

***Secretary General urges Sweden to support EAC Climate Change Master Plan***

***EAC Headquarters, Arusha, Thursday 14 May 2009:*** The Secretary General of the East African Community, Ambassador Juma Mwapachu today met a delegation from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) led by the Assistant Director General Operations, Mr. Magnus Lindell, who called on him at his office in Arusha, Tanzania. Other members of the delegation included Ms Kikki Nordin, the Regional Director based at the Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, Kenya; and Dr. Kristina Ramstedt, the Head of the Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV/Aids Team for Africa based in Lusaka, Zambia. The Secretary General was accompanied by the EAC Director for Infrastructure, Mr. Philip Wambugu; the Principal Resource Mobilization Officer, Dr. James Njagu; the Principal International Relations Officer, Mr. Joseph Birungi; the Senior Meteorologist, Mr. John G. Mungai; and other senior officials from the EAC Secretariat.

The Swedish government has engaged SIDA to prepare a new strategy for regional development cooperation in the Sub-Saharan Africa during the year 2009 and as part of this process, high level meetings are scheduled with the Regional Economic Communities namely; the East African Community, the Southern Africa Development Community, and the African Union, basically to get feedback on the new strategy and to receive additional inputs regarding trends, challenges and opportunities for Sweden's role in regional integration and development process.

Amb. Juma Mwapachu briefed his guests on a wide range of issues of the EAC integration, noting that in the overall, the Community was making tremendous progress. He said the EAC Customs Union was fast consolidating and the region was moving to the second stage of the integration process; the EAC Common Market Protocol whose signing is targeted for November

2009 by the EAC Heads of State and implementation by January 2010. He reiterated that work on the third stage of the integration process (Monetary Union) was already on course. He informed the delegation that at the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EAC Monetary Affairs Committee (MAC) held at Serena Hotel, Kigali Rwanda, on May 7, 2009, the Governors of the Central Banks of the EAC Partner States affirmed their strong conviction that a durable Monetary Union depends on achieving macroeconomic convergence with regard to price stability, sound fiscal and monetary policies, and exchange rate stability. He said the Central Bank Governors noted with satisfaction the progress of the comprehensive study on the EAC Monetary Union to be undertaken by the European Central Bank and that the study will inform the way forward to the realization of the EAC Monetary Union. Amb. Juma Mwapachu reiterated the Governors' commitment and support to ensure that the study was concluded in time.

On the issue of Political Federation (4<sup>th</sup> stage of the EAC integration process), Amb. Juma Mwapachu informed the delegation that during the recent Summit, the EAC Heads of State received findings of the national consultative process on fast tracking the political federation conducted in Rwanda and Burundi. According to the findings, the people of the two new Partner States indicated support for the process. Accordingly, the EAC Council of Ministers have been directed to review the reports (including those from the original Partner States that had already been received) and submit concrete recommendations to the Summit at its sitting in November 2009 on the way forward on the establishment of the Political Federation, noted Amb. Juma Mwapachu.

The Secretary General hailed the Swedish government for the enormous support it has always extended to the EAC in many critical areas, among them; the EAC Partnership Fund, lake Victoria Basin Commission, and HIV/Aids mitigation. He informed the delegation that the Community was in the process of developing a robust Climate Change Master Plan which addresses climate change detection, vulnerabilities, mitigation strategies, as well as adaption measures. In this regard, the Secretary General urged the Swedish government to actively support EAC and take the lead in the finalization and implementation of the Climate Change Master Plan, as this will go a long way to combat the current severe impact the region is facing as a result of the climate change.

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