



...Chair of Council presented a USD 110 Million Budget to the Regional Assembly last week

East African Legislative Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania; May 21, 2015: EALA yesterday debated and approved the EAC Budget estimates for the Financial Year 2015/2016 totalling to USD 110, 660,098.

To anchor the said budget, EALA also passed the EAC Appropriation Bill 2015. The object of the EAC Appropriation Bill, 2015 is to make provision for the appropriation out of the budget for the specified amount of money for the services and purposes of the Community for the Financial Year ending 30th of June 2016.

The Budget is allocated (after amendments to the Appropriation Bill) to the Organs and Institutions of the EAC as follows; East African Community Secretariat USD 68,961,054, East African Legislative Assembly USD16,541,436 and the East African Court of Justice USD 4,301,551.

The Inter-University Council for East Africa shall receive USD \$4,507,648, Lake Victoria Basin Commission USD 10,137,163 while USD 3,091,097 is earmarked for the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization. On their part, the East African Science and Technology Commission shall receive USD 726,755, East African Kiswahili Commission USD756, 361 and the East African Health Research Commission USD 935,498. A new outfit, East African Competition Authority is set to benefit from receipt of USD 701,530 in the Financial Year.

The 2015/2016 Budget is to be financed by Partner State contributions to the tune of USD 47,566,973 compared to USD 46, 958,273 of the current year and Development Partners support USD 58,555,635 which is a significant drop from USD 75,121,126 of the previous year. Other sources of revenue shall account for USD 4,537, 490.

The 2015/2016 Budget is a drop down from USD 126,110,145 Million in the previous Financial Year. The Budget prioritizes the operationalization of the Single Customs Territory, enhanced implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol with particular focus on implementation of the new generation EAC internationalised e-Passport and development of the EAC trading, payments and settlements systems.

The EAC Political Federation is also a key priority area on the agenda in the coming Financial Year as the mode of the regional Constitution making process commences. Other areas

include development of cross-border infrastructure including roads, implementation of the Vehicle Load Control Law and sensitization of weighbridge operators. The implementation of the EAC Industrialization Policy is also a priority with focus given on upgrading the Small and Micro-Enterprises (SMEs) competitiveness, strengthening the collection and compilation of industrial statistics

Hon Dr. Abdallah Sadaala Abdallah, Deputy Minister for EAC, United Republic of Tanzania and the Chair of the Council of Ministers presented the Budget Speech to an attentive House last week.

Tuesday this week, the Chair of the Council of Ministers moved a Motion that EALA resolves itself into a Committee of Ways and Means to consider and approve the Financial Statement for the Financial Year 2015/16 and a Committee of Supply to consider and approve the Estimates of Expenditure.

The debate was preceded by a Report of the General Purpose Committee (GPC), presented yesterday by the Chair, Hon Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo.

In a bid to enhance the budgeting process, the Committee called for a review of the EAC Budget Act. It also calls for the building of capacity of Members to enable them handle the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgeting process. The GPC also calls upon the Assembly to urge the Council of Ministers to define the roles and responsibilities of the Finance and Administration Committee, including its Terms of References and the extent to which powers are given to it.

The Committee is also emphatic that there is need to further curtail excess travel, enhance implementation of the decisions and directives of the Council of Ministers. It thus insists that the directive on Video Conferencing be further adhered to, and that all departments within the EAC should adjust their budgets to reflect the same.

The Committee is further concerned that the social sectors at the EAC have been chronically underfunded over time and thus calls for the re-allocation to the extent possible in order to restore some activities of the sector to allow for their effective implementation.

The GPC also calls for the overall strengthening of EAC Sensitisation policy and the requisite prioritization in funding.

“While the Committee has previously recommended strengthening of the Corporate Communications Department to be able to spearhead the process, the Committee is of the view that efforts have to be enhanced and funding increased to facilitate Organs and Institutions to optimally participate both jointly and as entities, in the sensitization of East

Africans,” a section of the report says.

Hon Dr Odette Nyiramilimo also calls for improvement of the conditions of service and emoluments of the EAC Staff to make the Institution more competitive and to retain the best caliber of staff. The Committee raises concern over the impending high number of staff of the Secretariat who are expected to retire or to complete the tenure of service in 2017. It thus urges the Council of Ministers to develop an exit and hiring plan that shall offset risks of losing several staff, develop institutional succession plans and develop EAC staff development and retention strategy.

The Committee in its entirety, makes a number of observations and recommendations within the respective Organs and Institutions of the EAC.

During debate, Hon Martin Ngoga remarked that East African Court of Justice had been given an extended jurisdiction in trade matters thus it was prudent to anticipate additional litigation matters. He called on the Council to extend funding so that the Court becomes efficient. He further reiterated that it was necessary to relocate the Court away from the Secretariat in Arusha for further judicial independence.

Hon Mumbi Ngaru said the integration process was people-centred and urged the Council of Ministers to tighten and seal any loop-holes of wastage so that funds become available for the uses.

Hon Yves Nsabimana tasked the Council to ensure adherence to the planned programmes and projects. Hon Susan Nakawuki noted that the Directorate of productive and Social Sectors remained largely underfunded. Hon Bernard Mulengani remarked that the budget as provided for indicated the need for more clarity. He noted that various sections of the Budget speech did not tally with the MTEF provided.

“The allocated amount in budget is miserable. If you look at Agriculture and food security, much is said but what is provided for in the MTEF is the opposite,” Hon Nakawuki said.

“Yet this sector touches on the very hearts of East Africans. I beg the Chair of Council to look for more money for this sector,” she said.

Hon Maryam Ussi said that some projects had not been operationalized due to zero utilization of funds which were available.

“We have been informed that the problem is due to no staffing as a result of the non-completion of the Institutional review. The morale of staff is also low, some staff are temporary and lack the actual benefits. We need to finalize the overdue review and regularize staffing,” she said.

Hon Dr. James Ndahiro said that there was need for better co-ordination to realise the EAC Development plan. “It seems we have only achieved 30% of the undertakings as provided for in the EAC Development Strategy were realized” he said.

EAC Secretary General, Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera lauded the Council of Ministers for presenting the budget in good time noting that it was taking place at the same time with those of the Partner States. He noted that the budgeting process was preceded by the Annual Planning process which had been undertaken earlier on. He remarked that all Organs and Institutions of the Community lacked the requisite resources to carry out their mandate fully. “Council is fully aware that not all needs are met but we are prioritizing and re-prioritising to see how best we can be effective, Hon Dr Sezibera noted.

The EAC Secretary General said the Executive was considering the operationalization of the East African Parliamentary Institute (EAPI) Act by July 1, 2015.

“I have made a specific request to the Council of Ministers to re-consider the earlier position of waiting until the finalization of the Institutional Review,” he said.

The Secretary General said the EAC had strengthened its procurement and administration systems at He remarked that every attempt was been made to ensure travel is results-oriented.

“All travels of the Secretary General and Executive staff are public and output oriented”, Hon Dr. Sezibera said.

He reiterated that as part of creation of awareness and sensitization activities, EAC would continue to hold meetings outside of the headquarters (Arusha).

Others who supported the motion were Hon Nusura Tiperu, Hon Abdullah Mwinyi, Hon Frederic Ngenzebuhoro, Hon Jeremie Ngendakumana, Hon Pierre Celestin Rwigema, Hon Dr. Kessy Nderakindo, Hon Valerie Nyirahabineza, Hon ShyRose Bhanji, Hon Christophe Bazivamo, Hon Dora Byamukama.

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