

**STATE OF EAC ADDRESS BY H.E. PIERRE NKURUNZIZA,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI AND  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE SUMMIT OF THE EAC HEADS OF  
STATE AT THE 4TH SESSION OF THE EAST AFRICAN  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE CHAMBER OF THE RWANDA  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN KIGALI ON 5TH APRIL 2011**

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**Rt Honourable Speaker of the East African Legislative  
Assembly, Honourable Members of the East African  
Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, all protocol  
observed, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**May the Almighty God be praised for his Greatness !**

**1. It is for me a real pleasure and a great honour to be here  
in front of this majestic Assembly, to take the floor on this  
important occasion of the 4th Session of the East African  
Legislative Assembly, which is taking place in this beautiful  
city, Kigali.**

**2. Allow me first of all to sincerely thank the Government  
and the People of Rwanda for hosting this Assembly Session  
in Kigali, and for the warm hospitality extended to me and  
to my delegation.**

**3. Before starting my remarks, let me reiterate first of all the  
importance of this annual address delivered each time by  
the Chairperson of the Summit of the East African  
Community Heads of State. As indicated by His Excellency  
Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of  
Tanzania, in May last year while addressing this Assembly as**

**the then Chairperson of the EAC Summit, a focus in these addresses is to reflect on matters of general policies relating to the progress that our Community is realizing, while outlining the strategic challenges which require greater attention.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**4. My annual address of today comes at an important moment of the political evolution in our Region. Here, I think particularly of the context of the busy electoral period, after general elections in Burundi, the Constitutional Referendum in Kenya, Presidential Elections in Rwanda, General Elections in Tanzania last year, and Elections in Uganda early this year.**

**5. These democratic, peaceful, free and fair exercises are a cornerstone of the promotion of democracy and good governance in our respective countries, as well as a strong foundation for the East African Community integration process. This democracy is understood like a patriotic and participative manner of the public management, before, during and after elections.**

**6. Moreover, these political developments taking place in Our Region constitute an important part of our objectives, to consolidate political cooperation in various facets, as a way towards our quest for a Political Federation. We are proud of important achievements in sectors such as co-operation on questions in connection with defense, the**

coordination of the foreign policy, and other domains of peace, security and governance.

7. Furthermore, the major preoccupation of our integration is to live, to move together towards political stability, supported by a climate of mutual trust and solidarity among our respective countries. We are one people, and we have a common destiny. Rt Honourable Speaker, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

8. On the economic front, economies of Our Region are presently facing currency depreciation, with serious repercussions on inflation. These challenges arise from the recent extended drought that hit most parts of the Region, as well as from the recent rising prices of fuel and other imports, following the political events in the Maghreb and Middle East. The growing incidents of piracy in the Western rim of the Indian Ocean have also negatively impacted on Our Region. It is important for the EAC to reflect on this issue.

9. The East African Community is about to launch its Fourth « Five-Year Development Strategy 2011-2016 ». This Strategy is of a paramount importance as a broader development perspective, which the East African Community is engaged in. Our common ambition should be to transform Our Community into a Region that is truly united, peaceful and prosperous.

10. The integration process has achieved much over the past ten years. In maintaining the momentum already gathered, and moving the East African Community forward into larger growth and deeper integration, it is important that We then

**direct greater attention at getting the strategic drivers right. There are several drivers, but I may prioritize them as follows :**

**11. First of all, and in the context of the current low level of intra-EAC trade which stands at 11% of our total share in global trade, it is important that we address the factors that limit or constrain the construction of a larger EAC internal market.**

**12. We should seriously ask ourselves why this share of regional trade could not be more than that level. We have to accept the fact that it is a larger internal market, which will create the much needed new jobs for our youth, who today feel left behind in what we see as promising economic performances in our respective countries. This will also promote higher living standards of Our People.**

**13. Technology innovation, intensive irrigation and adding value to agricultural products through transformation and conservation techniques are among factors that can help boost higher intra-regional trade.**

**14. Similarly, the importance of roads and other infrastructures that connect agricultural production areas to markets and industrial centers is part of our concerns. In this regard, our focus on infrastructure development cannot therefore be limited to regional inter-connections. It must extend to the improvement of national infrastructures in general.**

**15. Besides, in all our national economic plans, we must constantly ensure that there are strong ties with what we are planning to realize a deeper regional integration.**

**16. Let me elaborate by saying that the East African Community is totally committed to the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite arrangement, with its central focus on the establishment of the « Grand Free Trade Area ». I wish to commend the work that has so far been done in this direction, and we are looking forward to the second Tripartite Summit, which will move Africa forward towards the realization of the African Economic Community.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**17. The second driver focuses on opening our borders to allow for trade to intensify. Trade flows are for the time being impeded by a good number of Non Tariff Barriers that remain a big disturbance today. The removal of Non Tariff Barriers would indeed constitute a solid basis for the success of the Monetary Union, whose negotiations are underway.**

**18. The introduction of One Stop Border Posts will provide part of the solution in enabling a freer flow of goods and services across our borders.**

**19. Allow me to reaffirm the important role of businesswomen in socio-economic development in general, in line with Chapter Twenty Two of the Treaty on the Establishment of the East African Community, and I am pleased to note that the East African Community is**

**organizing the First Women in Business Conference, which is expected to chart out policies and strategies, to put women at the heart of the East African Community integration.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

**20. Thirdly, We need to pursue regional infrastructure development more vigorously. The elaborated Regional Master Plans for Roads, Railways and Energy, have to be transformed into genuine infrastructures on the ground. We can no longer keep these plans in the drawers, since the expectations of the East Africans are very high.**

**21. We are also encouraged to note the developments in the implementation of the supportive regional infrastructure projects, in particular the new railway extension from Isaka, Tanzania, to Kigali in Rwanda and Keza-Musongati in Burundi.**

**This is a significant signal of getting the Region land linked, which can be supported by similar projects in the sectors of air and maritime transportation.**

**22. In the same spirit, immediate action must be taken in the strategic field of energy, source of development, to deal with power shortages that hamper regional industrialization.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable members of the parliament, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,**

**23. Fourth, One of our greatest challenges lies in quality assurance of our education systems at a global level, where science and technology are the prime drivers of social and economic transformation. We are then in need to strengthen the leading role of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) in quality assurance and in accreditation, harmonization of the higher education systems, to ensure high standards of the products of our academic institutions, in order to favour free movement of workers and services.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,**

**24. I cannot fail to mention the positive side on the horizon of the East African Community. As a matter of fact, with the Customs Union almost in full operation and the launching of the Common Market, we have laid a strong foundation to realize deeper integration of our economies and reinforce investments.**

**25. That's why when the East African Community Heads of State meet on 19 April, we are also expected to examine the proposal to establish a Single Customs Territory, which is intended to improve efficiencies in the collection of customs duties in our region. This decision should also reduce tax evasion. Ultimately, however, the success of the Customs Union relies on the establishment of a Regional Customs Management Authority, to oversee its effective operations.**

**26. However, we are calling upon EAC Member States to put in place legal and regulatory frameworks that will breathe life into declarations on the various free movements under the Common Market operations.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**27. In December last year, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission organized the first Lake Victoria Investment Conference in Mwanza, Tanzania. This conference was a huge success and attracted potential investors in our region.**

**28. The East African Community should plan a similar investment conference for the Lake Tanganyika Basin. This Conference should also involve the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia, which are also river countries of the Lake. We believe this can be another pole of development in the Region, with high stakes impacting on COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Member States.**

**29. In addition, in its commitment to move forward the agenda of the Political Federation, the next Summit of the East African Community will examine a roadmap of the Council of Ministers on this important subject, as it is the political integration that will sustain and safeguard all the gains of Integration. Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**30. Over the last one year, a major exercise has been ongoing to re-examine, in the light of experience, the efficiency and effectiveness of the East African Community as an organization. We will analyze major challenges which the Community is facing, as well as future prospects. A major Institutional Review has been undertaken, and I am glad to note that Honourable Members of this Assembly have been involved in its overall process.**



**31. It is within this framework that we are calling for the institutionalization of the Kigali Retreat, so that institutions and organs of the EAC can collaborate better.**

**32. The East African Community Summit, on its part, will give the support needed in ensuring that the East African Community becomes a more vibrant and robust institution.**

**33. Therefore, any institutional transformation demands additional resources. We will have to look into the best option for sustainable Community funding to run the Community strategic programmes.**

**Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**34. Before I close these remarks, allow me to sincerely thank Partners of the EAC for their various support. I encourage them to continue doing so !**

**35. I would like, once again, to call upon the media to be aware of their role in the society. Media people should portray what is beneficial to the community ; they should write or publish promotional stories, to ensure visibility of the EAC in other regional blocks and beyond.**

**36. Last, but not least, allow me to pay tribute to the Speaker and to Members of the East African Legislative Assembly for their unfailing commitment, as they continue to play a leading role to push forward the integration process of the East African Community.**

**Long Live the East African Community**

**Long Live the East African Legislative Assembly**

**May God Bless You All**

**Thank you for your kind attention**