

EALA Speaker in fresh appeal for bloc funding

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THE SPEAKER of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Daniel Kidega, has made another appeal for partner states to meet their financial obligations to enable organs of the East African Community to perform their duties.

Kidega made the appeal during the introductory session of the Assembly as it started a two-week session in Kigali, yesterday.

Speaking at a news conference later, Kidega shed more light on the issue.

"I re-appeal to our governments to make sure they help us fulfill our mandate to push this integration agenda," he said.

The issue of funding, the regional parliament Speaker said, is not only worrying but critical to the extent that a number of organs of the Community had to scale down on activities.

Today, he said, the contributions of partner states as per their budget contribution "stand only at 44 per cent and we are left with only four months to conclude this financial year."

"This challenge is not only faced by EALA as an organ. It is across the board, all organs and institutions of the Commu-

nity," Kidega noted, adding that he would restrict his comments only to what the Assembly has done to be able to carry on with work despite the challenges.

Last year, the Assembly had to suspend some activities and condense others. Apart from that, the MPs had to take it upon themselves to work without sitting allowances, he said.

"I don't think it happens easily around parliaments in the world for members to work without sitting allowances," Kidega said.

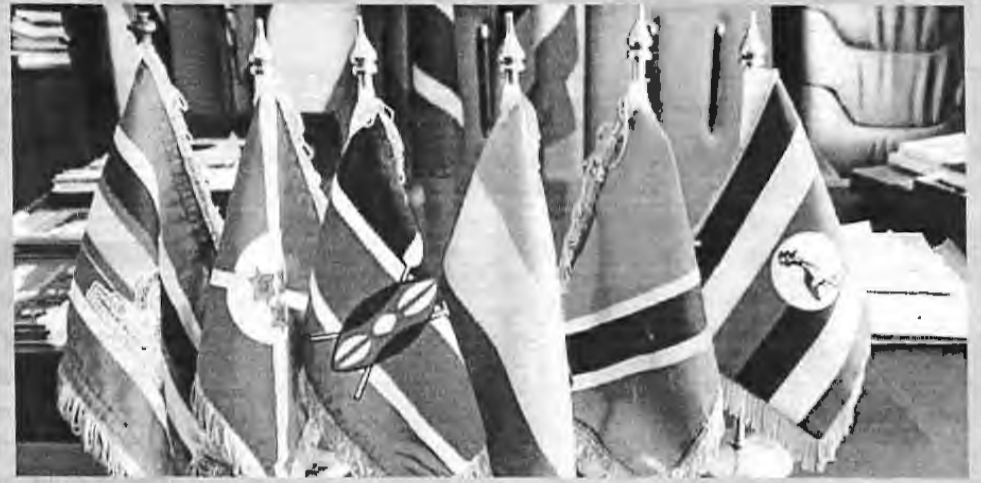
During their ongoing sitting in Kigali, the Speaker told reporters that the regional lawmakers have realigned their transportation logistics to cut costs as much as they can even if it inconveniences lawmakers.

Study on genocide ideology affected

Among the affected activities of the EALA is a study started last year on the nature and extent of genocide ideology in the region.

Kidega said: "For example, this assembly has a select committee that is supposed to do a study on genocide ideology and Genocide denial and hate speech in the region; that standing committee cannot proceed to do its work because it lacks funds."

STATUS OF PARTNER STATES' CONTRIBUTION



STATE	ARREARS (FY15/16)	PAID UP 2016/17	OUTSTANDING
Kenya	-	4,395,707	3,982,400
Tanzania	-	2,553,203	5,824,905
Uganda	-	7,489,004	889,104
Rwanda	-	3,999,760	4,378,348
Burundi	771,037	---	9,149,145
Total	771,037	18,437,674	24,223,901

*Each partner state is supposed to contribute \$8,378,108.
All figures are in US Dollar

The Assembly last year agreed to spend \$450,000 (about Rwf356 million) on the long-awaited study on the nature and extent of genocide ideology in the region.

At the time, MP Dr Odette Nyiramili-mo, the chairperson of the Committee on General Purposes, told *The New Times* that already \$200,000 was availed in this financial year and more would be disbursed later to complete the task.

The budget for the entire research is

about \$450,000, but since EALA could not secure the whole amount, they had decided to start work as they hoped to get more funds later.

The Assembly, Kidega said, also had several other committees that were supposed to traverse the region to examine issues such as refugee crisis but they cannot proceed for lack of funding.

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Kirunda Kivejinja, the Ugandan third deputy prime minister and minister for EAC Affairs (L), chats with Kidega during the news briefing in Kigali yesterday. Timothy Kisambira.