

Defence – a key player in the integration process - Hon. Beatrice Kiraso

East African Community Headquarters, Arusha, Thursday 4 June 2009: The EAC Defence Sector held several meetings in Arusha, Tanzania starting with the meeting of the Defence Experts Working Group (DEWG) from 23-26 May 2009 and culminating in the meeting of the Sectoral Council on Cooperation in Defence which sat 29 May 2009.

The Sectoral Council meeting, which was chaired by the Defence Minister from the Republic of Rwanda, General Marcel Gatsinzi, considered among other things preparations for the various defence sector activities and the status of implementation of the previous decisions and directives under cooperation in defence. The meeting noted with satisfaction the ongoing preparations for the 2nd Edition of the Second Cycle of Military Sports and Culture Week to be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 13-25 June 2009.

The Sectoral Council also received and approved plans and preparations for two major multinational EAC military exercises to take place in the United Republic of Tanzania during September and the Republic of Uganda during October 2009.

The Sectoral Council reaffirmed the need for more interaction, exchange of visits and sharing of expertise between the Partner States' defence forces; the necessity for greater shared utilization of each other's defense technical facilities; and the requirement to upgrade and expand the secure communication system between the Defence Forces' Chiefs to include the Republics of Rwanda and Burundi.

While welcoming the delegates to the Sectoral Council meeting, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in-charge of Political Federation, Hon. Beatrice B. Kiraso emphasized the inter-relationship between the processes within the defence sector and the other elements of political federation and reiterated the fact that EAC's collective security will be best guaranteed by cooperation in defense and security. "Defence is a key player in the integration process," affirmed Ms Kiraso

The delegates appreciated the warm hospitality accorded to them while in Arusha by the people and leadership of the United Republic of Tanzania.

