



**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, Arusha, Tanzania: September 4, 2012:** Parliamentarians should, as a matter of fact devise means of engaging their respective governments in ensuring their cities are engines of sustainable growth, EALA Speaker, Rt. Hon Margaret Nantongo Zziwa has said.

To this end, accountability to the people by improving quality of oversight at national and regional parliaments is key, calling for legislators to liaise closely with the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. The Speaker made the remarks during the 6th Session of the World Urban Forum Roundtable in Naples, Italy earlier today.

In a speech read on her behalf by EALA Member, Hon Patricia Hajabakiga, the Speaker noted that urbanization was the hope for the continent and called on stakeholders to massively invest in the cities.

The Speaker termed climate change, slums and the urban-rural link as major challenges facing the continent's quest to urbanise.

"Urbanisation is not in itself a problem in Africa. In fact in most African countries, the East African Community inclusive, cities account for a large proportion of all economic activities. If managed properly, African cities and towns could make globalization work for every African woman, man and child" the Speaker noted.

The week-long meeting commenced on September 1, 2012. Themed 'Cities as Engines of sustainable growth: the Role of Parliamentarians', the Roundtable is being attended by over 100 legislators from the globe and is organized by the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in conjunction with the UN Habitat. The EALA Speaker also doubles up as the President of the Africa Chapter of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat.

The Roundtable seeks to create a shared understanding of the role of cities in spurring national economic growth and the conditions necessary for sustainability. It further seeks to identify the roles of Parliamentarians in supporting the growth of cities while delineating strategies by which legislators can better influence commitments and policies in the running of the metropolis.

According to GPH, cities and economic progress have always been intimately linked and they generate significant portions of gross domestic product and national wealth by creating

development opportunities, jobs and investment. However not all cities are equal and as some succeed in providing economic and other opportunities for their citizens, others struggle to unlock the potential.

Parliamentarians on their part pass legislation and control budgets and can ensure the necessary financial resources to achieve a given set of objectives are available. The legislators in addition are in a position capable of influencing decision making processes and demand as well as in fostering co-ordinated action.

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