

EAC Headquarters, Arusha, 24 September 2008: The Chief Executive Officers of the EAC, COMESA and SADC - Amb. Juma Mwapachu, Secretary General of the EAC; SADC, represented by Assistant Executive Secretary, Eng. Joao Caholo ; and COMESA, represented by Assistant Secretary General, Mr Stephen Karangizi - held a preparatory meeting in Nairobi today, 24 September 2008 for the first Tripartite EAC-SADC-COMESA Summit of Heads of State planned to be held in Kampala on 20 October 2008.

The Chief Executive Officers of the three of eight African Union Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognized under the AU conventions as the building blocks for Africa economic community and continental unity convened to finalize the documentation for the Tripartite Summit.

These include the programme of the Summit, agenda and logistical arrangements for the Summit that will bring together 26 African heads of state for the first time under the tripartite forum intended to hasten the achievement of African economic and political integration under the AU agenda.

The EAC-SADC-COMESA Summit is considered historic because for the first time since the birth of the AU, key building blocks of the African Economic Community are meeting on how to integrate territories and moving towards deepening and widening integration within the overall Abuja Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community.

The Summit is expected to decide on matters related to enhancing cooperation among EAC, COMESA and SADC, including deepening trade, investments, and infrastructure, linking transport corridors, promoting joint projects to boost of industrialization agriculture and food security as well as enabling free movement of people between the three RECs with the ultimate aim of creating a single market and investment area, currently with a combined population of 527 million and combined GDP of \$625 billion.

Also to be addressed by the Summit are issues of multiple memberships in the RECs with a view to co-ordinating and harmonizing their regional integration programmes. The tripartite co-operation/arrangement whereby the three RECs will integrate their trade and infrastructure programmes is ongoing and will provide a mechanism that addresses the challenges of multiple membership.

Directorate of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs EAC ARUSHA