



## **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

### **EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON (DR) MARGARET NANTONGO ZZIWA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE ADDRESS OF THE ASSEMBLY BY H.E. UHURU KENYATTA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER, 2013, NAIROBI, KENYA.**

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**Your Excellency, Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya**

**Rt. Hon Justin Muturi, Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly**

**Rt. Hon Ekwe Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate**

**Hon. Shem Bageine the Chairperson, Council of Ministers of EAC,**

**The Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers,**

**The Secretary General of the East African Community,**

**Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Kenya National Assembly,**

**Hon Evans Kidero, Governor, Nairobi County**

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Your Excellency at the very outset, permit me to congratulate you, albeit belatedly, upon your successful election as the fourth President of the Republic of Kenya. Your election in March this year was a sign of confidence that the people of this great Republic bestowed in you.

Your Excellency, congratulations. I am honoured to address you for the very first time as Head of State of the Republic of Kenya knowing that Kenya was a founding Member of the East African Community and the country remains committed to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the Community.

My Members and I take this exceptional opportunity to wish you good fortunes in this office and in all your endeavours to take Kenya forward. We assure you of our unwavering and unequivocal support as you lead the Republic of Kenya and the Community to yet greater heights.

EALA has enjoyed cordial relations with your predecessors and we are confident that with you also at pinnacle of the Community's leadership, we shall even deepen the collaboration.

We are pleased to note that your record of development over the last 200 days in the context of the EAC integration process speaks for itself. The Republic of Kenya has moved with haste to demolish the existing Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs). This is evident along the Northern Corridor and port of Mombasa which has improved in terms of congestion which was the case in 2000 up to 2012. This has paved way to improve

businesses and indeed the business community is already recording progress. Today, it takes about a week to transfer cargo from Mombasa to Kigali and Bujumbura via Kampala. At the same time, your directive to the Revenue and Customs Departments to relocate to the port city of Mombasa has reduced the time taken to clear cargo consignments. Both moves must be hailed as progressive in lifting the lid off bureaucracies and fundamentally creating a conducive environment for business to flourish.

Your Excellency, since you assumed the reins of power, you have maintained Kenya's stance to combat the scourge of terrorism thus contributing to the restoration of peace to the neighbour, Somalia. Let me take this moment to extend our sympathies upon the loss of lives during the September attack of the Westgate Mall. This act of cowardice must be condemned in the strongest terms; it led to loss of innocent lives, maiming the many peace loving citizens and destructing of property. Whilst we continue to commiserate with you, the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya over the barbaric attack by these criminals, we are comforted that the attack did not scare your resolve. The attack did not lead to despair. It instead strengthened your stance in standing guard to ensure that peace reigns throughout Kenya and in the nations of the East African Community. This is commendable and we shall stand with you in search for peace and stability in the region.

With the commitment shown so far, I am confident that your contribution as Head of State will add impetus to this important process of integration of EAC. I am certain that you will strive to ensure that

East Africa continues to be the engine that gives momentum to Africa's potential.

Your Excellency, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly was inaugurated on June 2012. We recently completed our first year of service and I wish to briefly share with you our progress report. Over the one year or so period, we have enacted 7 pieces of legislation. The Bills are:

1. the East African Community Supplementary Appropriation Bill, (No. 2)2012;
2. the East African Community Customs Management (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2012
3. the East African Community One Stop Border Post (OSBP), Bill, 2012;
4. the East African Community Vehicle Load Control Bill, 2012;
5. the East African Community Supplementary Appropriation Bill,2013;
6. the East African Community Appropriation Bill,2013;
7. The East African Community Public Holidays Bill, 2013

I am pleased to note that Your Excellency have already assented to four of the above mentioned Bills that were brought before you.

We have also passed 23 Resolutions on the floor of the House. At the last sitting in Bujumbura, your colleague and brother, H.E. President Pierre Nkurunziza launched the EALA Strategic (2013-2018) Plan that among other areas, seeks to see EALA enhance its administrative autonomy, boost the sensitization, its corporate image and development, support negotiations for the EAC pillars of integration and ensure robust and effective monitoring and evaluation. We call on Your

Excellency to give us the support especially in terms of improving our budget.

**Your Excellency,**

Over the last ten days since the Plenary sat In Nairobi, I am pleased to report the following:

- we received and adopted 4 reports from various Committees of the Assembly.
- EALA also posed a number of questions to the Council of Ministers that were answered satisfactorily.
- The Assembly debated key Motions and passed 3 Resolutions.
- Your Excellency, tomorrow we embark on onsite visits to all the institutions of the EAC (LVBC, LVFO, EADB and CASSOA) starting with the Lake Victoria Basin Commission as part of our oversight activities.

**Your Excellency,**

The region's future development depends on its ability to trade. That is not just a question of lowering tariffs but also of improving physical capacity and the linkages between the Partner States. This brings to fore the need to push forward with major infrastructure projects such as ports, water ways, rail network, roads and energy as part of a wider regional partnership rather than just as individual state projects. EALA thus continues to call for sustained and concerted efforts in sustaining infrastructural developments especially with the partnership with the Private Sector through Public-Private Sector initiatives. In this regard,

we commend the Republic of Kenya for its lead in modernizing its infrastructure.

Let me quickly highlight some of the significant milestones we have so far registered in the implementation of integration pillars. The Customs Union has led to significant increase in intra-regional trade. In 2011, intra regional trade in the region rose to 23% of the total values of exports – according to the Doing Business Report of 2012. This is by far the highest increase in all the other African economic blocs and we need to take pleasure in the fact that it is happening in one of the fastest growing and reforming economic blocs of the world. But we must not sit on our laurels. We must strengthen the Customs Union by achieving the single Customs Union Territory.

It also behoves upon the Community to fully realise the Common Market Protocol. We must act and act decisively to enable the citizens to enjoy the benefits. In my view, if we are to fully implement the Common Market Protocol (CMP) today, I believe we shall have realised well over 75% of the integration process. This is due to the fact that the Protocol envisages the merger and integration of the five countries into one single market where factors of production move freely and enhances the free movement of persons and the rights to establishment amongst other factors.

I am pleased to note that in the quest to comply with the CMP, Republic of Kenya repealed the following laws that were inhibiting free movement of persons; Immigration Act (Cap 172), Alien Restriction Act (Cap 173)

and Visa Regulations. These laws were replaced by the following new laws: Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act No. 12 of 2011 and Kenya Citizens and Foreign Nationals Management Act No.31 of 2011.

**Your Excellency**

I am excited by the plan to sign off the Monetary Union Protocol in the next two weeks by the Summit of the EAC Heads of State. After months and years of complex negotiations, we finally see hope for a single currency in the name of the East African Shilling; we see hope for harmonised fiscal and monetary policies and we see hope for a greater future.

**Your Excellency,**

Your Excellency, this year 2013, Kenya turns 50 years since it broke the chains of colonialism. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on this year of golden Jubilee of the Republic of Kenya. We wish you all the best as you celebrate 50 years of independence, reflect on the past and turn over a new leaf and chapter for the country. The country is destined for greater things as demonstrated by some of the recent developments.

I for one keenly followed your inauguration speech at the Kasarani International Stadium on April 9, 2013. Before the thousands of persons who thronged the stadium and the millions who were listening and following closely on the media outlets, you promised a brighter future for Kenyans by focusing on Vision 2030, free maternal care and dedicated services. Three months later during the Madaraka day

celebrations, you announced free maternal care in all public health facilities, a move that was welcomed by many Kenyans.

Through the recently launched UWEZO Fund, Kenya is today incubating enterprise, catalysing innovation, promoting industry, employing the youth and growing its economy. I wish you well as you set off an industrial revolution to power your ambition of becoming a middle income country by 2030.

I wish to point out what I consider a unique strength in you. Indeed, Mr. President you today join the growing list of tech savvy Presidents in the continent. In this age of ICTs, it is important to be able to use social media to communicate directly with the populace. Your innovative way of using the social media to reach out to Kenyans is commendable. But this did not just begin today or yesterday. You have done it before. I recall a couple of years back as Minister for Finance, you invited Kenyans to 'tweet' their budget views citing Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya, which recognizes inclusiveness as part of the National Values and Principles of governance. Within a few hours, the responses were overwhelming and the gesture was well received.

Mr. President let me end by re-affirming our support to you and your Government. We are also confident that you will equally provide us with the necessary support that we shall require in our legislative role. EALA reiterates its 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.

Finally, Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome Your Excellency to address this August Assembly, today Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2013.

**Karibu Mheshimiwa Rais!**