

Economic competition delaying EAC integration - Kenya MPs

Advice. East Africa Community (EAC) member states asked to address issue of the economic status of the countries to speed up integration.

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NAIROBI. Fear of economic competition among East Africa Community countries is one of the barriers to regional integration.

Members of the Kenya National Assembly committee on regional integration said some countries in the region are at a "lower production level" than others.

The committee's vice-chairman, Christopher Nakuleu, said the East

Africa Community (EAC) member states need to address the issue of the economic status of the countries to speed up integration.

"Before the integration was introduced, countries were operating on different production levels. For instance, the GDP of Burundi is 11 times less than [that of] Kenya. This disparity poses a major challenge," Mr Nakuleu said.

They observed that past perceptions that led to the collapse of the EAC in 1977 have also contributed to lack of commitment to the integration among some member states.

"[The] reintroduction of [the] East Africa Community was meant to encourage competitiveness among member states. This will not only im-

prove regional economy but foster unity," said the Turkana North MP.

The committee members also accused some countries of derailing regional incorporation by failing to implement some projects.

They said Kenya is lagging behind

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CHRISTOPHER NAKULEU, TURKANA NORTH MP.

in putting up some structures to facilitate integration, saying Uganda has completed similar projects.

The committee members were inspecting the implementation of cross-border projects on the Kenya-Uganda border.

Kisumu County Woman Representative Rose Nyamunga challenged member states to educate their citizens on the benefits of integration.

"There are challenges that are yet to be fully addressed like insecurity. Citizens of most EAC countries are yet to fully embrace the integration due to fear of [the] unknown," he said

Other MPs present included David Ochieng (Ugenya) and Emmanuel Wangwe (Navakholo).