



REPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI
ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE
CABINET DU PRESIDENT

MESSAGE BY HIS EXCELLENCY PIERRE NKURUNZIZA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI AND
CHAIRPERSON OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE,

PRESENTED BY THE RT. HON. PIE NTAVYOHANYUMA,
SPEAKER OF THE BURUNDI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF
THE SYMPOSIUM MARKING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MOUNT MERU HOTEL, ARUSHA, TANZANIA,

2ND JULY 2011

**The Right Honourable Abdirahin Haithar ABDI ,
Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly;**

**The Right Honourable Speakers of National
Parliaments of East African Community Partner
States;**

Honorable Ministers;

**Honourable Members of the East African
Legislative Assembly;**

**Hon. Amb. Dr. Richard SEZIBERA, Secretary
General of the East African Community;**

**Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic
Corps;**

Distinguished Invited Guests ;

**Distinguished Participants in the East African
Legislative Assembly Symposium;**

All Protocols observed;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. It is great pleasure for me to be with all of you today for the Closing Ceremony of the Symposium marking the Tenth Anniversary of the East African Legislative Assembly. I would like to thank very sincerely the Right Honourable Abdirahin Haithar ABDI for the invitation he kindly extended to the Burundian Delegation, his warm welcome and all

the attention we benefited, since our arrival in Arusha, Tanzania.

2. Allow me also, on behalf of the People of Burundi, the Parliament of Burundi and on my own behalf, to present to you our warm greetings.
3. We are proud to be party to this long and historical process of realizing the East African Community political integration, as it was launched by the founding fathers H.E. Daniel Arap Moi, Former President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Al-Hajj Hassan Mwinyi, Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania and H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, whom we salute.
4. We once again thank the organisers of this Symposium for allowing us to have the honour and privilege of being with you today.

Your Excellency, the Right Honourable Abdirahin Haithar ABDI, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly,

Your Excellencies, Honourable Speakers of National Parliaments;

Honourable Parliamentarians;

Honourable Ministers;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. I also wish to communicate that His Excellency Pierre NKURUNZIZA, President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the East African Community Summit of Heads of State, who was invited to grace the Closing Ceremony of this Symposium, has graciously honoured me, by sending me to deliver His Message to the East African Legislative Assembly Symposium, on this occasion. His Excellency Pierre NKURUNZIZA had to grace the Forty-Ninth Anniversary of the Independence of Burundi, which is celebrated on the first day of July each year. Allow me therefore to quote:
6. "We have the pleasure, on behalf of the People of Burundi and on our own behalf, to convey our cordial and warm greetings. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly and the East African Legislative Assembly at large, for the Tenth Anniversary this year.
7. We are proud that the Tenth Anniversary of the East African Legislative Assembly coincides with this moment in which the five East African Community Partner States live in peace and security. This is also an opportunity to appreciate that the different electoral processes held in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda were

peaceful and successful. We wish the same for our brothers and sisters of the Republic of Kenya in the forthcoming elections.

Excellencies ;

Honourable Ministers and Parliamentarians ;

Ladies and Gentlemen ;

8. The present Symposium could not have taken place at a better place and time. Indeed, ten years are little in terms of life span, but what makes the difference is the achievements and the impact on daily life. We are convinced on our part, that the East African Legislative Assembly has delivered.
9. We are informed that the East African Legislative Assembly has, since November 2001, executed its mandate in accordance with Article Forty-Nine of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community and established parliamentary practice.
10. The Tenth Anniversary of the East African Legislative Assembly is being celebrated at the time when other regional organisations appreciate significantly progress made by the East African Community, as it was witnessed during the last Summit of the COMESA, EAC and SADC held in South Africa, earlier June this year. What remains

is to capitalize on such success which, undoubtedly, will inspire other countries of the Region to apply for membership of the East African Community and to work decidedly for the establishment of the future East African Political Federation.

11. As Chairperson of the East African Community Summit of Heads of State, We have also been privileged to acknowledge the job well done by the East African Legislative Assembly Members, in terms of legislating, representing the People of East Africa, approving the budget of the East African Community, providing oversight of East African Community activities and establishing linkages with National Assemblies.
12. In practical terms of performance and achievement, we are happy to note the following:

First, since November 2001, the East African Legislative Assembly has passed a number of bills which have been enacted. We congratulate the East African Legislative Assembly on this.

Second, the East African Legislative Assembly has moved many motions and resolutions. Similarly, the East African Legislative Assembly has debated many Committees Reports on various Issues, such as Climate Change, Food Security, Adequate and Decent Housing, Transborder Ecosystem, East

African Passport, the East African Community Anthem, Migingo Dispute, Street Children, to name but a few.

Third, the East African Legislative Assembly has led Election Observation Missions in all East African Community Partner States and, even beyond their borders, in the Southern Sudan. We commend the East African Legislative Assembly for that.

Fourth, the East African Legislative Assembly has been busy in East African Community Partner States, through the Nanyuki Series, which allowed the Regional Assembly to interact with National Parliaments and Constituencies. We sincerely appreciate this good practice.

Fifth, with the present Symposium, the East African Legislative Assembly has gone further in the area of interaction with the main Stakeholders at regional level, including the Private Sector and Civil Society. We congratulate again the East African Legislative Assembly on this achievement.

13. The East African Legislative Assembly has during the period under consideration, played a prominent role in fostering and helping to consolidate the integration of the East African Community which, under the vision of the founding fathers of the East African Community,

shall culminate into a Political Federation. East African Legislative Assembly Members do effectively, both individually and collectively, play community practice. We wish to commend them on this achievement.

14. It is Our most sincere hope that East African Legislative Assembly Members, just as convinced disciples, shall go and roam the Region, along with other East African Community Organs and Institutions, preaching the benefits of the different stages of integration, including Political Federation the ultimate goal, for all Parties involved in the integration, especially the East African People at grassroots level, whom they do solemnly represent.
15. In doing so, the East African Legislative Assembly shall serve as a strategic driver, just as the East African Community Summit, Court of Justice or the other Stakeholders at Partner State level, namely the Academia, Media and Civil Society, including the Youth and Women.
16. We shall never stress it, nor utter it out loud enough, it is Our strong belief that it is the synergy of action by all the interested Stakeholders, including the Population at grassroots level, both actor and beneficiary, that integration shall be a success, especially when we reach higher stages of integration like the Political

Federation. It cannot be otherwise, since we are talking about the East African Community as “people centred and private sector driven”.

17. Going back to the role of the East African Legislative Assembly, a few things still need to be reflected upon. During the Symposium, We do expect that the Participants have touched upon them and we are grateful that they did so.
18. First, to be truly at the service of the peoples of the East African Community, the Community must be built for its peoples and the elites must understand that. There is also need for agreeing on principles as well as a strategy to move by consensus towards Political Federation. The more we shall act together, the better chances of success are.
19. Therefore, Our Community shall gain not only strength but also power; and conquer its credentials in the International arena and the globalised world of economies of scale, as well.
20. Secondly, there is need for enhanced cooperation between the East African Legislative Assembly and the National Parliaments of East African Community Partner States. We are of the view that they will continue to work together to achieve the East African Community ultimate goal of Political Federation.

21. In this respect, there is a need for an increased feedback between respective National Parliaments and their respective East African Legislative Assembly Members, more regular contacts between East African Legislative Assembly and National Parliaments for more shared information on bills and an increased role of the Forum of the Speakers of the National Parliaments of East African Community Partner States.

22. Finally, **Mister Speaker**, We earlier pledged Our support to the Symposium for its success. We are convinced that the deliberations were conducive to charting out pillars for the roadmap to Political Federation. It is Our sincere hope that the East African Legislative Assembly will have the opportunity to abreast the Summit with the Recommendations of the Symposium. We assure you that we will pay attention to their implementation.

23. We reiterate once again Our congratulations on the East African Legislative Assembly Tenth Anniversary and wish the EALA all the best for fostering East African Community integration." End of Quote.

24. On my own behalf, I wish to reiterate once again my congratulations and thanks to the Right

Honourable Abdirahin Haithar ABDI, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, for the excellent organization of this Symposium and endeavours to make it a full success.

25. We have appreciated the high quality of the different speeches, presentations and various contributions from participants.

26. I cannot however, conclude without touching upon one or two issues that constitute the challenges ahead of us in terms of integration.

Firstly, do we have a common understanding of Political Federation? This is very critical, if we want to know where we are heading to.

Secondly, are we ready to make the unavoidable and necessary sacrifice of relinquishing or ceding big part of our East African Community Partner States' sovereignty?

27. In my opinion, we do have all the ingredients in place, because where there is a will, there is always a way. In addition, we have committed leadership and People willing and longing for integration.

28. Like any other East African, I look forward to a fully integrated East African Community.

Long live the East African Community

**Long live the East African Legislative
Assembly**

God bless you all.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.