



East African Community secretary general Liberat Mfumekeko (seated-R), USAID Mission Director for East Africa Karen Freeman (L) and Virginia Blaser, Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Tanzania, sign a five-year EAC-USAID Regional Development Objective Grant Agreement in Dar es Salaam yesterday. Photo courtesy of US Embassy

US, EAC sign \$194million partnership agreement to strengthen regional development

By Guardian Reporter

THE US government and the East African Community (EAC) yesterday launched a Regional Development Objectives Grant Agreement at the EAC headquarters in Arusha.

On behalf of the US government, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will contribute approximately \$194 million over a five year period for shared development

goals, deepening the partnership between the two organisations.

About \$30 million will fund institutional strengthening within the EAC Secretariat, while the remainder will support other development partners in their efforts to contribute to the EAC regional integration agenda.

Chargé d'Affaires of the US embassy to Tanzania and US Representative to the EAC Virginia Blaser, USAID Mission Director for Kenya and East

Africa Karen Freeman, and EAC Secretary General Ambassador Liberat Mfumekeko signed a memorandum of acknowledgment to affirm the agreement. Chargé Blaser noted the tremendous value of fostering regional cooperation, saying that the United States supports "governments and regional bodies such as the EAC in their collaborative efforts to unlock this region's full potential for the benefit of its people." USAID Mission

Director Freeman emphasized the joint achievements of the EAC and USAID over the past two decades. "By simplifying customs and border procedures, we have facilitated faster, more affordable and predictable trade. We have increased investment by facilitating the closure of more international deals, which are expanding local industries and manufacturing."

Under this agreement, the EAC and the United States will work together

to advance regional economic integration; increase trade and investment between member states and with the United States; improve the sustainable management of natural resources in the Lake Victoria Basin and Mara River ecosystems; improve access to integrated health services in border areas and strengthen the EAC's organisational leadership.

EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumekeko thanked USAID

for its continued support to the EAC integration agenda, saying that the EAC's partnership with the United States dates back to the Community's inception. "The partnership continues to expand and be strengthened through mutual development objectives and funding for programmes such as trade and investment, biodiversity, climate change, agriculture, food security, water supply and sanitation, and institutional support," said Amb. Mfumekeko.