



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

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**IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)**

**The Official Report of the Proceedings of the East African  
Legislative Assembly**

**88<sup>th</sup> SITTING - THIRD ASSEMBLY: FIFTH MEETING - THIRD SESSION**

**Tuesday, 17 March 2015**

**SPECIAL SITTING**

*(The East African Legislative Assembly met at 2:30 p.m. in the  
Chamber of Deputies, Burundi National Assembly, in Bujumbura,  
Burundi.)*

**ANTHEMS**

*(The Burundi National Anthem was played)*

*(The EAC Anthem played)*

**PRAYER**

*(The Speaker, Mr Daniel Fred Kidega, in the Chair.)*

*(The Assembly was called to order)*

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**PROCEDURAL MOTION**

**The Chairperson of the Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges**

**(Mr Peter Mathuki) (Kenya):** Rt. hon. Speaker, I move that this House pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 10 (5) of the Rules of Procedure do resolve to hold sittings in Bujumbura in the Republic of Burundi.

**The Speaker:** Seconded by hon. Kiangoi, hon. Hafsa Mossi, hon. Dr Nyiramilimo and all the Members standing.

**Mr Mathuki:** Thank you, Rt. hon. Speaker,

*"WHEREAS Clause 1 of Article 55 of the Treaty provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint;*

*AND WHEREAS Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure provides that the Seat of the Assembly shall be in the United Republic of Tanzania;*

*AND WHEREAS Sub-Rule 5 of Rule 10 provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such places as the Assembly may appoint and shall meet at least once in every year at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania and at a time to be determined by the Assembly;*

*NOW THEREFORE, This Assembly do resolve as follows:*

*THAT, pursuant to the provisions of Sub-Rule 5 of Rule 10 cited above, the Assembly shall hold sittings in the Chamber of Burundi National Assembly from today, Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 up to Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2015."*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move. (Applause)

**The Speaker:** Hon. Members, the motion before this House is that this House pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 10 (5) of the Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings in Bujumbura, Burundi; debate is open.

Being that there is no Member on the floor to debate the motion, I now put the question.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Members, amidst us today is His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi. (Applause) I have in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty invited him to address this Assembly. I would now like to make the following proclamation to welcome the presence, in the Assembly, of the President of the Republic of Burundi.

#### **PROCLAMATION**

*"WHEREAS Clause (1) of Article 54 of the Treaty provides that the Speaker of the Assembly can invite any person to attend the*

*Assembly notwithstanding that he or she is not a Member of the Assembly; if in his or her opinion the Business of the Assembly renders his or her presence desirable.*

*AND WHEREAS in the opinion of the Speaker, the attendance and presence in the Assembly of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi is desirable in accordance with the Business now before the Assembly.*

*NOW THEREFORE, It gives me great pleasure and honour, on your behalf, hon. Members to welcome in this Assembly, the presence of the President of the Republic of Burundi.” (Applause)*

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT NKURUNZIZA, PRESIDENT OF**

**THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI**

**Welcome Remarks by the Speaker of the East African Legislative  
Assembly**

**The Speaker:** Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, President of the Burundi National Assembly, Rt. Hon Gabriel Ntisezerana, President of the Burundi Senate, His Excellency Prosper Bazombaza, First Vice President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon Members of the Bureaus of the Parliament of Burundi; Your Excellences, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Dr. Harrison Mwakyembe, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers, The Hon. Ministers and members of the Council of

Ministers, Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Burundi, Your Excellences Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I wish to first of all thank hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma, President of *Inamashingamateka* - *(Applause)* - for those of you who don't know Kirundi, it means the National Assembly of Burundi- *(Laughter)*- and indeed the entire Government of the Republic of Burundi for accepting to host EALA at the occasion of the Fifth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third Assembly.

We are grateful to Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma for graciously offering EALA the use of the parliamentary facilities; a magnanimous courtesy he has always extended to us. *(Applause)*

At the moment, I am aware that the Burundi National Assembly is also in session, and so the fact that he has granted us space alludes to the total support and magnanimity that he has.

I further wish to acknowledge the support rendered by the Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma to the Members and to myself. I was privileged to meet with the Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma last Friday, when I made a courtesy call at his office. I thank the Rt Hon. Speaker for the words of advice and counsel he offered to me. *(Applause)*

The relationship between EALA and the Burundi National Assembly continues to be warm and cordial. We take particular interest in the strengthening of the effective partnerships between Burundi National Assembly and EALA as one of the dear avenues of building, not only true bonds of a family that we are, but as a concrete bloc upon, which we build deeper integration.

I am pleased to note that the Burundi National Assembly is set to revise its Rules of Procedure to include a clause on the relationship with EALA. (Applause) This shall definitely take our collaboration to the next level.

Parliament is indeed an embodiment of democracy; a demonstration in any country or region that its people have a voice and that there is accountability as well as checks and balances. We must at all times ensure that we nurture parliamentary democracy and that we collaborate as equals for the common good of our people.

I wish to give surety to the Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma and to pledge EALA's collaboration and cooperation in fulfilling the mandate of integrating the citizens of East Africa. This forms the basis for strengthened legislative focus, oversight and representation on the part of both Assemblies.

It is important that the two Assemblies build ties and that they continue to enhance performance to continuously play the

fundamental role in ensuring a flourishing democracy, good governance and peaceful co-existence in the region.

The Burundi National Assembly is also implementing its strategic plan in line with its vision and focus. I am sure, we can expect more progress to be recorded in the near future. My salutations to the Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma and his battalion of troops are, therefore, in order. I wish the Burundi National Assembly and the Rt Hon. Ntavyohanyuma well.

I am fully aware that a good number of Members of the Assembly shall be contesting in the forthcoming elections. I wish them well in the elections. *(Applause)*

With these few remarks, Your Excellency, Hon. Members, I now take this opportunity to invite my senior colleague and brother, the Rt Hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma to make his remarks.

**The Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly (Mr Pie Ntavyohanyuma):** Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, Rt Hon. Daniel Fred Kidega, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, Rt Hon. Gabriel Ntisezerana, Speaker of the Senate of Burundi, His Excellency Prosper Bazombaza, 1First Vice President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon Members of the Bureaus of the Parliament of Burundi, Your Excellency Sylvester Ntibantunganya, Former Heads of State

of Burundi; Hon. Dr. Harrison Mwakyembe, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers, The Hon. Ministers and members of the Council of Ministers, Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Burundi, Your Excellences Ambassadors and High Commissioners and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; good afternoon.

It is an honour, a privilege and a rare opportunity for me to address this august Assembly on behalf of the Parliament of Burundi and on my own behalf. *(Applause)*

May I first warmly welcome His Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi to the palace of Kigobi, the seat of Burundi National Assembly. *(Applause)* We are very grateful because he has accepted to grace this ceremony with his presence and address the Assembly despite his very busy agenda. *(Applause)*

I wish him a happy and prosperous New Year, 2015 and great success as the highest leader of this country and deserving Regional and African leader. *(Applause)*

I avail myself this opportunity to sincerely congratulate His Excellency, President Pierre Nkurunziza on his being awarded the



African Peace Award by the Always Be Tolerant Organisation (ABETO) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2015. *(Applause)*

This is a very timely event in Burundi, especially during the current electoral process in which the democratic culture remains to be tested and in which some people may be tempted by intolerance, homogeneity and analogy of the difference in knowledge and faith based ideologies and even terrorists to create insecurity and instability.

Beyond such an award, we feel our togetherness with our East African brothers and sisters. I invite ourselves to celebrate our unity in diversity and tolerance. Our differences should be the nutrient and driving force of tolerance in our countries. *(Applause)* Let us equally celebrate that which we share in common, our East African identity.

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon. Members of EALA and the Parliament of Burundi, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me also to extend a very warm welcome to the Rt Hon. Daniel Fred Kidega and sincerely congratulate him upon his election on 19th December, 2014 as the Fourth Speaker of EALA. *(Applause)*

I wish him a prosperous year, 2015 and plenty of successes in steering EALA to a prestigious institution. Priorities are for

the time being; achieving reconciliation, unity and harmony in EALA, sanctioning EALA and deepening the EAC integration process. *(Applause)*

With the cooperation of National Assemblies and Parliaments of Partner States, assuredly, you will succeed, as is the target, with the unanimous support of your EALA colleagues.

I cease this opportunity to assure him that the good relationships which so happily exist between the Parliament of Burundi and EALA will be enhanced in the framework of parliamentary diplomacy. *(Applause)*

This is also an opportunity for me to welcome and very sincerely thank all the distinguished guests who have come to participate in this ceremony. *(Applause)* Their presence is a signal of their special interest in the proceedings of EALA and the EAC integration. I wish them a peaceful year, 2015. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon. Members of EALA and the Parliament of Burundi, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, especially in Article 55 provides that meetings of EALA shall be held at such times and places as EALA may appoint.

Rule 11 of EALA's Rules of Procedure provides that EALA may on a resolution adopted by a majority of its Members decide to hold one or more sittings elsewhere within the Partner States other than its seat. That is what has just been done today in order for this meeting to be held in Burundi.

I wish to commend the EALA for sticking to its rules and implementing its principle of holding EALA's rotational meetings in in the EAC Partner States. *(Applause)*

On behalf of the Parliament of Burundi, I sincerely express my heartfelt appreciation and warmly welcome all EALA Members to Burundi. *(Applause)* Once again, EALA Members, welcome to Burundi. Feel at home in our country and our capital city, Bujumbura. *(Applause)* Enjoy our hospitality and the breeze and *mukeke* of Lake Tanganyika. *(Applause)* It is of great pleasure to have you around in our country. The Parliament of Burundi hopes that its hospitality will be paid towards a successful EALA sitting.

Hon. Members of EALA, the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, especially in Article 49 provides that: *"EALA shall liaise with the National Assemblies of the Partner States on matters relating to the Community."* As you are aware, you have come to liaise with the Parliament and the people of

Burundi, especially during the current electoral process in Burundi.

Our wish is that you contribute in sensitising them on matters relating to democratic and parliamentary culture towards governance, fair and peaceful elections, the rule of law and the EAC integration. *(Applause)*

I can assure you that everything possible will be done to make you stay in Burundi enjoyable and fruitful. Every effort will be made for this session to be successful.

Hon. Members of EALA, in reference to the EALA two weeks' provisional programme, debates and plenary sessions will be organised on inter alia the rights of the child in EAC Partner States, the EAC Single Customs Territory, the Civil Aviation Safety Bill, 2015, The EAC Integration Education Bill, The EAC Cross Border Legal Practice Bill and the EAC Electronic Transactions Bill.

Our hope is that a number of challenges such as insecurity and terrorism, elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers and obstacles for free flow of business, free movement of people and other services and capital will be dealt with if we are as East Africans to consolidate the Customs Union, implement the Common Market Protocol and prepare strong technical, legal and institutional

arrangements in view of the Monetary Union in order to sustain economic growth and create jobs for the millions of jobless East African youth. *(Applause)*

With regards to the Parliament of Burundi, it remains committed to adopting all the required Bills and popularising them so that their implementation can lead to a smooth EAC integration. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon. Members of EALA and the Parliament of Burundi, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, concerning the 2015 elections, preparations are underway.

The Independent National Electoral Commission has already made public the calendar of elections. The voters have already been registered in accordance with today's electoral record, which has been accepted by all political parties.

A week ago, partners in the electoral process signed a non-violence charter of conduct, which condemns all forms of violence before, during and after the elections. *(Applause)*

According to the 2015 Elections Calendar, Members of the National Assembly and the Communal Councillors will be elected on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2015; the Presidential Election will be held on

the 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2015; Senators and local leaders will be elected, respectively, on the 17<sup>th</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.

In addition, international donors have started funding the electoral process. Our wish is that East African elections observers come to Burundi soon to see for themselves how peaceful, inclusive and fair these elections will be. *(Applause)*

It is with such a wish that I humbly invite His Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi to address this august Assembly. Thank you very much for your kind attention. *(Applause)*

**The Speaker:** Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, President of the Burundi National Assembly, Rt. Hon Gabriel Ntisezerana, President of the Burundi Senate, His Excellency Prosper Bazombaza, First Vice President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice President of the Republic of Burundi, Hon Members of the Bureaus of the Parliament of Burundi; Your Excellences, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Dr. Harrison Mwakyembe, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers, the Hon. Ministers and members of the Council of Ministers, Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Burundi, Your

Excellences Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Your Excellency, it is with great and profound humility that I stand here to warmly welcome you to deliver your address at the commencement of the Fifth Meeting of the Tird Session of the Third Assembly.

Your presence here today exemplifies the deep commitment and sense of duty you hold to the citizens of Burundi and to East Africans as we advance the integration agenda. Thank you for positively responding to our invitation. (*Applause*)

In a very special way, allow me to sincerely thank you, Your Excellency for sparing the better part of your Friday morning to see me when I paid you a courtesy call at the Executive Office of the President. (*Applause*) Your Excellency, forever, I am grateful.

I am happy to note that the EALA is now back on track after a tumultuous 2014. (*Applause*) We have embarked on catching up with the backlog of activities in this newly found spirit among the Members. At the 4<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of EALA held in Arusha in January 2015, we passed two Bills, three Resolutions and several Reports. We also committed another six Bills to the relevant Committees of the House.

Of the six Bills, I am particularly elated that the region is keen to address NTBs through a regulatory framework. *(Applause)* Indeed, we have talked for far too long about the weighbridges, police roadblocks, non-recognition of the EAC certificates of origin, lack of mutual recognition of quality marks, among others. It is now time to reverse the trend and the campaign can and should be strengthened by championing for and anchoring relevant legislation to the process.

At this Plenary Session, we shall be considering and hopefully passing three Bills, analysing several oversight reports of the Committees of EALA and debate specific Motions and Resolutions. The Bills we shall be debating on are the Elimination of NTBs Bill, 2015; - this is a Council Bill - The EAC Customs Management (Amendment) Bill, 2015 and The EAC Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2015, among many others.

Let me also inform you, Your Excellency that the Council of Ministers has assured us in our discussions of tabling at least 4 Bills this calendar year. I am very grateful to the Council. *(Applause)* I have taken stock and noted that there are 14 Meetings left to the end of our mandate in 2017.

With the support of my colleagues and that of the Council of Ministers, we should be able to debate on and to enact at the



very least - at least one key Bill per Meeting. If we do so, then we shall have passed at least a minimum of 14 Bills and this would put us back on good stead as a legislature.

The Assembly shall also scale-up the area of sensitization to increase the citizens' level of awareness on the benefits and opportunities of the EAC integration. *(Applause)* Later on this week, we shall be meeting with representatives of the youth in Burundi and the EAC Youth Ambassadors to listen to, discuss and strategize with them on key issues around integration. *(Applause)* This is a critical group to reach out to strengthen integration given the fact they account for over 60 percent of the total population. Outreach to the youth is also on our menu as it is envisaged by our Strategic Plan (2013-2018). We are also going to meet with representatives of the employers and the Trade Union Movement who also have a formal petition to make to the Assembly.

Our message to the groups is clear, that we need to close ranks, and to keep the conversations alive to strengthen the process of regional integration. We shall keep avenues open for deeper consultations and receipt of petitions with the diverse stakeholders including the business community, the academia, and civil society and opinion leaders. In this way, we believe we can create a spiral effect in the dissemination of information of EAC to the citizenry of the region.

Your Excellency, I congratulate you for the exemplary leadership that has seen the country leap to greater heights thus far. (Applause) I wish you good health and prosperity as you continue to lead the country. (Applause)

Burundi continues to realise steady yet upward economic growth by leveraging on regional investments. Today, Burundi is a peaceful country. I am happy to note that you chose the path to peace akin to John F. Kennedy who once said: "*Mankind must put an end to War or War will put an end to mankind*".

The landmark achievements of this beautiful country, a few years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement have been hailed far and beyond. We now constantly see new developments around Bujumbura and the countryside that did not exist before and it is only natural that we too add our voice in heralding these great achievements that are resultant from choosing the path of peace. Allow us, therefore, to celebrate with you on the achievements. (Applause)

We commend the people of Burundi for putting their country first and for working for the cheaper option of peace and stability. (Applause) I recognize the fact that the Republic of Burundi shall be going to polls in the next two months. This is a period to secure the future of the country through the ballot box.

Elections anywhere tend to stir uncertainty, and investors traditionally withhold decision making until the aftermath, to see if and when the effect of any radical shift in policy becomes apparent. This uncertainty is not new to Burundi, as it is a common phenomenon on the continent and elsewhere. On behalf of EALA, let me wish you, Your Excellency successful, peaceful and credible elections. *(Applause)*

As EALA, we are keen to see the country go through this electioneering period peacefully. We are also keen to see a process that is credible and devoid of malpractices. We appeal to the citizens of the country to exercise their just and democratic right. We further appeal to the Electoral Commission to institute the internationally agreed normative base for free and fair elections. I am happy that in my meetings with Your Excellency, the Ombudsman, Dr. Mohammed Rukara and the President of the Burundi National Assembly, Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, and the trio have all given me assurances over holding credible elections. Of essence really is the total adherence to principles of democratization and constitutionalism. *(Applause)* I urge you to defend this to the hilt and not to let any infiltration of undue interference or influence. *(Applause)*

I wish to state that the EAC shall be sending an Elections Observer Mission which shall be steered by EALA. I need to add here that elections generally present a challenge for many young

and developing democracies. The EALA meeting here coincides with the period and this is a good thing given the fact that in the African setting, a true friend is one who sticks through the challenging times. There is no better place to be than in Burundi because as they say; "A friend in need is a Friend indeed."  
(Applause)

Your Excellency, before I invite you to address this Assembly, may I briefly, with your permission, introduce to you some of the dignitaries present; I will take the opportunity to introduce former President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Senator Sylvester Ntibantunganya , Hon. Member of the Parliament Bureau of Burundi, Members of Parliament and Senate of Burundi, Hon. Ministers of the Government of Burundi, Mr Justice Jenje Emmanuel, President of the Supreme Court of Burundi, members of the Judiciary, members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Police and the Defence Corps, religious representatives. (Applause)

Your Excellency, we are also privileged to have some of the most important people in this Community, the eminent persons of the East African Community amidst us. (Applause) Allow me to introduce them one by one: Her Excellency Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda - (Applause). Your Excellency, honourable Members, my conscience will not be clear if I don't say this: Her Excellency Dr Speciosa

Wandira Kazibwe had a fundamental role in my political, social, and moral upbringing when I served in her office as a Private Secretary, Excellency. Forever I will be grateful. *(Applause)*

I would like to introduce Hon. Justine Joseph Warioba, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Tanzania; *(Applause)* Hon. Amana Mushega, former Secretary General of EAC; and Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, former Chairperson, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya. *(Applause)*

Finally, Your Excellency, allow me introduce my colleagues, the Members of the East African Legislative Assembly. I request you to kindly stand up and wave to the President. *(Applause)* I thank you so much.

Finally, Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome Your Excellency to address this August Assembly, today, Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2015. You are most welcome. *(Applause)*

**The President of the Republic of Burundi (Mr Pierre Nkurunziza):**

The Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly, the Rt Hon. Daniel Kidega, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, the Rt. Hon Gabriel Ntisezerana, President of the Burundi Senate, Your Excellency Sylvester Ntibantunganya, former President of Burundi, Hon Members of Parliaments of the

East African Community Partner States, Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, Your Excellency Amb Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon. Ministers, Your Excellences members of the COMESA Committee of Elders, Excellences Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Your Excellency Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Your Excellences members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, all protocol observed, Ladies and Gentlemen, first and foremost, let us thank God, the Almighty, who has blessed this important Activity of the East African Community to take place in Burundi, and particularly in Bujumbura, the Capital City. You are welcome; *karibuni sana!* (Applause)

It is my singular honour to take the floor before this Majestic Assembly, formally opening the plenary ceremonies of the Fifth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly.

I am delighted for the kind invitation of the Right Honourable Daniel F. Kidega, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, and thank him for having provided me with this opportunity to meet again and address this august House. (Applause)

Allow me at this juncture, to congratulate him for his brilliant election as Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly,

and wish him all the best at the service of the East African Community, and for the benefit of the Peoples of East Africa.

*(Applause)*

I wish, therefore, to take this opportunity, on behalf of the people and the Government of Burundi, and on my own behalf, to warmly welcome Members of EALA, and wish all and every one a pleasant and comfortable stay in the Republic of Burundi, your second home. *(Applause)*

I am also taking this happy opportunity to extend to all of you present my best wishes for the Year 2015; a year of good health, happiness, prosperity, success and greater achievements. *(Applause)*

Honourable, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; the Fifth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly takes place, today, when the East African Legislative Assembly has undergone significant changes in its Leadership, following some harsh times it went through. But I am informed and I happily note that the hard period is now a thing of the past. *(Applause)*

Let me also take this opportunity to commend Members of the East African Legislative Assembly for the wisdom, willingness and commitment they have shown in resolving the matter and provide

the Community with a youthful Speaker of this important body.  
(Applause)

I am happy, therefore, to welcome once again the EALA Speaker and reiterate our full support to the East African Legislative Assembly and its new Leadership, and reassure you that we shall spare no effort in supporting your activities in the Community in general; and in Burundi in particular. (Applause)

We are all aware that the East African Legislative Assembly plays a key role in bringing the People of East Africa on board of the integration process, through the Public Hearings on Bills and Nanyuki series that are conducted throughout the Region. It is crystal clear that the achievements by the East African Legislative Assembly in this area would not have been possible without its Members' outstanding leadership. (Applause)

Our Community, bound by historical ties and geographical proximity, shares unique warmth and friendship built on a common vision and values, which ultimately are the cornerstone for sustainable social and economic development of our peoples in the respective EAC Partner States.

Performance wise, we are gratified to note that much progress has been made by the East African Legislative Assembly in terms of legislating, representing our peoples, approving the EAC



budgets, providing oversights in many activities as well as establishing linkages between National Assemblies of the East African Community Partner States. I congratulate the EALA for these achievements. *(Applause)*

Honourable, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; the present sitting of the Fifth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly occurs when we are in full preparations for the forthcoming 2015 General Elections. Much has been done to pave the way for peaceful, free and fair elections.

I would like to sincerely thank the East African Community and the Region for the strong support and commitment towards peace and stability in Burundi.

In this perspective, I wish to commend the Joint Initiative of the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) aimed to supporting the consolidation of Democracy, Reconciliation and Tolerance among Burundians and Political Actors, in view to achieving transparent and credible 2015 Elections.

I also wish to put on record my high appreciation of the Programme of Round Tables, which was launched in Burundi on 15th January 2015, and attended by a large number of stakeholders.

It was indeed a special occasion for Burundians and Eminent Personalities of the Region, to tackle issues related to elections and electoral processes in view to consolidating regional stability through peaceful elections in Burundi.  
(Applause)

Those meetings, which brought together targeted groups, drawn from different walks of life, have borne strong messages of peace and coexistence, which can help prevent electoral conflict.

From where I stand, allow me once again to address our partners and the International Community, and call for observers before, during and after the elections. (Applause) I am pleased to report that parliamentary elections will be held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015, and Presidential Elections on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Honourable, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; going back to EALA Business, I have also been informed of progress made in the area of cooperation between the East African Legislative Assembly and National Parliaments of East African Community Partner States. I am of the strong view that such cooperation will continue to make it easy for the East African Community to work together and in doing so, be able to achieve integrated and harmonious development.

The EAC Region faces a number of emerging challenges. It is, therefore, vital that we constantly work together to strengthen peace and security, and stand solid as a rock against terrorism, piracy and transnational crime. *(Applause)* There is also need for our region to actively sustain disaster preparedness and management. This is extremely important today, and even more tomorrow, as our ultimate goal as East Africans is to achieve a Political Federation. *(Applause)*

Honourable, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; the East African Community Partner States long for the eradication of poverty and illiteracy in our Region. To this effect, the East African Legislative Assembly has a key role to play in overseeing that EAC Partner States fully implement the stages of integration, so that the peoples of East Africa genuinely enjoy the benefits of integration.

I am pleased to note that the East African Community has been engaged in a number of activities which translate wider and deeper integration, for example the Single Customs Territory, which has sharply improved trade in general, and reduced time and cost for transit goods in particular. There is a need to strengthen the trend and reach total elimination of non-tariff barriers. *(Applause)*

For land-linked countries like Burundi, free circulation of goods goes along with the mobility of people and trade in services. It is important that we reinforce the transition from the Single Customs Territory to a fully-fledged Common Market, which will eventually lead us to implement the Monetary Union Protocol.

It is my conviction that our integration agenda is all about the answers to the challenges we face, and the problems we are called upon to sort out. Our real challenges are, therefore, fighting against poverty and raising the living standards of our citizens.

To this effect, the East African Community projects and programmes, whether in infrastructure, energy, transport, communications, or in social and productive sectors, are vital and their implementation critical, if we are to deliver and show the intended results.

Another top priority is the speedy implementation of decisions at the EAC Partner States level and the implementation of the Protocols and commitments agreed upon by Partner States, if the benefits of regional integration were to be achieved.

It is imperative, therefore, that the East African Legislative Assembly and the Council of Ministers collaborate more on

mechanisms to initiate laws to enforce the rapid implementation of the Single Customs Territory and the Common Market Protocol so that East African citizens can reap benefits accruing from them.

The Right Honourable EALA Speaker, Honourable, Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; you will allow me to congratulate once again EALA for holding their Plenary Session in Bujumbura. *(Applause)* The Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly has invited you to taste *mukeke* - *(Applause)* - but I will not only add *mukeke* but other small fish called *ndagala*; don't forget it. *(Applause)*

Just like establishing the East African Court of Justice sub registry in the capital cities of EAC Partner States, rotating the EALA sittings is one way of ensuring visibility of the Community and its Organs, and allowing the citizenry to follow EALA proceedings. *(Applause)*

I wish to call for the citizen involvement in order to foster active participation in the regional integration process. In doing so, ordinary East Africans will have a voice and EAC Organs their rightful relevance.

I would, therefore, like to assure this august House that the citizens of the Republic of Burundi appreciate the East African

spirit and are always ready to offer their steadfast contribution to the realization of the objectives of the Community. *(Applause)*

To conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate once again the commitment of the Republic of Burundi to the integration process, and wish EALA Members a pleasant stay and fruitful deliberations all along the ten days during which the Sitting will take place.

With these remarks, I declare the Fifth Meeting of the Third Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly officially open. *(Applause)* Long live the Republic of Burundi; long live the East African Legislative Assembly; long live the International Cooperation; may God bless you. Thank you for your kind attention. *(Applause)*

#### **VOTE OF THANKS**

**The Speaker:** Thank you so much, Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi for your very kind words, to me as an individual, and to the Assembly. *(Applause)* Your Excellency, some months ago, I was invited to this podium to move a vote of thanks to you - [*President Nkurunziza: "You took the blessing."*]- His Excellency is saying that was the blessing. *(Laughter)* I can't say thank you enough

but I would like to invite my good friend, Hon. Abubakar Zein to say thank you to you, on behalf of the Assembly. *(Applause)*

**Mr Zein:** You want me to come there, Sir?

**The Speaker:** Yes, to take the podium but not the blessing.  
*(Laughter)*

**Mr Abubakar Zein Abubakar (Kenya):** Your Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, Rt Hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly, the Rt. Hon Gabriel Ntisezerana, President of the Burundi Senate, and I beg your pardon if I need to exercise more in pronunciation, the Rt Hon. Daniel Kidega, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, Hon. Members of the Bureau of the Parliament of Burundi, Your Excellency Sylvester Ntibantunganya former President of Burundi, the Hon. Abdallah Saadalla representing the Hon. Dr Harrison Mwakyembe, the Chairperson of the East African Council of Ministers, the Hon. Ministers and members of the Council of Ministers, Your Excellency Ambassador Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon Members of Parliaments of the East African Community Partner States, Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the Parliament of Burundi, Your Excellences Ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, good afternoon.

Your Excellency, it is my singular honour, pleasure and duty to move a motion of thanks, not just because my brother, who was here before me last year, moved a motion and in your footsteps, Your Excellency, you at one time became the youngest President in Africa and the world - *(Applause)* - he has become one of the youngest Speakers in the region and Africa. *(Applause)*

We, who are gathered here, are grateful for the policy, directives and wise counsel contained in Your Excellency's speech to this House. Your wise counsel will act as a compass in the work of this Assembly for many days to come.

Your Excellency, our presence in this Republic; in this beautiful city, is a testament to our commitment to the people of Burundi and our solidarity to the time when you are about to undergo the test of the will of the people. *(Applause)*

Sir, this Assembly appreciates one's singular honour that will be accorded to you forever; that you shall be remembered as the President who actualised the dreams of many great sons and daughters of this Republic - of guiding; of negotiating; and of leading the Republic of Burundi to become an important member of the East African Community - *(Applause)* - so that we may become a more perfect union; so that we may become a more solid community.

Sir, may who have spoken before me on a podium such as this have recounted to great detail the many great track records of your



development record. Those who had come to your inauguration in this city and had not had the pleasure to come back, were they to come back today, they may not recognise this city. *(Applause)* This city has grown and its beauty has continued to attract many from far away shores, not just because of our secret passion for *mukeke*.

Sir, many who have spoken before me have made reference to many of your deserved accolades and awards that have been extended to you because of your work in peace building. *(Applause)* Many have even remarked that your other name is Mediator; Reconciler; Peace Builder; I don't have the time to back to those, entire Sir.

Allow me to only say two things and beg your pardon and permission so that I may sit down; one, I want to mention something that brings together a companion of people you would not think would ever be brought together, that is, lawyers, Members of Parliament and members of the faiths community. I want to invoke a prayer; all of them say prayers.

So, Sir, allow me to say that we pray and we believe - it is important for me as a man of faith to talk to you in this way, Sir, if you allow me - we pray and believe that a strong Burundi is a strong East African Community. *(Applause)*

We pray and believe a safe Burundi is a safe East African Community. *(Applause)* We pray and believe that a prosperous Burundi is a prosperous East African Community. *(Applause)*

We stand here today - this day and month - and make this prayer that Burundi shall lead this Community in telling the world that we are committed to democracy; that we are committed to good governance; that we are committed to the rule of law; that we are committed constitutionalism.

These are not my words; these are the words of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. *(Applause)*

Allow me to say this lastly, Sir; you are an inspiration to many young people. This young man sitting on your right received a note from you and blessings and look where he is now. *(Laughter)*

Thank you for demystifying the presidency - *(Applause)* - because we know when people assume high offices, you see them less but people see you more. *(Applause)* Access to President Pierre Nkurunziza is easy.

Not only that, people thought that you would give up football but people know that when you put on that jersey of Hallelujah Football Club- *(Laughter)* - defences are shaken, the goal keepers are worried because you are about to score. *(Applause)*

So, thank you for demystifying the presidency that a young man cannot lead and that once you are President, you then become

closed and there are gate keepers and people can no longer access you.

So, allow me to end with these words; that we, the Assembly are grateful for our presence here and I assure you, Sir when you give us advice, we take it seriously. *Ndagala* will become a passion as well. So, allow me, Sir to say thank you very much for your presence; thank you very much for your leadership; and thank you very much for the kind words and good counsel that you have extended to us and to our leader, the Rt Hon. Dan Kidega. Thank you so much.

I beg you to give me permission to leave, but on behalf of my colleagues, thank you; thank you; and thank you. (*Applause*)

**The Speaker:** Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, I would like to thank Hon. Zein so much for the kind words he has extended to you on our behalf. That is the Assembly you have been advising and that is the Assembly and its membership. We thank you so much for everything.

Hon. Members, I have two announcements to make; one, from here we shall be going to a group photo session. The Sergeant - at - Arms will help us arrange for that.

Secondly, we have all been invited for a cocktail at the beautiful foyer of this Parliament. I thank you so much.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Speaker:** I now adjourn the House to Wednesday, 18 March 2015, at 2.30 p.m.

The House stands adjourned.

*(The House rose and adjourned until Wednesday, 18 March 2015  
at 2.30 p.m.)*

**ANTHEMS**

*(The Burundi National Anthem played)*

*(The EAC Anthem played).*