



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

The Official Report of the Proceedings of the East African Legislative Assembly 12th SITTING – THIRD ASSEMBLY: FOURTH MEETING - FIRST SESSION

SPECIAL SITTING

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 2.30 p.m. in the Chamber of Deputies, Burundi National Assembly.

(Burundi National Anthem was played)

(The EAC Anthem was played)

PRAYER

(The Speaker, Ms. Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, in the Chair)

(The Assembly was called to order)

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Chairperson, Legal, Rules and Privileges Committee (Ms Dora Byamukama): Your Excellency, President Pierre Nkurunziza, Your Excellency, the president of the National Assembly of Burundi, Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Your Excellency, the President of Senate, the Chairperson Council of Ministers and hon. Ministers present, hon. Members of the National Assembly and hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, all protocols observed.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move_

THAT, this House pursuant to the provisions of Article 55(1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure do resolve to hold sittings in Bujumbura in the Republic of Burundi.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Hon. Valerie Nyirahabineza, Hon. Abdallah Mwinyi, and hon. Peter Mathuki have seconded. Proceed hon. Byamukama

Ms. Byamukama: Madam 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

WHEREAS Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure provides that the seat of the Assembly shall be at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania

AND WHEREAS Sub-Rule 7 of Rule 11 provides that the Assembly may on a resolution adopted by the majority of its members decide to hold one or more sittings elsewhere within in the Partner States other than its seat.

NOW THEREFORE this Assembly do resolve as follows:

- 1. THAT pursuant to the provisions of Sub-Rule 7 of Rule 11 cited above, the Assembly shall hold sittings in the Chamber of the Burundi National Assembly from today Tuesday 22nd January 2013 up to Thursday 31st January 2013.*

Madam Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Thank you very much hon. Byamukama. Hon. Members the motion on the floor is that this House pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure do resolve to hold sittings in Bujumbura in the Republic of Burundi. Debate is open.

Hon members I wish to put the question.

(Question put and agreed to)

(Applause)

PROCLAMATION

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.

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 is with great pleasure and honour, on your behalf Hon. Members that I welcome in this Assembly, the presence of the President of the Republic of Burundi. (Applause)

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE SPEAKER OF EALA

THE SPEAKER (Rt. Hon. (Dr) Margaret Nantongo Zziwa): Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi; Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly; His Excellency Therence Sinunguruza, 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 Excellency, the Ombudsman of Burundi; Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Shem Bageine, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers; the Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers; 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 Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to first of all thank Rt. Hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly and indeed the entire Government of the Republic of Burundi for accepting to host EALA at the Occasion of the Fourth Meeting of its First Session. *(Applause)*

We are grateful to Rt. Hon Ntavyohanyuma for graciously offering EALA once again the use of the Parliamentary facilities. We consider the Parliamentary precincts here to be our second home and we always have a sense of belonging here. *(Applause)*

I wish to acknowledge the support rendered by the Speaker to my Members and to myself since our election to the Third Assembly. As a result, the relations between EALA and Burundi National Assembly continue to be warm and cordial.

Allow me to thank the Rt. Hon. Speaker for receiving me so well when I visited the beautiful country, Burundi on November 6, 2012 and for the renewed assurances over our (EALA and Burundi National Assembly's) collaboration and co-operation in fulfilling the mandate of integrating the citizens of East Africa. This forms the basis for a strengthened legislative focus.

Again on behalf of the Assembly and my own behalf, I congratulate Rt. Hon Ntavyohanyuma as well as the President of the Senate over the recent launch of the new three-year strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan shall definitely go a long way in ensuring the modernization and enhanced performance of the Parliament, which plays a fundamental role in ensuring a floundering democracy, good governance, and national reconciliation.

Regionally, I appreciate the fact that Rt. Hon. Ntavyohanyuma continues to contribute passionately to the integration process and is an active Member of the Bureau of the EAC Speakers, the umbrella body the National Assemblies are using to spearhead the set up of a number of institutional arrangements at the EAC. *(Applause)*

With these few remarks, I now take this opportunity to invite my colleague, the Rt. Hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma to make his remarks. Invite you Rt. Hon. Speaker, sir. *(Applause)*

WELCOME SPEECH BY THE SPEAKER OF THE BURUNDI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Burundi (Mr. Pie Ntavyohanyuma): Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi; Rt. Hon. Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA); Your Excellency, Thérence Sininguruza, First Vice-President of Burundi; Your Excellency, Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of Burundi; Hon. Members of the Bureaus of the Parliament of Burundi; Your Excellency, the Ombudsman of Burundi; Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Shem Bageine, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers; Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers of the East African Community (EAC); Hon. Members of EALA and the Parliament of Burundi; Ambassador Dr. Richard Sezibera, Secretary General of EAC; Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Diplomats; Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. 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.

May I first and foremost salute and welcome His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza to Kigobe. We are very grateful to Him because He has accepted to grace and address this august Assembly, despite His very busy agenda. We wish Him a happy new year 2013 and great success as the President of Burundi and a key player in EAC integration process.

Allow me then to extend my warm welcome and my wish for a prosperous year 2013 to all EALA Members and to Rt. Hon. Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, whom I sincerely congratulate on her election on the one hand as the Speaker of EALA and, on the other hand, as the first lady Speaker of this prestigious parliamentary institution. *(Applause)*

I seize this opportunity to assure her that the good relationship between the Parliament of Burundi and EALA will be enhanced, in the framework of parliamentary diplomacy. *(Applause)*

Her election and the election of other prominent women as Speakers of national parliaments and assemblies in EAC will further the issue of gender equality, which is very critical in good governance, democratic dispensation and respect of human rights, especially the rights of women and girls.

May I also welcome and thank very sincerely all the distinguished personalities and guests who have come to participate in this ceremony. Their presence is a signal of their special interest in the proceedings of EALA and in EAC integration. I wish them a peaceful year, good health, success, and prosperity.

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi; at first, we knew that the third Assembly had to meet in Bujumbura, in the Chamber of the Burundi National Assembly, from 26th November to 7th December 2012. Then it was announced that the meeting was scheduled to take place in January 2013.

We were told that the postponement was due to the official opening of the EAC Headquarters, which is also the new seat of EALA, in Arusha, Tanzania, and that EALA Members had to participate in that function.

Finally, Rt. Hon. Margaret Zziwa personally came to Bujumbura, on 5th November 2012, to reassure our Parliament that Burundi would host this Assembly, after the inauguration of the new EAC Headquarters.

I congratulate both EAC and EALA on their inauguration of the new Headquarters. I also express our heartfelt gratitude to EALA and its able leader, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Zziwa, for organising this Meeting in Burundi and therefore institutionalising the principle of holding EALA rotational meetings in the different Partner States of the EAC.

Hon. Members of EALA; Once again, welcome to Burundi. Feel at home in our country and our capital city, Bujumbura, near Lake Tanganyika.

In my understanding of the aims of this meeting, and as recommended by Article 49 of The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, you have come to liaise with the Parliament of Burundi.

You are also here to see how your colleagues from Burundi engage with their electorate and the people they represent in EALA.

Assuredly, you will not be disappointed at all because, as a team, they are doing their best to represent their people and sensitise them on matters relating to EAC integration process. I appreciate their collective commitment.

More importantly, in addition to your busy agenda, you have come to liaise with Burundian Parliamentarians on East African Community matters. Certainly, such matters pertain to the EALA fundamental missions of legislating, overseeing, and representing our respective peoples and EAC citizens.

The Parliament of Burundi applauds you for performing such duties. I can assure you that everything possible will be done to make your stay in Burundi enjoyable and fruitful. Every

effort will be made in order for this Session to take place in an enabling environment that allows it to be successful.

Hon. Members of EALA ; With reference to the EALA two-week provisional programme for plenary and standing committees, you will hold debates on committee reports, namely a report of the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources, which highlights good governance in natural resources.

Good management of natural resources, in an environment where climate change and outcomes of that change are to be dealt with, are critical issues for Burundi, a country where nearly 90 per cent of the people live in rural areas and on agriculture.

EALA deliberations on climate change and good governance in natural resources management will be very enriching and instructive to the people of Burundi, a small country with very interesting and diversified natural resources and many opportunities.

As a matter of fact, development projects business companies are being set up by Burundians and people from different parts of the world, including East Africans.

I therefore invite you to sensitise Burundian and East African business people, so that in carrying out their activities, they preserve and protect our beautiful and diversified environment.

This EALA meeting is being opened after the 13th East African *Jua Kali/Nguvu Kazi* Exhibition which was held in Bujumbura in December 2012, and whose main aim was promoting innovation, competitiveness, investment, and private public partnership.

The exhibition was a great success. Indeed, it showed that EAC integration was gradually becoming more people-centred. We are looking forward to seeing another East African *Jua Kali/Nguvu Kazi* Exhibition held in Burundi in the very near future because, Burundians from all walks of life, especially leaders, business people, representatives of the civil society, crafts people, artisans and artists, learnt a lot from their colleagues from other EAC Partner States.

By visiting the different stands, Burundians realised that issues relating to their day-to-day life could be properly addressed by engaging with their counterparts from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania and through EAC Integration.

That is why a number of challenges and obstacles, such as non-tariff barriers and obstacles to the free flow of business, the free movement of people, labour, services and capital, should be eliminated if we are, as East Africans, to consolidate the Customs Union and implement the Common Market Protocol, in order to sustain economic growth and create jobs for the millions of East African youths, who are willing to work hard, but who remain jobless.

To achieve this, we need new laws. We need also to harmonise the laws that are already in place. That is what national assemblies and parliaments of EAC Partner States and EALA are there for.

They are also there to ensure that respective governments rightly implement such laws and that EAC integration process is paving the way to good governance, democratic rule and the rule of law.

Regarding the Parliament of Burundi, we remain committed to adopting all the required bills and popularizing them so that their implementation can lead to a smooth integration of the EAC.

Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Republic of Burundi, the people of Kenya, are on the road to historic general elections, which will be held in March 2013. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our strong support to the people of Kenya in their political process. They deserve peaceful, fair, and transparent elections, so that they can have democratically elected leaders and Members of parliament.

It is with such a wish that I humbly invite His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, the President of the Republic of Burundi, to address us.

Thank you for your kind attention. (*Applause*)

WELCOME SPEECH BY THE SPEAKER OF EALA

THE SPEAKER, EALA (Rt. Hon (Dr) Margaret Nantongo Zziwa): Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi; Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly; His Excellency Therence Sinunguruza, 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 Excellency, the Ombudsman of Burundi; Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Shem Bageine, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers; the Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers; 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 Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I stand before this august House to welcome warmly you to address the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third Assembly. I wish to sincerely thank you for once again responding to our invitation. Indeed, in welcoming you to today's Special Sitting of the House, may it please you to note that you have consistently taken time off your busy schedule to address EALA whenever invited? (*Applause*)

We congratulate you upon completion of 2012. We thank the Lord for his providence and sustenance and wish you many happy returns in 2013. May this year also bring better health to you, prosperity, and growth to the people of the Republic of Burundi and the EAC?

Permit me, at this juncture, Your Excellency, to congratulate you, the Government and the people of the great Republic for attaining 50 years of independence last year. (*Applause*) We wish you all the very best in your endeavours in the years ahead.

Your Excellency, the EALA and the EAC in general ended the year 2012 successfully with the major highlights being: the successful election and inauguration of the 3rd Assembly of which I am pleased to note that the Republic of Burundi sent to the Assembly a strong and cohesive team of Members. (*Applause*) It is a strong team Your Excellency; I want to thank you for that.

The completion of the EAC headquarters and the relocation into the Headquarters by the three organs of the EAC signifies a milestone for the Community and we are pleased and proud of the new and magnificent home. In the first 3 meetings, the 3rd Assembly has also been able to ensure the passage of key Bills and Resolutions including the Customs Amendment Act, 2012 and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2012.

We congratulate the Summit of the EAC Heads of State upon the successful Summit meeting in Nairobi in November 30th 2012 and the tangible decisions registered notably: the recommendations of the Retreat on infrastructure where the Summit adopted a clear list of priority projects in infrastructure, especially in rail transport - (*applause*) - energy, ports and harbours as well as inland waterways. The Summit also received reports concerning negotiations on the implementation of a Single Customs Territory and the corresponding progress on negotiations of all Articles of the East African Monetary Union Protocol at a technical level thus, committing to signing the East African Monetary Union Protocol on November 30, 2013.

We note that the official unveiling of the Arusha- Namanga-Athi River road was a very important landmark in the integration process. We salute the Summit for taking cognizance of the fact infrastructure is key to the economy of the region. We are grateful that the establishment of the East African Railway Authority has been approved and we now await the Bill that shall establish its legal regime at the EAC.

We however realize that just as is the case in every process of regional integration, the successes were not without challenges – majority of which, bordered on the implementation of the pillars of integration. Non-Tariff Barriers, lack of adequate funding and lack of awareness amongst the EAC citizens of the benefits of integration are some of the challenges we faced in 2012. We look towards the Summit for further guidance especially where the Partner States' involvement will produce better results.

Your Excellency, what remains of absolute importance as we start the year 2013 is the undertaking that we strive to harness the challenges into opportunities and that we utilize the prospects to strengthen the integration process and enthuse a people-centred approach. How for example, can we streamline and rationalize the whole area revolving around funding? We must also firmly undertake to address the non-tariff barriers, which continue to have disastrous effects on the business environment in the region.

The Assembly remains dedicated and committed to its role as the legislative Organ of the Community. We pledge our continued commitment to work closely with you; with the EAC

Summit; the Council of Ministers and other Organs/Institutions of the Community until the EAC dream of a united East Africa is realized. (*Applause*)

It is on this premise that over the next two weeks, we shall debate the following:

- receive and debate reports of Committees namely: the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources on Climate change, the report on the workshop on Good Governance in Natural Resources and the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)
- pose questions to the Council of Ministers, debate and adopt various Motions and Resolutions.

Previously, we have appealed to the Council of Ministers to bring forth more Bills for debate. I have recently touched base with the Chair of the Council of Ministers on matters of relevance to both themselves and to the Assembly. I am pleased to note that the Council of Ministers has finalized its legislative calendar and has identified key Bills to be brought before the House for debate soonest. This is positive development since earlier on; the Council was slow in bringing forth Bills. Consequently, it lays emphasis to the comprehensible fact that the Executive and the Legislature are partners in development and it is necessary that we work together.

Your Excellency, the EALA Commission met in Arusha last week to review its Plan of Action occasioned by the fact that EALA's Financial Year ends in June. The results of the mid-year review make positive reading and I am happy to report that we remain on course.

Over the next six months, we expect to receive several Bills for debate and to pass legislation at the forthcoming plenary meeting in Kigali, Rwanda and Kampala, Uganda in April and June 2013 respectively. The Council of Ministers introduced the One Stop Border Post Bill, 2012 and the EAC Vehicle Overload Control Bill among others, and the Committees are already working on them. We will also undertake on-spot assessments in the region, the key ones being in the area of Non-Tariff Barriers and another on the EAC projects related to the implementation of the Common Market Protocol. EALA shall also hold public hearings within the purview of the Committees' mandate. EALA is also expected to observe the elections in the Republic of Kenya as citizens embark on the democratic exercise in early March.

EALA also undertakes to do all that is within its powers in collaboration with various stakeholders to address challenges in the integration dispensation and to ensure all citizens of East Africa reap the full benefits of integration.

At the same time, we shall collaborate with the Council of Ministers to see to it that legislation around crucial matters of integration that stabilize the EAC are enacted. This Assembly shall no doubt need an expanded mandate as the region moves to fast track the Monetary Union and sets the basis for the Political Federation. In this regard, we call for the amendment of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community at an opportune moment.

Your Excellency, I wish to applaud your visionary leadership that has enabled the Republic of Burundi to remain steadfast towards the objective of integration and improved the citizens' well-being through optimising the benefits of the EAC. *(Applause)*

We appreciate that you graciously agreed to our request to revise the plenary schedule to allow us to hold the Third Meeting in Arusha in November 2012 as opposed to Bujumbura, given the importance of the function of the official opening of the EAC Headquarters on November 28, 2012. I wish to sincerely thank you for hosting my delegation and myself at the Office of the President on 5 November 2012, and for the wise counsel you imparted. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you for steering the Republic of Burundi to greater heights? *(Applause)* Development in the great country has been tremendous since the Ceasefire Agreement was signed. *(Applause)*

Again, it is important to note, Mr. President, that in 2005 you inherited a country devastated by over a decade of civil war and dictatorship. In spite of those difficulties, you have been working hard to restore peace and harmony among the Burundian people. *(Applause)* Your policy that is aimed at reconstruction and reconciliation, economic recovery and political stability is laudable. *(Applause)*

We particularly admire your desire to empower the people which has made pulling Burundi out of poverty as one of the key priorities. Burundi is today a stable country economically. Burundi's exports within the East African region have continued to increase by more than 15 percent while imports have been declining. *(Applause)* This is a clear indication that there is improved peace and security in the country enabling citizens to enjoy the dividends of peace through reconstruction of local production base.

Permit me also to credit your leadership for the on-going reforms in all sectors. Burundi is lauded as one of the top ten countries in the continent that has reformed "Doing Business" *(Applause)* this is according to the World Bank Doing Business Report 2012. Your government's commitment to improving the investment climate is strong. We are proud of the Community works that you initiated to be carried out every Saturday. *(Applause)*

Some of us, who were present during the Second Assembly, participated with you in building the Ngozi District headquarters during the *Ibikorwa Rusangi* in Ngozi District on November 26, 2011. *(Applause)* The courageous but otherwise important measures you have taken in favour of children and women is also laudable. *(Applause)* We salute the free education for primary school children and free health care for those under five and the maternity programmes are very remarkable. *(Applause)* Regionally, Burundi's contingent continues to serve in the African Union Peacekeeping Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) - *(Applause)* - and remains undeterred by the insurgent attacks, vowing to stay in Mogadishu until it restores peace and stability.

EALA feels proud to be associated with you following this profound transformation. I am very confident that this country shall continue to be progressive with increased space and freedom of expression, better economy, and infrastructural development that came with your tenure as the President.

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 22nd of January 2013.

Karibu Mheshimiwa Rais! (Applause)

The President of the Republic of Burundi (Pierre Nkurunziza): The Right Honourable Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly; Rt. Hon Pie Ntavyohanyuma, Speaker of the Burundi National Assembly; His Excellency Therence Sinunguruza, 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 Excellency, the Ombudsman of Burundi; Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi; Hon. Shem Bageine, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers; the Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers; 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 Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me first and foremost to give thanks to the Almighty God whose grace and mercy guided us to this date, when the East African Legislative Assembly sits here in Bujumbura. *(Applause)* It is therefore for me a privilege to address this August Assembly in order to launch the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly officially.

I wish to thank the Right Honourable Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly for her kind invitation and for having provided me with this very best opportunity to meet all of you present here today. *(Applause)*

On behalf of the People and Government of Burundi and on my own behalf, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you and wish you a pleasant stay in the Republic of Burundi. *(Applause)* Let me also use this platform to extend to you and to all your dear ones my very best wishes for the Year 2013. *(Applause)*

Excellencies, distinguished invited guests, the East African Legislative Assembly plays a key role in bringing together the people of East Africa, and in fostering the integration process. In this respect, the achievements made so far would not have been possible without such an understanding, vision and leadership of the Members of the East African Legislative Assembly. Allow me to congratulate the EALA Members as a team. *(Applause)*

Since the day we met in this very same place, during the Fifth Nanyuki Session, the East African Legislative Assembly has made tremendous achievements, in terms of representing our Peoples, legislating, approving the East African Community budgets, providing oversights in many East African Community activities as well as establishing linkages between the East African Legislative Assembly and the National Parliaments of the East African Community Partner States.

Although there still is a long way to go in each and every area mentioned above, a need for more commitment and action, a need to be more result oriented. I am confident that the East African Legislative Assembly can live up to this task.

As for the Republic of Burundi, significant progress has been recorded thanks to community works which give answers to local socioeconomic community basic needs. We shall continue to consolidate peace and security as the cornerstone of the promotion of democracy, good governance and the rule of law. In order to move forward, the population, the private sector and the civil society should be involved. We want to place economic growth and creation of employment at the centre of future programmes of poverty reduction.

To do so, as a country and in the region, there is need to live and move together with sound economies and towards political stability, which we can sustain with mutual trust and solidarity, as we boast in the East African Community to be One People with One Destiny. *(Applause)* We must work and transform our Community into a united, peaceful, and prosperous Region.

Madam Speaker, with regards to regional integration, there is also need to maintain the momentum gathered and keep up moving the East African Community forward into larger and deeper integration. It is important that we direct greater attention at the drivers of integration.

In this respect there is need to address factors that limit or constrain the construction of a larger EAC internal market in order to increase the share in global trade and economy. Indeed a larger internal market can help create new jobs for the youth, and raise the standards of living of our Peoples.

There is also need to embark on generating more value addition to our agricultural products through transformation and conservation. If we do so, we shall have accommodated more than 95 percent of our populations who live on agriculture in the Region, and this will certainly boost higher intra-regional trade. Similarly, the importance of infrastructure cannot be overemphasized. There is a need to get agricultural production areas connected to markets and industrial centres. In the same vein, there is need for our Region to concentrate on energy generation on one hand; and consider the railway as the means of transportation of tomorrow in the Region for heavy goods and peoples on the other hand.

We should also focus on opening up our borders to allow trade to grow and intensify. The removal of Non Tariff Barriers, the facilitation of transport and trade by One Stop Border Posts and the implementation of a Single Customs Territory can make the difference.

The East African Community integration is, in the eyes of analysts, one of the models of integration. We must commit to keep the standards and the record high. We have to consolidate the Customs Union and implement the Common Market Protocol, to pave the way for the Monetary Union and lay the foundations for the East African Community Political Federation. *(Applause)*

The commitment and dedication of EALA Members being now a proven fact, I would like to invite the Session to combine the pleasant and the useful, so that at the end of the Session, “Mission Accomplished” should be the motto for every EALA member. *(Applause)*

I have no doubt, that during these proceedings, the East African Legislative Assembly will strengthen further the ties, which so happily exist between EALA and Burundi Parliament, to work more closely and raise the performance of the East African Community as well as improving the law making mechanisms. *(Applause)*

I wish to reiterate Burundi's commitment to EAC integration. Burundi will spare no efforts in playing its part to achieve the objectives of the East African Community. *(Applause)*

I wish also to call for more and close collaboration between EAC Organs and Institutions and those of the EAC Partner States. In doing so, I am confident that we shall bring the East African Community closer to the People and that the East African citizens will definitely, through their direct involvement, benefit from and reap the fruits of regional integration.

Finally, as the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly takes place at a time when general elections in our Sister Partner State Kenya are at hand, I would like to wish Kenyan People peaceful and successful elections and a wonderful Jubilee year. *(Applause)* May the discussions and deliberations of the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly be fruitful?

It is upon these well wishing words that I declare officially open in Kigobe House of parliament, the proceedings of the Fourth Meeting of the First Session of the Third East African Legislative Assembly. *(Applause)* Long Live the Republic of Burundi! Long Live the East African Community! Long Live the EALA!

Murakoze cyane! Asanteni Sana! (Applause)

VOTE OF THANKS

The Speaker: I wish to invite hon. Mumbi Ngar'u to move a vote of thanks. You can use the front podium.

Ms Mumbi Ngar'u (Kenya): Your Excellency, Pierre Nkuruziza; the Right Honourable Margaret Nantongo Zziwa, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly; the Right Honourable Pie Ntavyohanyuma Speaker of Burundi National Assembly, Your Excellency Thérence Sininguryumuza, First Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, your Excellency Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi; honourable Members of the Bureaus of the National Assembly and Senate of Burundi, Your Excellency Mohamed Rukara, Ombudsman of Burundi, Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State of Burundi; honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly; honourable Members of Burundi National Assembly and Senate, Honourable First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs of Uganda and Chairperson of the Council of Minister, Distinguished Ministers, Your Excellency Ambassador Doctor Richard Sezibera, East African Community Secretary General, Yours Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; on behalf of the Speaker of EALA, I want to wish His Excellency, the President of Burundi, a happy new year. *(Applause)*

We do not take it for granted that in our Fourth Meeting, beginning of the year, we are sitting in your country. We are grateful that we have felt at home. For those of us who are fast members like me, we have learnt in the few days that we have been here, what integration is all about. *(Applause)*

Moreover, from your address, we have heard an integrated person, you have challenged us about our work in the Assembly and we are more charged than we have ever been about what our role and duties in the EALA are. The hon. Speaker of the National Assembly of Burundi, thank you very much. We have been here since Sunday, we are feeling at home, and on behalf of my colleagues, we do not take it for granted that we can change our schedule from November to January and fit us in your programme. We appreciate the kind gesture that we can change your programme and you fit in our programme. Thank you very much for that. *(Applause)*

And for you, Madam Speaker, from where we come from, we always talk about the head. We are proud of you, you have been a good servant of our Assembly. When we send you, you run. When we make changes in our programme, you take it upon yourself to run around for us and change the programme. You are a good messenger. Continue being that *-(applause)* - and will take on the challenges that we have been challenged today about our role as legislators, our stakeholders and I am sure by the end of our term, like the president has clearly stated we shall say that we have done our job. I am an east African from Kenya and on my own behalf and on behalf of the Kenyan Chapter, from His Excellency, the president of Burundi, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Burundi, the Speaker of the EALA, we don't take it for granted that you're a true brother's keeper. That you have remembered in all your addresses the situation in Kenya that we are going through elections and you are praying for it and us is your heart to make sure that we stand on our own two feet democratically, peacefully and we don't take that for granted. *(Applause)*

On behalf of the Kenyan Chapter, I take that message seriously because we do not want to go what we went through in the Year 2007.

With those few remarks, I want to assure you that the challenges that you have mentioned in your address, we are going to take them seriously. We shall work; we are already charged. As a new member, we look forward to the community day, on Saturday. Some of us have never experienced it and we are looking forward to do whatever is done here in Burundi and carry the good example to our home countries.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: Hon. Mumbi thank you for passing that very important message from the bottom of our hearts to His Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, and the Rt. Hon. Pie Ntavyohanyuma. We are very grateful to you.

Hon. Members we have come to the end of our session today but before we adjourn, allow me to make two important announcements. The first one, hon. Members we are going to have a group photograph with His Excellency, President Pierre Nkurunziza, and all our dignitaries and we shall be shown by the protocol team where to take the photographs.

The second one is also equally important; we are all invited to a cocktail so that we share the graciousness of Burundi together in the garden in front of this beautiful hall.

With those few announcements, I wish to adjourn the House to tomorrow.

(The House rose at... p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday 23rd January 2013 at 2.30 p.m.)

(The Burundi National Anthem was played)

(The EAC Anthem was played)