



...Reports of the CTI and GPC adopted

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NAIROBI, KENYA: September 6, 2012: EALA has today debated and adopted the Report of the Committee on Communications, Trade and Investment and the corresponding Report of the Committee on General Purpose.

The Report of the Committee on Communications Trade and Investment (CTI) re-affirmed that EALA had a critical role to play in the integration process and stated that it was necessary for stakeholders to acquaint themselves with the objectives of the Treaty and thus influence policy formulation geared towards enactment of laws and regulations.

The Report presented by the Committee's Chairperson, Hon Angela Charles Kizigha, reiterated the need for strengthening relations between EALA and the National Assemblies to ensure popular participation of the general public as expressed through the debates of elected Members in the National Assemblies. At the same time, the Committee wants the issues generated from EALA debated in the National Assembly to enhance awareness.

With regards to adherence to the provisions of the Treaty for the establishment of the EAC, the Committee is emphasizing the need to enact legislation that shall enforce implementation of the same. This law, the CTI indicates, shall also provide for sanctions to be taken in case(s) of non-compliance by the Partner States to the said provisions.

In addition, the Committee is calling for establishment of a neutral authority whose mandate shall be to undertake the implementation of the Treaty. The CTI further re-affirms its call that Ministers- in- charge of EAC be resident in Arusha and that they should be allocated specific sectors at the EAC Secretariat on matters of the integration process for their close follow up and scrutiny.

The Report follows a capacity building workshop recently held in Nairobi, Kenya. The objectives of the workshop were to orient the new Members of the Committee on its functions in the execution of the EAC Integration process, areas of intervention in the integration process and the nature and flow of Parliamentary business among others.

During debate, Hon Peter Mathuki, Hon Frederic Ngenzebuhoro, Hon Christophe Bazivamo, Hon Abdullah Mwinyi and Hon Joseph Kiangoi all supported and threw their weight behind the motion.

However, speaking on behalf of the Council of Ministers, Kenya's Assistant Minister for EAC, Hon Peter Munya requested the House to rescind the request to have EAC Ministers resident in Arusha.

Citing other duties of the Ministers within their respective Partner States, Hon Munya noted that the Ministers were charged with implementing the EAC decisions in their home countries.

"Our constituencies whom we serve are East African citizens residing in the Partner States. We also carry out duties in the National Assemblies where we must espouse the policies of the EAC", Hon Munya remarked. "In addition, some Ministers are Members of Parliament and discharge duties at the constituency level", he added.

The second Report that was adopted was that of the Committee on General Purpose presented by the Chairperson, Hon Dr. Martin Nduwimana. The Report emphasizes the need to brand and profit the space and role of EALA in the legislative agenda so as to build collaborative networks and enhance the deepening and widening of the integration process.

On oversight, the GPC undertakes to enhance assessment of the status of utilized funds, question the delay in release of funds and procedural limitations in planning and approval and review of the time-frame for the budget implementation and approval. The Committee further remarks that it is essential to deal with technicalities in the EAC budget framework and positioning of the budget in the broader EAC Strategic Plan. With it, the GPC shall also work at reducing public expenditures vis a vis increasing expenditure on service delivery while addressing the different political interests attached to the EAC Budget.

The Committee further positions itself to address the general undertaking as to the implementation of the Treaty. In this regard, it makes a number of proposals in priority areas including the following sectors: Education and Training, Science and Technology and Health. Other areas include Culture and Sports as well as Social Welfare.

The Report summarises the proceedings of the capacity building workshop held for Members of

the Committee on July 25-28, 2012, in Kampala, Uganda.

On resumption of debate, Hon Susan Nakawuki, Hon Judith Pareno, Hon Hafsa Mossi, Hon Valerie Nyirahabineza, Hon Jeremie Ngendakumana and Hon Mike Sebalu supported the motion. Hon Sebalu noted that Kiswahili was key and that its usage needs to be fast-tracked. He noted that it was time for the size of the Assembly to be enlarged in terms of numbers of elected Members. Hon Nyirahabineza remarked that it was time all Partner States' National Assemblies put in place specific EAC Committees while Hon Hafsa Mossi reiterated the need for the rights of Persons With Disabilities (PWD) to be at the top of priorities of Partner States development plans.

Hon Chris Opoka-Okumu however supported the idea of borrowing by Development Partners among other avenues noting that it was supported by Article 132 of the Treaty Establishing the EAC.

The EAC Secretary General, Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera reiterated that the role of EALA in budgeting was fundamental. He noted that Members had participated in the Pre-budgeting process and hailed the Speaker for her participation. The Secretary General remarked that the priorities for funding were several. He remarked that EAC and the Development Partners were working together to enable the integration agenda be realized. "We however need a sustainable budget given the fact that 70% of the budget is donor-funded", he said and noted that the Secretariat was exploring alternative mechanisms of financing the Community as per a directive of the EAC Council of Ministers.

Tomorrow Friday, September 7, 2012, there shall be an Inter-EAC Organ Meeting. The Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution Committee will also meet. Meanwhile, Plenary resumes next week.

-Ends-

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