



**H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda,
And
Chairperson of the Summit of the
East African Community Heads of State**

**Addresses the
5th Meeting of the
2nd East African Legislative Assembly**

**EALA Chambers, AICC, Arusha,
26 February 2008**

H.E. The Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania,

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly,

Honourable Ministers of the East African Cooperation,

All dignitaries here today.

It is my great honour and pleasure to address you on this auspicious occasion of the 5th Meeting of the 2nd East African Legislative Assembly (EALA). Being the first time to address the Assembly, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and Honourable Members on your election to the 2nd Assembly. This is a great honour, trust and responsibility which have been bestowed on you and I have every confidence in you to meet the challenge.

Rt. Honourable Speaker

The 5th Meeting of the Assembly is taking place at the confluence of significant developments in the East African Community (EAC) with the deepening of the EAC integration, the ongoing process towards the establishment of the Common Market and the enlargement of the Community, with the recent admission of Rwanda and Burundi. Today, the East African Community embraces a strong and large market of a combined population of 120 million people, has a land area of 1.8 million sq. kilometers with a combined GDP of US\$ 41 billion.

Although the size of the East African economy is still embarrassingly small, compared to other economies of the World with comparable populations, the potential is great. Most significantly, this meeting of the Assembly also comes at a time when our region is experiencing a crisis, namely the political situation in Kenya, which is causing great concern to the East African Community region and, indeed, the international community as a whole. Combined, these developments present our region with great challenges and they need to rise to the occasion and redouble our efforts and commitment to strengthen the Community. **Indeed, it is in times of crisis that we can test and demonstrate the capacity of our regional organization to overcome any setbacks and remain firm and steady on the course to fulfill its mission.**

Over the past year, the Summit has been seized of the critical issues in the strategic direction of the EAC. The process towards the establishment of the Political Federation of East Africa as well as the steps in building a single and strong regional economic bloc remain the two major goals of our regional organisation. These are intended to cope with the powerful movement for globalization and put a stop to the perennial marginalization of our economies and societies within the world economic and power systems.

During the exercise that was undertaken last year to find out the views of the East Africans on the Political Federation, **the Regional Consultative Process delivered a verdict of broad public support for the idea of Federation among the majority of the East African people** that were consulted.

There were, however, some divergences of opinion on the timing of such a Federation. The samples showed that the populations of Kenya and Uganda, overwhelmingly, supported both the Federation and the fast-tracking as recommended by the Amos Wako Committee. The population sampled in Tanzania, on the other hand, overwhelmingly supported the idea of the Political Federation of East Africa but did not support the integration timetable as recommended by the Amos Wako Committee. There were also concerns expressed about issues like land and natural resources in relation to this political integration.

The East African Authority decided to maintain a united position on this matter by directing for the fast-tracking of the Common Market to be achieved by 2010 and a Monetary Union to be achieved by 2012 so that we deal with the issue of Political Federation at that stage. Concurrent with this movement, some of the Partner States had internal issues to deal with so that the way to the political federation is clear. There was also the issue of conducting consultations on the political federation among the populations of the new East African Community Members: i.e. Rwanda and Burundi.

It is, therefore, most gratifying to note the good progress of the ongoing negotiations for the Common Market. The swift progress we are making in the Common Market negotiations is commendable. Similar efforts should be exerted in respect of the negotiations for the Monetary Union.

In one of our dialects there is a noun known as *ekyaaha* (clumsiness). In the pre-colonial Uganda there was a joke about one of the clans whose members built a hut but did not leave space for the doorway (*omuryango, ekisaasi*) only to discover the mistake when the house was complete. The recent problems in Kenya, tragic as they were, nevertheless, illustrated this point of short-sighted political architecture.

The violence in Kenya immediately caused shortages in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Southern Sudan, DRC Congo and, I was told, some parts of Northern Tanzania were also affected. What does this highlight or prove? It proves what the religious leaders always talk about: "*What God has put together, Man shall not put asunder.*" The religious leaders restrict this to micro-social units such as families. The problems in Kenya, however, have, again, highlighted this message: "*What God put together, Man shall not put asunder.*" God put Africa, East Africa together; no man should put them asunder. It is like a house where the bedroom is in another country, the sitting room another country, the guest room (*entarire*) is in another country. To go from the sitting room to the bedroom, you need a Visa, etc.

The post-election violence in Kenya and the concomitant difficulties throughout the whole region have shown that the head cannot be independent of the neck; the neck cannot be independent of the chest; the chest cannot be independent of the abdomen; the abdomen cannot be independent of the limbs; and *vice versa*. Of course, you can have amputees and cripples. They, however, do not lead a full life. Their potential is diminished to the extent of the loss of parts of their bodies.

The political fragmentation that was imposed on Africa since 1884 creates that irrational situation. The consequent multiple management of what is, essentially, one house creates all sorts of complications.

I am, however, glad that our brothers in Kenya are handling the problem with maturity. We condemn the violence that took place in Kenya. It was unfair on the affected families and also unfair to the neighbouring countries. That violence was ideologically confused. Indiscriminate violence is reactionary. I am sure the Kenyan Leaders (Government and Opposition) will deal with the constitutional, political and ideological issues that arose out of the elections so that normalcy is restored.

On the issue of the political integration, I have submitted my views for the strategic importance of an East African Federation in my speech during the launch of the fast-tracking consultations in Uganda on 13 October, 2006 (***Addendum I***) and also on the occasion of receiving the fast-tracking report at Ngurdoto on 20 August, 2007 (***Addendum II***).

H.E. Ben Mkapa, H.E. Mwai Kibaki and myself made a strong call for Political Federation in our Communiqué of August 2004 in Nairobi. It is, therefore, not necessary to repeat the points in this speech.

As we continue to debate the tempo of working for the East African Federation, we should also undertake joint efforts in some of the following areas: foreign policy co-ordination, co-operation in defence, co-operation on matters of regional peace and security, etc.

Co-operation in these areas is possible and useful even in the short run. Even the mere sharing of ideas in these areas is quite useful. Uganda became a frontline state against Arab chauvinism espoused by some regional countries.

Our resolute stand against this chauvinism as well as our fight against all types of extra-judicial actions has, finally, enabled the people of Uganda to begin enjoying unprecedented peace. We could share our experience with our East African partners as well as learning from them. Above all, we can use the institutions of East Africa together as we build capacity in the areas referred to above. In order to attract investments, we need to ensure security in the whole region.

I am, therefore, most pleased to note that co-ordination on foreign affairs, inter-state defence co-operation as well as inter-state security co-operation are high on East African Community agenda today.

Since 1986, the economy of Uganda has recovered and grown, some mistakes notwithstanding. One such mistake was on account of our Parliament delaying the construction of Bujagali dam; this resulted in power shortages. Nevertheless, last Calendar Year, the GDP grew by 7%. The size of the GDP of Uganda grew six times since 1986 from Ug. Shs. 3000 billion (1985/1986) to Ug. Shs. 19,000 billion (19 trillion) (2006/2007).

This works at US \$ 11.2 billion. In PPP terms, the GDP of Uganda is US \$ 52.9 billion. With assured energy in about two years' time, the economy will grow much faster. However, there is one aspect we cannot handle alone – cheaper transport to the sea. We cannot, for instance, handle railway modernization without working with Tanzania and Kenya. Yet, this rail transport is very crucial for lowering the costs of doing business, especially in relation to our exports and imports. Given what has already been achieved, the resolving of the problem of electricity and transport to the sea will enable the economy of Uganda to grow by *leaps and bounds*.

The high rates of growth we enjoyed in the past were inspite of the terrorist campaign in Northern Uganda and lawlessness in Karamoja. These areas are now peaceful. You can imagine the impact that peace will have on the economy.

It is against this background that I urge this East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) to gauge its future role in taking East Africa to greater heights of achievement. The term of this Assembly will see some momentous developments within the ambitious programme of the 3rd East African Community Development Strategy (2006-2010), including planned institutional development, major infrastructural development works, general programme expansion towards the Common market and Monetary Union and, last but not least, the process, already begun, of the review of **The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community of 30 November, 1999**, to accommodate present and future demands of the expanding programme and membership of the East African Community. I would call upon this distinguished Assembly to readily embrace this challenge and strategic commitment to develop the Community.

In adopting this commitment, we should not be oblivious to the critical role of the broad range of stakeholders in the regional integration process. These are the civil society, the business community and the political parties which have to be deeply involved in the awareness and participation in the regional integration process if the East African Community has to meet its objectives with any degree of success.

The role of the Media in promoting worthy causes cannot be underestimated. The Media has the power to make or break causes, however well intentioned or justified. The Media can make or break the Community, however strongly the protagonists may profess or proclaim commitment to the East African Community cause. **If we want to build the Community, if we really want the cause of East African unity and development to succeed, we must do everything within our power to get the Media on our side.**

Indeed, one of the longstanding pre-occupations of our regional co-operation (and on which I have personally constantly laid emphasis) relates to the publicity and marketing function of the Community. **I would like to commend the Secretariat for the process it has initiated in implementing a new Publicity and Marketing Strategy, under the EAC Re-Branding Project, that seeks to involve the people deeply in awareness, support and participation in the regional integration process.**

This project is cross-cutting and highly participatory of the broad spectrum of East African Community stakeholders and should receive our unreserved support.

During the time I have been leading Uganda, I have been dismayed and infuriated by the failure of the political stratum, the administrative cadres as well as other elements of the elite (religious, cultural, etc.) in identifying the strategic weaknesses of Africa, let alone resolving them. When I attended the G.8 Summit in Sea Island, USA, I pointed out to those leaders what I considered to be those strategic bottlenecks. They are contained in a booklet (***Addendum III***), which my staff will distribute to you Honourable Members through the Speaker. One such strategic bottleneck that is bound to cause unnecessary and completely avoidable crises is the low level of industrialization and modernisation in East Africa.

Attached herebelow is a table of the comparative figures of selected countries in the world according to population (labour-force) distribution among the sectors of agriculture, industry and services. (***Addendum IV***)

As you can see, too many people in East Africa still depend on agriculture rather than being active in industry and services. This phenomenon, in turn, means that East Africa cannot provide enough jobs for the increasingly educated population; we shall not earn as much foreign currency as it could have been done; we shall not collect enough taxes, hence the ignominious practice of having to be in the relationship with the so-called donors; it also means environmental degradation on account of the increasing population, using primitive techniques, produces little per unit of land area, thereby many people being forced to encroach on the forests and on the

wetlands, etc; promotes horizontal rural migration instead of the healthier vertical migration from farm to factory. Horizontal migration causes tribal tensions and other problems.

The political integration of East Africa, in the form of a federation, would accelerate the process of industrialization and modernization because of the bigger market being a more attractive investment destination and more clout in trade negotiations with other strong countries or blocs such as the USA, China, India, Russia and European Union. It is the factor of size that helped India and China to frog-leap in terms of development and social transformation. It is imperative that the political strata (elite) and other elements of the elite wake up to the need for economic and social transformation so that the labour force shifts from agriculture to industry and services.

Otherwise, we should prepare for disoriented social and political convulsions which will be to the eternal shame of the elites involved. Agriculture alone, moreover subsistence agriculture, cannot cater for the employment needs of the 120 million East Africans, cannot earn enough foreign currency and cannot generate enough taxes. As we work for the East African Federation, let us, at the level of each country, work to bring in and facilitate more and more investors. We must combat all the negative anti-investor attitudes and practices: corruption, indifference to their needs, delays, etc. As each of our economies grows, East Africa will be stronger.

Honourable Speaker

In conclusion, let me state that we have a clear and urgent mission to transform the East African Community into a positive force in the lives of our people and not just an abstraction in their minds. **Visions, which have a tendency to fly about like confetti wherever one turns today, are invariably conveyed in mere words; but bold visions, real visions need bold actions to match the words.**

I would, therefore, urge you in this Second Assembly to evince a singular commitment to promote the cause of regional integration and development in East Africa for the benefit of the present and future generations.

I extend my confidence in your commitment and preparedness for the historic task ahead and, once again, congratulate you and wish you happiness and great success in your important mission.

I thank you for your attention and wish the Second Assembly great success.

ADDENDA:

I. - Fast-tracking of the EA Political Federation, 13.10.06

***II.- Receiving the Fast-tracking Report
in Ngurdoto – 20.08.07***

***III.- Strategic and Tactical Bottlenecks that have
Bedevilled Africa – G8 Summit -8-10 June,2004***

***IV. – Fact Sheet (Table) on Labour Force distribution of Selected Countries
by Sector***

Arusha – 26 February, 2008