



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON (DR) MARGARET NANTONGO
ZZIWA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE STATE OF EAC ADDRESS BY
H.E. UHURU MUIGAI KENYATTA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KENYA AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SUMMIT OF EAC HEADS
OF STATE. - MARCH 25, 2014, ARUSHA, TANZANIA.**

**Your Excellency, Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, President of the Republic of
Kenya and the Chairperson of the Summit of EAC Heads of State,**

**Hon. Phyllis Kandie, Cabinet Secretary for East African Affairs,
Commerce and Tourism and Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers,**

Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers,

Hon. Secretary General of the East African Community,

Hon. Members of EALA,

Heads of EAC Organs and Institutions

Excellencies High Commissioners, Government Officials,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning to you all!

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I stand before this *august* House to warmly welcome you to deliver the **State of EAC Address** at the commencement of the 5th Meeting of the 2nd Session.

I wish to sincerely thank you for responding to our invitation – this being your first official engagement with EALA as the Chairperson of the Summit.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you following your elevation to the Chair of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State on 30th November 2013 and assure you of the Assembly's unequivocal support.

In a very special way, I salute you for finding time yesterday, March 24th, 2014, to meet and dialogue with the EAC Executives and Staff. The Session was motivational and inspired the Community staff a great deal.

Permit me also to acknowledge the support given to EALA during the Kenya Tour held in February 2014. The Tour enabled us to appreciate the potential of East Africa. We were able to note the tremendous progress at the Mombasa Port that is today decongested following your policy directive to allow the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) to directly handle cargo destined for the respective Partner States. The opening of the 19th Berth is further testimony of the desire to facilitate trade.

The visit to the Olkaria Geothermal Energy Project which is the largest in Africa was an eye opener and a sign of Kenya's commitment to the implementation of the East African Energy MasterPlan.

The Kenya tour also gave EALA an opportunity to interface with the peoples' representatives at the Senate, Parliament and with the Governors and County representatives and to seek their support in the integration dispensation. This was a unique opportunity under Article 49 of the Treaty.

Finally, EALA interfaced with representatives of the Civil Society Organizations as mandated under Article 127 of the Treaty and we were able to consult with them on the activities that promote integration. In the same vein, we held deliberations with key institutions including the Vision 2030 Secretariat, the KONZA TechnoCity and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance, all of which gave testimony to the steady path of growth that Kenya is taking.

We are indeed grateful to Your Excellency and to the Cabinet Secretary and Chair of the Council of Ministers, Hon Phyllis C. Kandie and her team for the rewarding programme they put together for us.

In essence sensitization is a key component of the integration process. As legislators, we have to continuously play our part as engines of mobilization. We shall thus re-double our sensitization efforts by reaching out to University Students, the Faith Based Community, Women groups and the Diaspora.

I shall forward to Your Excellency at an appropriate time Sir, our request for additional funds to the EALA budget, specifically for sensitization activities.

Today's State of EAC Address is a fundamental activity on the calendar of the Community. The Address sets the momentum and impetus for the integration process by reflecting on general policies that relate to the Community's progress and outlining the strategic challenges which require attention.

H.E. President Yoweri Museveni made the first such Address to this Assembly in the year 2008 in Arusha. The State of EAC Address has since then been institutionalised and we are grateful that all Heads of State have continuously honoured their respective invitations.

Your Excellency,

I wish to congratulate you and the Summit for the support and direction that ensured the successful negotiations of the Monetary Union Protocol which was signed on 30th November, 2013.

In many ways, the Monetary Union is the logical culmination of the integration efforts as it seeks harmonised fiscal and monetary policies leading to a single currency. Many of the benefits we seek, shall be multiplied under the Monetary Union for there shall be strengthening of competition in the respective domestic markets as well as efficiencies arising out of greater economies of scale. We now look forward to the eventual ratification of the Protocol come July 1, 2014 so that implementation commences in earnest.

With regards to the Common Market Protocol which is in Year 4 of implementation, I am happy to report that the Republics of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have already opened up their capital accounts thus removing barriers and restrictions on the movement and payments of capital. There is significant progress in the processes in the Republics of Burundi and Tanzania.

Your Excellency,

The Protocol sets to accelerate economic growth and development of the Partner States through the attainment of free movement of goods, persons and labour as well as the rights of establishment and the free movement of

goods, services and capital. While there is substantial progress been made, the region also faces considerable challenges.

At the outset, it was perceived and understood that free movement of persons and that of workers would initially apply to certain professionals with an increased and widening scope over time. The Protocol further envisaged opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs to flourish given the associated freedoms.

However, one of the biggest challenges realised over time - concerns the slow pace with which Partner States are "opening up". Although EALA and several stakeholders have intensified sensitisation campaigns of East Africans on the Common Market Protocol, citizens continue to bear the brunt of restrictions with Partner States taking 'cover under the pretext' that their respective national laws are still being amended.

As an Assembly, while we appreciate the role of Partner States with regards to legal conformity, we are of the opinion that the legal processes need to be hastened.

Our appeal to Your Excellency in your capacity as Chair of the Summit of EAC Heads of State is that you cause the region to fully and fervently implement the provisions of Common Market Protocol.

Let me reiterate the call on the Council of Ministers to be progressive in bringing Bills to the House. We still await several Bills on the effective implementation of the Common Market as was mentioned at the time of the signing of the said Protocol. The failure of the Council of Ministers to bring forth Bills has sometimes compelled Members to bring Private Members Bills'.

The Customs Union has significantly increased 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 which is by far the highest increase in all the other African economic blocs.

One of the expectations of East Africans this year is the operationalization of the Single Customs Territory which shall reduce cargo clearing costs by half, since the transit bond fees along the corridor would be scrapped.

Your Excellency; EALA applauds the significant steps taken to reduce Non-Tariff Barriers and acknowledges that results thereof are beginning to be felt by East Africans. The timely reduction of the weighbridges and removal of roadblocks has led to speedy transportation. Today, it only takes 4 and ½ days for a trailer to travel from Mombasa to Malaba, a significant reduction from the previous 21 days.

The EAC's Infrastructure program has also registered a boost with notable investments recorded in Rail, Energy, Ports and Harbors' sub-sectors. We laud the infrastructure developments in place and salute the bold decision to introduce the modern standard Railway gauge. We look forward to the time when the critical infrastructure system shall reach Kampala, Kigali and Bujumbura to further open the interior to greater trade and development.

The Breton Woods' Partners who still doubt the viability of the Railway project should be reassured that this is the new lifeline of trade for East African Community.

Your Excellency,

I wish to urge the Summit to direct stakeholders to conclude discussions on the liberalization of air space which shall culminate in reduction of costs for air travel. CASSOA which is an institution of the EAC, has taken the lead in ensuring liberalisation of airspace among other areas but it needs to be fully funded and equipped to carry on with its mandate.

EALA has recently launched a new Strategic Plan (2013-2018) where it clearly spells out approaches and policies to realize its mandate. In the Strategic Plan, we seek to embrace legislative, representation and oversight agenda that deepen and widen the integration process.

Your Excellency at this juncture, I thank you and the Summit for the positive consideration of improvement in the Members emoluments, leveraging it to that of the Deputy Secretaries General. I recall your assurance on this matter when I paid you a courtesy call along with the Members of EALA, Kenya Chapter last year.

This is also perhaps the opportunity for me to raise one other matter of significance for the Assembly and the Community.

The issue Your Excellency; is the length of time it takes to finalise the process of enactment of EAC legislations. In accordance with Articles 62 and 63 of the Treaty, the final process of enactment of legislation is shared between the Assembly and the Heads of State of the EAC Partner States.

As per the provisions of Article 62 (2) of the Treaty, when a Bill has been passed by the Assembly, the Speaker of the Assembly is required to submit the Bill to Heads of State for assent. By provisions of Article 63(2), every Head of State has up to three months to assent or withhold assent to a Bill. As we stand at five Partner States, it means a Bill will take up to 15 months (1 ½ years) to be assented to.

Meanwhile for the general public, when they hear the Assembly has passed a particular piece of legislation, they believe it is already a law and immediately, my Office is requested for copies of the Act.

Your Excellency; we would like the process of enactment of EAC legislation to be predictable. We therefore have a humble proposal which we kindly request that you discuss with your brothers.

The Summit of the EAC Heads of State meets twice in a year; in April and in November. We know the Assent to Bills is not a Summit matter, but rather a responsibility of each Head of State in his individual capacity. However, our proposal is that we can utilize the presence of Heads of State on the sidelines of every meeting of the Summit, to individually signify their assent to Bills. This of course would be done with prior consultations with the relevant offices of the Partner States and the Counsel to the Community. With this kind of arrangement, all stakeholders will know that in EAC, Bills are assented to in April and November.

Your Excellency; Looking outwards, I wish to reiterate the importance of a peaceful and secure region. Recent developments in South Sudan are worrying given the fact that post cessation of hostilities talks which were

scheduled to resume last week did not take off. Our hope and prayers is that both sides of the divide will give the talks a chance to cement peace. We laud you for the role you are playing in ensuring zero-sum politics do not undermine the negotiations and encourage you to remain steadfast.

Let me again congratulate you, **Your Excellency**, the Government and the People of Kenya upon attaining 50 years of independence which was marked on December 12th 2013.

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 25th of March 2014.

Karibu Mheshimiwa Rais!