

Address by His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi to the Fourth Meeting
of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly

Bujumbura, Burundi

January 22, 2013

☒ The Right Honourable Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker of the East
African Legislative Assembly,

☒ The Right Honourable Pie NTAVYOHANYUMA, Speaker of Burundi National Assembly,

☒ Your Excellency Thérance Sininguruza, First Vice-President of the
Republic of Burundi,

☒ Your Excellency Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the
Republic of Burundi,

☒ Honourable Members of the Bureaus of the National Assembly and
Senate of Burundi,

☒ Your Excellency Mohamed RUKARA, Ombudsman of Burundi,

☒ Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi,

☒ Honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly,

☒ Honourable Members of Burundi National Assembly and Senate,

☒ Honourable First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African
Community Affairs of Uganda and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers,

☒ Distinguished Ministers,

☒ Your Excellency Ambassador Doctor Richard SEZIBERA, East African
Community Secretary General,

☒ Yours Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

☒ Distinguished Invited Guests,

☒ Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. Allow me first and foremost to give thanks to the Almighty God whose grace and mercy guided us to this date, when the East African Legislative Assembly sits here in Bujumbura.

2. It is therefore for me a privilege to address this August Assembly in order to officially launch the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly.

3. I wish to thank the Right Honourable Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly for her kind invitation and for having provided me with this very best opportunity to meet all of you present here today.

4. On behalf of the People and Government of Burundi and also on my own behalf, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you and wish you a pleasant stay in the Republic of Burundi. Let me also use this platform to extend to you and to all your dear ones my very best wishes for the Year 2013.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. The East African Legislative Assembly plays a key role in bringing together the people of East Africa, and in fostering the integration process. In this respect, the achievements made so far would not have been possible without such an understanding, vision and leadership of the Members of the East African Legislative Assembly. Allow me to congratulate the EALA Members as a team.

6. Since the day we met in this very same place, during the Fifth Nanyuki Session, the East African Legislative Assembly has made tremendous achievements, in terms of representing our Peoples, legislating, approving the East African Community budgets, providing oversights in many East African Community activities as well as establishing linkages between the East African Legislative Assembly and the National Parliaments of the East African Community Partner States.

7. Although there is still a long way to go in each and every area mentioned above, a need for more commitment and action, a need to be more result oriented. I am confident that the East African Legislative Assembly can live up to this task.

8. As for the Republic of Burundi, significant progress has been recorded thanks to community works which give answers to local socioeconomic community basic needs. We shall continue to consolidate peace and security as the cornerstone of the promotion of democracy, good governance and the rule of law. In order to move forward, the population, the private sector and the civil society should be involved. We want to place economic growth and creation of employment at the centre of future programmes of poverty reduction.

9. To do so, as a country and in the region, there is need to live and move together with sound economies and towards political stability, which we can sustain with mutual trust and solidarity, as we boast in the East African Community to be One People with One Destiny. We must work and transform our Community into a united, peaceful and prosperous region.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

10. With regards to regional integration, there is also need to maintain the momentum gathered and keep up moving the East African Community forward into larger and deeper integration. It is important that we direct greater attention at the drivers of integration.

11. In this respect there is need to address factors that limit or constrain the construction of a larger EAC internal market in order to increase the share in global trade and economy. Indeed a larger internal market can help create new jobs for the youth, and raise the standards of living of our Peoples.

12. There is also need to embark on generating more value addition to our agricultural products through transformation and conservation. If we do so, we shall have accommodated more than 95% of our populations who live on agriculture in the Region. And this will certainly boost higher intra-regional trade.

13. Similarly, the importance of infrastructure cannot be overemphasized. There is a need to get agricultural production areas connected to markets and industrial centres. In the same vein, there is need for our Region to concentrate on energy generation on one hand; and consider the railway as the means of transportation of tomorrow in the region for heavy goods and peoples on the other hand.

14. We should also focus on opening up our borders to allow for trade to grow and intensify. The removal of Non Tariff Barriers, the facilitation of transport and trade by One Stop Border Posts and the implementation of a Single Customs Territory can make the difference.

15. The East African Community integration is, in the eyes of analysts, one of the models of integration. We must commit to keep the standards and the record high. We have got to consolidate the Customs Union and implement the Common Market Protocol, so as to pave the way for the Monetary Union and lay the foundations for the East African Community Political Federation.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

16. The commitment and dedication of EALA Members being now a proven fact, I would like to invite the Session to combine the pleasant and the useful, so that at the end of the Session, "Mission Accomplished" should be the motto for every EALA member.

17. I have no doubt that during these proceedings, the East African Legislative Assembly will strengthen further the ties which so happily exist between EALA and Burundi Parliament, so as to work more closely and raise the performance of the East African Community as well as improving the law making mechanisms.

18. I wish to reiterate Burundi's commitment to EAC integration. Burundi will spare no efforts in playing its part to achieve the objectives of the East African Community.

19. I wish also to call for more and close collaboration between EAC Organs and Institutions and those of the EAC Partner States. In doing so, I am confident that we shall bring the East African Community closer to the People and that the East African citizens will definitely, through their direct involvement, benefit from and reap the fruits of regional integration.

20. Finally, as the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly takes place at a time when general elections in our Sister Partner States Kenya are at hand, I would like to wish Kenyan People peaceful and successful elections.

21. May the discussions and deliberations of the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly be fruitful.

22. It is upon these well wishing words that I declare officially open in Kigobe House of Parliament, the proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly.

Long Live the Republic of Burundi!

Long Live the East African Community!

Long Live the EALA!

MUGIRE AMAHORO!

Asanteni Sana!