



**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, Kampala, Uganda; July 3, 2012:** President Yoweri Museveni has today held a meeting with the EALA Speaker Rt. Hon Margaret Nantongo Zziwa. During the meeting that took place at the President's up-country home in Rwakitura, Kiruhura District, west of the capital, President Museveni and Rt. Hon Zziwa delved on issues related to the integration process.

The meeting was cordial with the Head of State congratulating the Speaker following her recent ascension into the high office after the EALA elections - which he termed duly democratic. The President reiterated the need for strengthening of the integration process, saying it was the only way for the EAC to fully realize economic development.

'Integration is about increasing opportunities since producers need to grow and expand markets', President Museveni remarked, adding that, the region had long cultural and historical ties that were binding.

He noted that for business to flow there was need to rid the region of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and the full implementation of the Common Market Protocol.

In her remarks, Rt. Hon Zziwa lauded President Museveni for supporting the legislative Assembly and the EAC and added that political will was fundamental in the entire process. Rt. Hon Zziwa also called on the President to continue with his advocacy to the Summit of Heads of State on the importance of creating awareness of the EAC amongst the citizens of respective Partner States.

'The EAC anthem is sang at every function while the Community's flag flies in almost every public office in Kampala. This should be scaled-up to all towns and townships here. I wish to appeal that the practice should ideally be replicated in all the Partner States', Rt. Hon Zziwa noted.

The Speaker re-affirmed EALA's desire to see to it that EAC was unified and progressive. 'During my tenure, I shall strive to ensure that the Assembly remains strong and true to the ideals of the regions citizens. Your support - Your Excellency shall be fundamental in this quest', the Speaker stated.

Rt. Hon Zziwa noted that the Assembly shall under her watch continue to work closely with the Council of Ministers. She however challenged the Council who sit on the Assembly as ex-officio Members to rise up to the occasion and bring more Bills to the House.

' We expect to see them (Council) give us sufficient work for debate on the floor of the House. The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) for example is operational yet the corresponding Bill which was withdrawn by the Council sometimes back has never been re-introduced' the Speaker noted.

The meeting further noted that more action was necessary – including that of translating plans into tangible benefits to enable citizens of the region to relate more with the integration process. The Speaker also pleaded with the Head of State to see to it that the EAC Speakers' and Chief Justices' Fora were institutionalized in order to strengthen the linkages.

Present at the meeting were EALA staff, Senior Public Relations Officer, Bobi Odiko and Senior Administrative Assistant, Winnie Kaliba.

The courtesy call was a first in the series of meetings planned with the Heads of State as the new Speaker lays her down strategy for the Assembly.

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