, because insecurity and terrorism take advantage of conditions of exclusion, injustice, poverty, unresponsive leadership to the basic needs of the population, and lack of human values.

Indeed, there can be no genuine integration, if the Community allows conflicting or competing positions, with regard to insecurity and terrorism issues. It is therefore imperative that EALA and National Assemblies strengthen their relations, and effectively collaborate to tackle the underlying conditions that provide insecurity and terrorism to take root.

Rt. Hon. Speakers,

Honorable members of EALA and National Assemblies,

In the long term, the most efficient and effective responses to insecurity and terrorism, it is education, employment and real opportunity for our young people. Good governance and development defeat insecurity and terrorism.

Parliamentarians and all stakeholders must step up real and collective efforts, to enhance mindset, awareness, and contribute to develop policies and legislations to effectively prevent all violent tendencies, negative and destructive ideologies.

And, we, Rwandans are realistic about these, because they once developed into the tragic genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, we all know.

Nevertheless, thanks to the choices we made during the past 20 years, Rwanda has changed and transformed by defeating causes of insecurity such as discrimination, lack of accountability, corruption and bad governance. Even when we faced terrorist attacks and tentative security threats, thanks to our good governance policies and strong institutions, we contained and defeated them. Vis-à-vis our history of insecurity and failure, we have chosen the resolve to try to do better and to be better, under the leadership of H.E. President Paul KAGAME.

Twenty years ago, under the his visionary leadership, Rwandans have started a new country with nothing. But not just with nothing, but with ruins, rivers, and villages covered with the bodies of our brothers and sisters, over one million Tutsi killed.

As it was well stated by H.E. President Paul KAGAME, Rwandans decided to build a new Rwanda, a secure and united nation that our children and our neighborhood deserve. Today, we don't need people to tell us who we are, where we come from or what is good for us. We need partners, like our brothers and sisters in East Africa, to make one another improve and prosper.

Drawing from this experience, I would like to emphasize that security and peace must be focused on as a foundation for our achievements and aspirations. That is why I want to stress that especially we, Leaders, have the duty to prevent and fight the root causes of insecurity and terrorism, such genocide ideology and its denial in the region, in all their forms of manifestations, if we are really convinced to sustain what we are building. It is a matter of making the right choice.

- Rt. Hon. Speakers,
- Hon. Members of EALA and of National Assemblies of Partner States,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I would like to challenge Members of EALA and National Assemblies to sharpen the Regional response to insecurity and terrorism – from prevention and early warning, to cooperation and dialogue, to diplomacy and legislations, to smart peace building and reconciliation programs.

I hope that at the end of this Seminar, NANYUKI spirit will grow stronger, and carry over the agenda of the Community, by strengthening partnerships and collaboration in trust and respect. These are the standards that the Community and our citizens need.

With these few remarks, I would like to declare the 8th Inter-Parliamentary Relations Seminar officially open, and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.