



...calls for more linkages between the National Assemblies and EALA

East Africa Legislative Assembly, Nairobi , Kenya: September 4, 2012: President Mwai Kibaki today opened the Second Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) at the Kenya National Assembly in Nairobi.

In his speech, President Kibaki called on EALA and the National Assemblies to forge more linkages noting that such a move would go a long way in improving the performance of the Community. He termed the necessity of different legislatures to work together urgent to ensure the laws enacted by EALA enhance and compliment national laws.

'For instance, it may be useful to hold special joint sessions to debate the Community agenda. This way, the Community will be brought closer to the people for whom it is intended', the Head of State remarked.

The President further urged the Assembly and the Council of Ministers to collaborate more on mechanisms to initiate laws to enforce the expeditious implementation of the Customs Union and the Common Market Protocols. This he noted will enable citizens of EAC to reap benefits

accruing from the pillars and to ensure the fulfillment of the citizens' desires.

The President pleaded for the removal of Non-Tariff Barriers so as to spur trade and called for effective communication of policies agreed upon across the region to enable the seamless flow of goods and services.

He noted that Kenya had proceeded to reduce the police stops for transit cargo to ensure speedy movement of goods and services to the EAC Partner States and added that Kenya was keen to ensure smoother operations at the weighbridges.

On environmental matters, the Head of State called for better mechanisms to contain the periodic droughts, floods and other natural resources and challenged legislators to play their part in mitigating the effects of Climate Change.

On peace and security, the President maintained that stability was key for the region and hailed Somalia as it embraces for a period of reconstruction.

The Head of State further welcomed the interests of Sudan, South Sudan, the DRC, Ethiopia and Somalia in joining the EAC and called on the regional bloc to facilitate their membership.

In attendance were the Vice President, Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Members of EALA, Parliamentarians, EAC Secretary General, representatives of the diplomatic corps, government officials and other stakeholders. The EALA Plenary takes place from today to September 14th, 2012.

In her welcome remarks, the Speaker of EALA, Rt. Hon. Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, hailed President Kibaki and the citizens of the Republic of Kenya for their efforts and steadfast contribution towards the realization of the objectives of the EAC. She termed as progressive developments at the EAC during the period under President Kibaki as the Chair of the Summit of EAC Heads of State.

“I note with gratitude that the EAC region has realized a number of successes during the period of your Chairmanship exemplifying your dedication and desire to be a strong advocate for the integration process in all actions and deed. Some of these successes include the fact that EAC has commenced deliberations on the Monetary Union while putting in place far reaching measures to consolidate on the Customs Union and the Common Market pillars respectively”, Rt. Hon Zziwa remarked.

She however reiterated the need for the speedy implementation of the decisions of the Council of Ministers, removal of Non-Tariff Barriers that hinder the free flow of business and sustained creation of awareness on the benefits of the integration process to citizens.

On infrastructure, Rt. Hon Zziwa remarked that it was time the region enhanced its rail network system noting that it would ensure availability of efficient and cheap transport.

“In comparison to the road network which can be developed exclusively, the rail network needs ideally to be developed basing on its inter-connectivity in order to enable all Partner States to immensely benefit. We note with concern that since the 1920s limited improvements in terms of rail-lines have been added on to the existing network. So we are banking on Your Excellency for support in the area”, the Speaker added.

Rt. Hon Zziwa said the country was on the verge of transformation stating the new constitutional dispensation, which came into place two years ago was revolutionary and progressive. She noted that the country had realized progress in various sectors and remarked that the region as a whole stood to immensely benefit. The Speaker further called on the country to ensure the elections scheduled for next year are credible.

The Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly, Rt. Hon Kenneth Marende said the EAC was a strong economic bloc and heralded the integration process. He noted that his Assembly was committed and keen to see the region realize its dream. Rt. Hon Marende further called for the speedy removal of the Non-Tariff Barriers.

Over the next two weeks, the Assembly shall conduct the following business:

- Receive reports of the following Committees of EALA:

1. The Committee on Accounts
2. The Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources
3. The Committee on General Purpose
4. The Committee on Communications, Trade and Investment
5. The Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution
6. The Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution

- debate the Report of the Committee on Communications, Trade and Investment on Consultation between Inter-Parliamentary bodies on Trade related policies. The Consultation took place in Kigali, Rwanda

- pose questions to the Council of Ministers, debate and adopt various Committee Reports, Motions and Resolutions.

EALA Member, Hon. Bernard Murunya moved a vote of thanks applauding President Kibaki and the Kenya National Assembly for the continuous support to EALA. Hon Murunya thanked President Kibaki for fulfilling the Presidential address and termed its content vital and useful.

“The speech today was relevant and insightful and addressed relevant issues,” Hon Murunya

remarked, thanking the Head of State for his hospitality, reliability and availability.

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For more information, contact Bobi Odiko, Senior Public Relations Officer

East African Legislative Assembly, Tel: +255-27-2508240, Cell: +255-787-870945,
+254-733-718036. Email: BOdiko@eachq.org, Web: <http://www.eala.org>