

***EAC Headquarters, Arusha, 18 August 2008:*** The second round of the negotiations of the EAC Common Market Protocol opened in Nairobi today amidst expressions of a determination by all the negotiating parties to work towards the conclusion of the negotiations and reaching agreement on the Protocol by the set deadline of December 2008. The Nairobi round of negotiations will be held from 18-23 August 2008.

The first round of the negotiations were held in Kigali, Rwanda on 14 – 22 April 2008 and made significant progress with agreements that were reached on the overall structure as well as specific issues on the Preamble, the Objectives and Principles of the Protocol, Free Movement of Goods, Free Movement of Persons and Free Movement of Labour.

Addressing the opening of the talks at the Grand Regency Hotel, Nairobi today, the Kenya Assistant Minister for East African Community, Hon. Peter Munya commended the High Level Task Force on the Negotiations of the EAC Common Market Protocol (HLTF) for its arrival at a consensus on a large number of the critical aspects of the Protocol.

The Minister said the negotiators should adopt a positive attitude in shedding off some national interests, “if we are to realize the objective of the Common market which is to create a single internal market that guarantees the free movement of goods, persons, labour, services and capital”.

The Minister noted that Tanzania, which did not attend the first round of negotiations (in Kigali) had, however, in the intervening period received the report of the Kigali deliberations and forwarded her comments. The Tanzania comments will form the first agenda of the current 2nd round of the negotiations in Nairobi after which the negotiations will proceed into the other aspects of the Protocol, i.e., the Right of Establishment; the Right of Residence; Free Movement of Services; Transport; and Free Movement of Capital.

Meanwhile, the EAC Deputy Secretary General (Projects and Programmes), Amb. Julius Onen has said a key outcome of the Nairobi round of negotiations is for the HLTF to consider Tanzania’s comments on the Kigali deliberations. Amb. Onen said he was confident that a compromise would be reached on the Tanzania comments, which he said were constructive, in the spirit of give and take that the negotiations are emphasizing.

The Tanzania comments, while broadly endorsing the Kigali deliberations, seek clarifications or further elaborations on several issues, including movements of refugees, structural aspects of addressing imbalances in the implementation of the Common Market; applications of the principles of asymmetry and variable geometry as well as establishing logical build up from Customs Union to Common Market and addressing more boldly the issues of acceleration of economic growth and development in their link to the promotion of free movement of factors of production.

**Directorate of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs**

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