



...leaders of Parliaments/Assemblies call for solutions to the crises that threaten integration

East African Legislative Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania; April 28, 2015: With the Republics of Kenya and South Africa still reeling from the respective terrorist and xenophobic attacks recently, Speakers of the Parliaments/Assemblies in the EAC have condemned the affronts to humankind in the strongest terms possible.

Meeting under the auspices of the 10th Meeting of the EAC Bureau of Speakers in Dar es Salaam late last week, the EAC Speakers urged EAC Partner States and the continent to come up with quick solutions to the threats which they termed deterrent to the integration efforts.

On the infamous attack at the Garissa University College in Kenya which claimed over 140 lives on April 2, 2015, the Speakers called on the EAC Partner States to collectively come up with measures and mechanisms to address security challenges in the region.

In the Communique released at the end of the day-long meeting on April 24th, 2015, the Speakers further condoled and expressed their deep sympathies with the families of those who lost the lives in the attack on the University in North-Eastern Kenya.

“The Bureau implores the EAC Council of Ministers and calls upon the respective Governments of the Partner States to share knowledge and information on the mobilization, recruitment and operationalization of terror networks in the region, while working with global partners”, a section of the Communique read.

The Bureau of Speakers said it was alarmed by the increasing security threats in the region particularly the threats posed by the Al-Qaeda linked militant group, Al-Shabaab, the Allied Democratic Forces and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and said permanent solutions were necessary.

The Meeting was chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania and the Chairperson of the Bureau of EAC Speakers, Rt. Hon Anna Makinda. Present was the Speaker of EALA, Rt. Hon Daniel Kidega, Speaker of Kenya National Assembly, Rt. Hon Justin Muturi, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga and the Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, Rt. Hon Donatille Mukabalisa.

On the xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals living and working in South Africa, the leaders regretted what they termed a new menace of xenophobia in South Africa and called for an immediate end to the atrocities.

The move came as Parliament in South Africa plans to adjourn later this week to enable legislators in the country to travel to their respective constituencies to spread the anti-xenophobia message and to calm down their constituents in the wake of the attacks on the African migrants.

The move is the latest in a series of government initiatives aimed at quelling weeks of violence against foreigners, which left at least seven dead and drove thousands away from their homes.

On other regional matters, the Bureau of Speakers lauded EALA for passing the EAC Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers Bill, 2015 saying it would go a long way in spurring free movement of persons and goods. The objective of the EAC Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers Bill, 2015, is to provide a legal mechanism for the elimination of identified NTBs in the EAC region.

EALA Speaker, Rt. Hon Daniel F Kidega saluted the founding of the Bureau of Speakers saying it played a key part in information exchange and regular consultations between the Speakers. He said that EALA was now more focused on its mandate following the strengthening of its governance instruments. The EALA Speaker remarked that the Assembly would continue in its quest to promote integration through sensitization and outreach programmes such as the annual Inter-Parliamentary Games.

Rt. Hon Anna Makinda remarked that the United Republic of Tanzania was on the verge of getting a new Constitution. She remarked that the country was also gearing up for the forthcoming elections scheduled for October this year. The Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga on her part called on Parliaments in the region to exercise diligent oversight and to put in place mechanisms that would ensure efficient management of resources.

Rt. Hon Kadaga called on citizens of the region to enhance peaceful co-existence and harmony among themselves, saying that East Africans shared a common language and culture. The Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda, Rt. Hon Donatille Mukabalisa remarked that the region had realized tangible achievements and cited the application of the Rules of Origin and the

envisaged operationalization of the One Stop Border Posts and the Single Customs Territory as key to the integration process.

The Speaker of Kenya National Assembly, Rt. Hon Justin Muturi called for the operationalization of the East African Parliamentary Institute (EAPI) Act saying that it would be provide a positive thrust towards building institutional capacities of Legislators and Parliamentary staff in the region. The EAPI is an initiative of EALA in consultation with the National Assemblies and is envisaged to be established as an institution of the EAC.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The Bureau of the EAC Speakers is the umbrella body that EALA and the National Assemblies that champions the cause of Parliaments in the region, that of enacting legislation, oversight and representation and plays a key advisory role to the Summit of the EAC Heads of State.

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