



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

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

114th Sitting - Third Assembly: Fourth Meeting – Third Session

Tuesday, 24 November 2015

SPECIAL SITTING

*The East African Legislative Assembly met at 2:39 p.m. in the Chamber of Deputies,
Parliament of Rwanda, Kigali.*

PRAYER

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

(The Assembly was called to order)

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Speaker: Hon. Peter Mathuki, Chairperson Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges.

The Chairperson, Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges (Mr Peter Mathuki) (Kenya): Thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I move that this House pursuant to provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 10 (5) of the Rules of Procedure do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali in the Republic of Rwanda. I beg to move.

The Speaker: Seconded by Hon. Nyirahabineza, Hon. Ngenzebuhoro, Hon. Pareno, Hon. Ussi, Hon. Bazivamo and all the Members standing. Proceed with the motion, Hon. Peter Mathuki.

Mr Mathuki: Thank you very much, Mr 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 at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania;

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

NOW THEREFORE, This Assembly do resolve as follows: Pursuant to the provisions of Sub Rule 5 of Rule 10 cited above, the Assembly shall hold sittings in the Chamber of Rwanda Chamber of Deputies from today, Tuesday 24th November, 2015 up to Thursday 3rd December, 2015."

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon. Peter Mathuki, Chairpersons of the Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges. Hon. Members, the motion before the 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 Kigali, Rwanda. Debate is open.

Hon. Members, being that there is no Member rising to debate, there is no need for me to call the mover of the motion to respond. I, therefore, move straight to put the question to the motion.

The motion before the 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 Kigali, in the Republic of Rwanda.

(Question put and agreed to.)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker: Honourable Members, amidst us today is the Rt. Hon Makuza Bernard, the President of the Rwandan Senate and the Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa Donatille, Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies - *(Applause)*. In accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty, I have, invited them to address this Assembly.

I would now like to make the following proclamation to welcome their presence, in this Assembly:

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 House renders his or her presence desirable.

AND WHEREAS in the opinion of the Speaker, the attendance and presence in the Assembly of the President of the Rwandan Senate and Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Rwandan Chamber of Deputies 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 to welcome the Rt Hon. Speaker of the Rwandan Senate and Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Rwandan Chamber of Deputies in this Assembly. (Applause)

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE SPEAKER OF EALA

The Speaker: Rt. Hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Rwandan Senate, Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa Donatille, Speaker of the Rwandan Chamber of Deputies, the Chairperson and

Council of EAC Ministers, the Secretary General of the East African Community, the honourable Members of EALA and Chambers of Deputies and the Senators of the Republic of Rwanda, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish, first of all, to thank the Rt Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, the Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies and indeed the entire Government of the Republic of Rwanda for accepting to host EALA for the duration of the Third Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Third Assembly - *(Applause)*.

I congratulate Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa for leading the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies with dedication and charisma since assuming the position of the Speaker in 2013 - *(Applause)*

The relationship between the Parliament of Rwanda and EALA is cordial. That very gesture of surrendering the use of the precincts of Parliament to EALA over the two weeks period portends a very strong statement of cordiality and one of pure friendship. We as EALA are truly grateful for the spirit of sisterhood and look forward to strengthening and solidifying the relationship even further between EALA and the Chamber of Deputies. I am proud that both assemblies continue to learn from each other and collectively build ties across the Community.

I was privileged to meet with Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa in March this year during my introductory tour around the Partner States. At the same occasion, I also held discussions with the President of the Senate, the Rt. Hon. Bernard Makuza. Together we discussed matters of mutual interest between the legislatures.

I am certain that we shall continue to benefit in many ways from the experience of the Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa as we strengthen the Speakers' Bureau- the platform through which we spearhead and intensify the linkages of EALA and the National Assemblies as stipulated in Article 49 (2) and 65 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

In the very short time that we have worked together, I have found the Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa to be engaging, cordial and cooperative to work with me - *(Applause)*.

I think the Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa made extremely good choice 15 years ago to join politics because her resonance with public life is in perfect conformity - *(Applause)*.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker is passionate that Rwandans should understand and know the work of Parliament. In many ways, the Rt. Hon. Speaker contributes to telling and selling the story of how the Parliament operates. Today, many Rwandans are aware of the roles of the INEKO- very much aware - *(Applause)*.

I admire you for your leadership, Madam. Your leadership style and political philosophy at the Parliament, which was honed a couple of years ago when you served as a Member of Parliament in the Transitional National Assembly and Deputy Chairperson on the Standing Committee on Economy and Trade. Later on, you served as Deputy Chairperson on the Standing Committee on Political Affairs in the Chamber of Deputies. No doubt, you are doing very well with this experience - *(Applause)*.

I am confident that under your leadership, the Parliament of Rwanda will make significant achievements and that its role as the legislative, oversight and representative body shall continue to be strengthened. I can vouch that with you as the presiding officer of the House, we shall see the operating performance of your House strengthen the development of this country.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I can assure you of my unreserved support and wish you very good success in your endeavours and tour of duty as the Speaker. I thank you very much. *Karibu Mheshimiwa Speaker - (Applause).*

ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER OF THE RWANDA HOUSE OF DEPUTIES

The Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies (Ms Donatille Mukabalisa): Rt. Hon. President of the Senate and Guest of Honour, Rt. Hon. Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, Hon. Chairperson EAC Council of Ministers, Hon. Ministers of the EAC, the Secretary General of the EAC, Hon. Members of EALA, Hon. Members of Parliament of Rwanda, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Chamber of Deputies, it gives me great pleasure to be here with you today at this occasion of the official opening ceremony of the Third Meeting of the Fourth Assembly of the East African Legislative Assembly.

I am honoured and delighted to greet you all, and particularly to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished guests from abroad. Please, feel at home in this country of a thousand hills and a thousand opportunities - *(Applause).*

I also take this occasion to thank Rt. Hon. Daniel Fred Kidega, the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly and all Members of EALA for the strong collaboration in our legislative activities.

In our regular meetings of the Bureau of EAC Speakers, we discuss EAC regional integration, achievements and advise the competent organs on the way forward especially aiming at fast tracking harmonisation of the national laws to conform to the EAC Protocols. The harmonisation of Partner States laws is ongoing; it is in the process and a number of laws have been harmonised in different areas.

Excellences, Hon. Members, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to reiterate commitment to work closely with the EALA for the faster realisation of the objectives and goals of the Community and Rwanda is committed to consolidate their achievements.

The Parliament of Rwanda is honoured to host this session once more and it will do all that is within the range of its possibilities to facilitate EALA meetings.

Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, the EALA session will be followed by EAC Inter-Parliamentary Tournament and Games. Inter-Parliamentary Games are an important activity by Parliaments/ Assemblies to promote EAC integration. It will be another opportunity for Members of Parliament from EAC Partner States to meet, interact and share experiences and expertise meant to foster social cohesion and unity among the people of the East African Region, which is the foundation of sustainable development as we are one people with a common destiny.

With these few words, I thank you all, once again, and I wish our guests a pleasant stay in Rwanda. Once again, you are welcome. *Karibuni sana. Murahoneza murisanga.* Thank you. May God be with you all - *(Applause).*

The Speaker: Your Excellency, Rt. Hon. Mukabalisa Donatille, Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, the Chairperson Council of Ministers of EAC and Ministers, the Secretary General of the EAC, Members of EALA and Chambers of Deputies and Senators, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I warmly welcome you to deliver your address at the commencement of the Third Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Third Assembly.

I thank H.E. Paul Kagame for delegating this important assignment to you - (*Applause*). I appreciate the entire Government led by President Paul Kagame and the Parliament of Rwanda plus the citizens of this country for continuously hosting the Assembly whenever we convene in Kigali - (*Applause*). Your Excellency, we truly feel honoured and privileged to be here.

I wish at this point, on behalf of EALA and on my own behalf to send heartfelt condolences to His Excellency Paul Kagame, the family and the entire country following the loss of his dear mother, the late Asteria Rutagambwa. I request the Assembly to stand up in memory of our departed mother.

(Members rose and observed a minute of silence)

May the Almighty God rest her soul in eternal peace!

I wish to report that since we last met here in October 2014, the Assembly has grown from strength to strength. We have continued with our plenary sittings in line with the principle of rotation. Since January 2015, the Assembly has held four sittings; in Bujumbura – March 2015; Arusha – June 2015; Kampala-August, 2015; and Nairobi-October, 2015.

In totality, we have enacted eight Bills. Passed seven resolutions and adopted 15 reports. In addition to a number of questions posed to the Council of Ministers. We have also received three petitions on the matter of concerns to East Africans.

At this plenary session, Your Excellency, EALA shall debate on the East African Forest Management Bill, 2014 and the East African Disaster Risk Reduction Bill, 2013; analyse several oversight reports of the Committees; debate crucial motions and pass resolutions.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, immediately thereafter, EALA shall in collaboration with the Parliament of Rwanda host the Sixth Inter-Parliamentary Games tournament. I take this earliest opportunity to congratulate you for all the efforts so far concerning the preparations. The sports disciplines include among others; football, netball, volleyball, athletics, golf and tag of war. Your Excellency, we are aware that you are an active participant - (*Applause*).

Rt. Hon. Speaker, President Paul Kagame has been quoted as saying, and rightfully so, that sports is a teacher of sacrifice, humility, honesty and teamwork. These aspects cut across into the integration divide. We are grateful to the Summit for living up to this big dictum and thus keeping integration alive over the 15 years despite the challenges we have walked through.

Your Excellency, the story of democracy in Africa is one of evolution. Having been interrupted and mutilated to enable installation of a Western type of modal by colonial regimes at the post-independence period, several years later, the continent faces challenges as we try to grasp and apply the modal that was left with us. Many a times, I have believed that the African modal of democracy was the most suitable and that would have provided homegrown solutions to our challenges.

However, that said, Sir, when one of our sister Partner States suffers, then we as a family all do agonise. The Assembly is extremely concerned about what is taking place in the Republic of Burundi. Many lives have been lost; others maimed; peace disrupted; property damaged and

the economy destabilised following the rapid escalation of violence and instability over the few months. The situation is worrying, Sir and could be dire and grave.

I have recently had the opportunity of meeting with the President of the Senate of Burundi in Geneva and I called upon him to rally the country's legislature to go beyond the call of duty in restoring stability.

As an Assembly, we have also debated on and passed the report of the Good Will Mission of the Assembly to Burundi refugees in the Eastern Province of Rwanda and in Kigoma in the United Republic of Tanzania. Last week the Assembly also received a petition from concerned East Africans keen to the impulse to resolve the matter.

Beyond that, Sir, we are worried that the image and the credibility of EAC could be drastically affected and negatively reversed if we do not find a lasting solution to Burundi to enable the citizens enjoy their full democratic rights and the fruits of integration as enshrined in the Treaty of the Establishment of the East African Community.

I, on behalf of the Assembly, wish to laud the initiatives that the Summit of EAC Heads of State is doing to remedy the situation in terms of mediation. I, however, request on behalf of the East African people to up the momentum to remedy the situation. The East African people are crying for more.

The African Union has likewise endorsed the process of peace seeking and so has the UN Security Council to engage in the peace dialogue.

Your Excellency, this region has already paid a high price because of bad politics. The memory of the 1994 Genocide in this great republic is still fresh in our minds; the memory of the confusion in 2007 in the Republic of Kenya is still fresh in our minds; and the memory of the killing of the innocent people in Northern Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is still fresh in our minds. All these are the price of bad politics. We as an Assembly cannot afford to see further price being paid for bad politics by East Africans - (*Applause*).

We appeal to the Government and people of the Republic of Burundi to do all that they can within their best means to stop the killing and maiming of people and the destruction of property. We as an Assembly are firmly behind the position of the EAC Summit members that has called upon the Burundian people to sit down for a peaceful negotiation with all the warring or disagreeing people in that republic. We shall firmly support that decision by the Summit, we invite all frameworks in this region, and beyond to firmly stand behind the Summit to help Burundi resolve the crisis that is obtaining now.

Concerning the Common Market Protocol, I note with great encouragement that the Republics of Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda did abolish work permit fees thus encouraging workers to move freely in search for opportunities - (*Applause*). Movement of citizens within the three countries have also been eased following the recent introduction of the interstate passes. So far, this is working well and it is my firm belief that the modal should in due course serve as a case study that can be extrapolated in the entire region - (*Applause*).

Generally, there is need to speed the uptake of the Protocol, which was entered into five years ago. EALA is considering how it can introduce relevant pieces of legislation to anchor the said protocol.

Concerning the Customs Union, we are glad the Summit is pushing for the operationalisation of the Single Custom Territory to streamline and enhance clearance of goods. The improvement

at the Dar-es-Salaam and the Mombasa ports will make both the Central and Northern Corridors attractive in terms of facilitation of trade.

The completion of the standard gauge railways shall further spur business and further reduce the number of days for goods coming to Kigali from all the ports mentioned above.

It is also necessary to address all bureaucratic processes, administrative restrictions and misuse of rules of origin principle among others, which hamper free movement of goods and persons.

As EALA, we are doing all that is within our purview of legislation, oversight and representation to make East Africa a comfortable place to live and work in and to be proud of. It is in this vein that the Assembly is reaching out to the Summit Heads of State with a proposal to take advantage of the Summit Meetings as an opportune moment to assent to Bills of the Assembly in line with Article 63 of the EAC Treaty.

This mode, we feel, will speed up the processes and address the logistical issue of moving the Bills from one Partner State to another. Already, we have received positive responses from H.E. President Yoweri Museveni and H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta when we were in their capitals for EALA Meetings. Rt. Hon. Makuza, we request you to deliver a similar message to H.E. Paul Kagame who is known for efficiency - (*Applause*).

Another challenge facing the Community generally is that of funding. We appreciate that all Partner States are committed towards the process despite the fact that remission of funds occasionally get delayed thus hampering our deliverables to the Community. We hope that the Community can finalise on the alternative funding mechanisms as has been discussed by the relevant bodies of the Community.

Rt. Hon. Makuza, permit me to take this singular opportunity to congratulate H.E. Paul Kagame for steering the Republic of Rwanda to greater heights - (*Applause*). His leadership style continues to be an inspiration to many given the focus towards addressing national and regional issues. EALA too adds its voice in a rounding view for the great achievements in this republic.

Rwanda enjoys peace and stability; it is the ICT hub of the region; and the country is environmentally conscious and clean - (*Applause*). Rwanda is building its reputation as a choice of destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions and this is good for its economy and the region - (*Applause*). I wish you all good health and prosperity as you reflect the country's development in the coming years.

Finally, Sir, Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome you, Your Excellency to address this Assembly on this day, Tuesday 24th November, 2015. Thank you so much for your kind attention - (*Applause*).

The President of the Rwanda Senate (Rt. Hon. Bernard Makuza): Rt. Hon. Daniel Kidega, Speaker of EALA, Rt. Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda-Chamber of Deputies, Hon. Chairperson of EAC Council of Ministers, the Secretary General of EAC, Hon. Deputy Speakers of the Parliament of Rwanda, Hon. Members of EALA, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of H.E. the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, I am delighted to welcome the Assembly and the entire EALA family to Rwanda and I take this opportunity to convey to you, his warm greetings and best wishes. (*Applause*)

I would like to let you know that the Parliament of Rwanda appreciates the opportunity to host these Meetings of EALA, and I hope that our hospitality will provide a perfect environment for your deliberations - (*Applause*).

The agenda of the Meetings, which features among other issues: forest management, one stop border post, East African Community Vision 2050, financial sector integration, disaster and risk management, represent the determination of our Community to address important matters of integration and cooperation with the conviction that our region can overcome challenges, which Partner States would not easily overcome individually. These challenges, be they related to, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, economic and social development, defence and security or international relations, these challenges are easily overcome when we agree upon common approaches to address them, taking into consideration our own realities. That is the powerful phrase of cooperation and solidarity. Moreover, it is the expectation of the people of East Africa.

The steps we have made together so far demonstrate that with political will and hard work, we can do more and accomplish the results our people expect and deserve. To attain sustainable growth and reach the level of development and prosperity we want in the Vision 2050, we have to collaborate effectively to address together issues such insecurity, bad governance and corruption.

We, legislators in complementarity with our governments and all Community Organs, we have an important role to play so that nothing can get in the way of development as intended in the Treaty.

However, as we all know, dreams of East Africans cannot come true unless we eradicate the “business as usual” mindset. As legislators, we must ask questions and keep searching for solutions for and on behalf of our people. We must identify and address whatever may divert the progress of the Community and ensure that there are no obstacles to our cooperation for integration.

To start with, procedures and processes governing Organs of the Community should not be themselves an obstacle to the growth of the Community - (*Applause*).

Rt. Hon. Speaker, hon. Ministers, hon. Members of EALA and hon. Members of the Parliament of Rwanda, one of the challenges the Community faces is related to inadequate involvement of the people of East Africa - (*Applause*). It is indeed common sense that our people must be consulted and involved in each step of the integration programmes as much as possible - (*Applause*). The fact of the matter is that the cost of failing to involve people widely enough is ultimately much higher than what is required to invest in people’s participation in the decision making processes.

Before we formulate explanations, as leaders and people’s representatives, we should ask ourselves, are we doing the best we could? Are we not engaging debates just for the sake of it rather than debating pragmatically aiming to come up with real solutions for results? (*Applause*) Do we not allow administrative and procedural considerations to stand in the way of development and growth of East Africa? (*Applause*) Actually, it is with this kind of questions that the homegrown solutions are borne in Rwanda.

Indeed, after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the challenges we faced as a nation have taught us lessons. They became our motivation to transform the political and social economic situation of the people of Rwanda. We understood well that unity, security and good

governance were very critical for survival sustainability as a nation. We are a nation that has been built from ashes. Today, Rwanda stands for something, that is, resilience and dignity - (*Applause*). That is why Rwanda is very committed to the objectives of a people centred Community.

Rwanda will continue to stand for a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa because that vision represents the aspirations of East Africans. (*Applause*)

Excellences, the key aspiration that EAC citizens expect from their leaders is more comprehensive accountability mechanisms in accelerating implementation of the East African Common Market Protocol. By delaying the implementation of the Protocol, we are depriving EAC citizens of the promises we have made to make the East African Community a common market for free movement of people, jobs, service provision, education, financial access and services. (*Applause*)

Partner States are seriously lagging behind in the implementation of the commitments agreed upon in 2010, and with a deadline of just one month, we must hold each other mutually accountable. We must all push our frontiers to effect the change we desire for our citizens. I urge this special gathering and the august House to seize this opportunity and push for swift implementation of all pending commitments across all Partner States - (*Applause*). I think that EALA is specially placed to hold the Executive accountable, and it is my hope that we can work together to make this happen.

The agenda of your meeting is actually timely and clearly reflects the concerns raised in the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, basing on our experience in Rwanda, we believe that we should develop ambitious, comprehensive and achievable development plans, which recognise the importance of national ownership because when citizens are on board, they do the work themselves. In this regard, we have to draw the lesson from the Millennium Development Goals as we have seen that the MDGs had to be locally adopted and owned. Otherwise, they were derailed.

Therefore, your Excellences, the activities of this Assembly, but also, of our National Assemblies in general should articulate the new Sustainable Development framework with a genuine effort to involve the citizens. I appeal to you to ensure that our people are fully and genuinely involved in governance - (*Applause*).

Your Excellences, as a legislation, the recent example of involvement of citizens in governance is our Parliament's consideration of petition by Rwandans regarding the constitutional revision. As legislators, there is no other voice to hear other than that of our people both in decision-making and in accountability. People's aspirations are the only argument against intimidations and prejudices. National sovereignty belongs our people. We cannot afford to apologise for the very things that work for our people and make us stronger. This is actually the real expression of democracy. (*Applause*)

Rt. Hon. Speakers, Hon. Ministers, Hon. Members of EALA and Hon. Members of the Parliament of Rwanda, with regard to environmental issues, I would say that your Assembly is convened at a critical turning point just days before the start of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, COPE 21.

Now, I would like to recall the remarks H.E. Paul Kagame made to EALA a few years ago. He said, "Our region continues to experience natural disasters and food shortages owing in part to effects of climate change and poor management of the environment. The need to develop

agricultural policies and practices and land management systems that ensure food security in the region is most urgent.” *(Applause)*

As legislators, we understandably have a critical role to play to mitigate natural disasters, food and water insecurity and other effects of climate change in the context of the agenda for sustainable development. I particularly appreciate the attention to the issue of natural resources, environment management, food security and rural development in the EAC Vision 2050. These particular issues stipulated in the EAC Vision 2050 are obviously linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda. As you address them, we should always keep in mind that development is not a miracle. We have to work for it to the point that it may even hurt. Of course, it depends on a people centred leadership that own its agenda with citizens on board.

Finally, I would like to once again say that security and good governance would be sine qua non to achieve our Community’s Vision 2050 if you are really determined to make East Africa more visible, competitive and relevant to the global economy.

With these few remarks, on behalf of H.E. Paul Kagame, I declare this Meeting of the Fourth Session of this Assembly officially open - *(Applause)*.

Rt. Hon. Speaker of EALA, I want to assure you that I will convey your message to His Excellency Paul Kagame. *Asanteni sana - (Applause)*.

VOTE OF THANKS

The Speaker: Your Excellency, the President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda, representing H.E. Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, I would like to say thank you for kind remarks. It is always very refreshing to be in this republic. I cannot express on behalf of my colleagues these words of appreciation. I will invite one person to do so. However, before I invite one of our colleagues to move a vote of thanks to you, allow me to request my colleagues, the Members of EALA to introduce themselves to you, country by country. I start with the Republic of Burundi; may you rise for recognition, please? The Republic of Kenya; the Republic of Rwanda; the United Republic of Tanzania; and the Republic of Uganda - *(Applause)*. Your Excellency, this is the team that has made it possible for us to achieve what I have read to you.

I would like also in a special way to recognise our guests who are in the gallery. We have Deputy Speakers of the Chambers of Deputies; Hon. Mukama Abbas and Hon. Uwimana Mpaye Jean. We also have Deputy Speakers of the Senate; Hon. *Jean d’Arc Gakuba* and Hon. Harerimana Fatou Fatou. We also have our good friends, the Rwandan Members of the Senate and the Rwandan Members of the Chambers of Deputies. *(Applause)*

I am also informed that we have one of our own Hon. Jacqueline Muhongayire - *(Applause)*. We thank you so much for keeping institutional memory alive.

With those few remarks, allow me to invite Hon. Dora Byamukama to say thank you to you on our behalf. Hon. Dora Byamukama, I kindly grant you the permission to use the golden podium - *(Applause)*.

Ms Dora Kanabahita Byamukama (Uganda): Mr Speaker, Sir, Your Excellency, the Rt. Hon. Makuza Bernard, the President of the Senate of the Rwanda Parliament representing H.E. Paul Kagame the President of Rwanda, Rt Hon. Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, the Hon. Deputy Speakers of the Parliament of Rwanda, Members of Senate and Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, present, my colleagues, Members of EALA, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me a lot of pleasure and honour to be able to express a vote of thanks to H.E. Rt. Hon. Makuza who is representing the President of Rwanda.

Mr Speaker, sir, when it comes to a vote of thanks, maybe only two words are enough, and those are “thank you.”, but being the politician that I am, I humbly request that I say a little bit more.

First and foremost, we would like to thank you, Your Excellency Makuza for being here with us. We sincerely appreciate that you have found time and you have brought us the directives of His Excellency Paul Kagame. We thank you very much - *(Applause)*.

We thank you for the excellent delivery of the President’s message and we pledge that we shall take off time, with the Speaker’s permission, to be able to deliberate on it and to be able to find mechanisms of implementing what has been stated in this very important message - *(Applause)*.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rt Hon. Mukabalisa, the Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies; we thank you very much Rt Hon Mukabalisa for giving us this space and the honour to deliberate in this very prestigious Chamber of Deputies - *(Applause)*.

Permit me to say this, Rt. Hon. Speaker, that your action to meet the Speaker of EALA personally at the airport, which I personally witnessed was very touching. We thank you again. *(Applause)*

I will not go into the depth of what was said because all of us were present but permit me to highlight a few aspects, which I found very touching and which we would like maybe to deliberate on further. First and foremost, I would like to say that we have noted progress made in the East African Community. However, just as you said, we at the EAC would like to see a more accelerated speed of the EAC integration.

Mr Speaker, as you are all aware, we have a slow pace when it comes to the issue of enactment of the EAC laws. We even have a slower pace when it comes to prompt implementation of the laws. Therefore, we would like to ask that maybe we may change, just like you said, it should not be “business as usual.” The procedures we use can be changed so that they do not hamper the speed of integration - *(Applause)*.

We have taken this message home and we would like to work on this. As you have said, we would like to adopt the homegrown solutions, which has made Rwanda the prosperous and illustrative of very highly progressive nation that it is today - *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to also highlight the issue of goal setting and setting of a clear road map. This is an issue, which we would like to have made very clearly so that when we talk to the East Africans they would know that, for example, in 2020 we shall be a political federation called, maybe, the United States of East Africa or maybe any other name that we may choose - *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, I would also like to highlight the issue of removal of Non-Tariff Barriers. These continue to hamper progress and new ones keep on coming up. Therefore, it is very important that we find ways of continuously dealing with it.

I would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for introducing in his tenure a scorecard, which score card has heightened accountability as well as provided a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. (*Applause*)

Mr Speaker, Sir I could go on but let me conclude on an important aspect, which I believe touches on all of us. This is the issue of speedy construction of a railway line from Mombasa to Bujumbura. This particular railway line would pass through Kampala and then to Kigali. My neighbour here, hon. Leonce has reliably informed me that the Republic of Rwanda and that of Burundi have never ever had even one kilometre of a railway line. Therefore, I believe this will be a marvel; it will be a great achievement and it will facilitate free movement of persons and goods in the East African Community - (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, sir, I cannot conclude without making one plea, Your Excellency, in your speech, you made it very clear that we need to consult and engage common people in each stage of integration. (*Applause*) You also highlighted that the cost of failing to do so is very grave. I would like to plead, on behalf of my colleagues, humbly, that we Members of EALA would like your support in our bid to sensitise all the East Africans - (*Applause*). I trust that when this comes to your table, Your Excellency, you will support this humble bid.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, I would like to make a conclusion and in concluding, I would like to once again say that whenever we come to the Republic of Rwanda we marvel at the development that has taken place since we, for example, were here last. We would like to salute you for the great leadership; for the political will, which has made us very proud of the Republic of Rwanda - (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Sir, as you are aware, one of the achievements of the Republic of Rwanda is the fact that it has the highest number of women in Parliament - (*Applause*). This particular achievement has profiled the East African region so that every time we go anywhere in the world, we are quick to associate with Rwanda as being part of the East African Community. I hope all the other Partner States will take a cue from Rwanda and do likewise.

The other aspect, which is very important and which I must mention, is the issue of transparency international as well as the zero corruption strategies that you have put in place - (*Applause*). This has also profiled the East African Community and in particular Rwanda. I could go on and on, as I said, but allow me to say one thing, which I think one day will be captured as one of the wonders of the world and this is what you have done since 1994. Rwanda has risen from ashes; it is now a star in many aspects. It is a star in performance; it is a star in progress; it is a star in the East African Community. We continue to pray that this leadership will continue and will be able to borrow a leaf as East Africans from what you have scored.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, Sir, we of the East African Legislative Assembly would like to implore Your Excellency, President Paul Kagame, whom I know you will meet, to take into account the issue of good governance in the East African Community. We cannot progress unless we have good governance. I will not go on and on, on this aspect, but for a fact, we need the issue of security to be addressed in the whole region, as well as, the issue of human rights to be also considered as a priority.

I would like to conclude by saying that we thank you again and as I thank you, I would like specifically to thank the Members of the Rwanda Chapter - (*Applause*). We thank you, Your Excellency for sending a splendid group. These Members are exemplary; they are performers; they are jet setters and we hope that you will be able to acknowledge this to them at one time

or the other because they have made us proud and they continue to make you proud as a country - *(Applause)*.

Our target is to be a middle-income region in one generation. Rt. Hon. Makuza, we would like you to relay this to the President and say that we seem not to be together on this particular agenda. However, as you said in your remarks, we need to adopt common approaches taking into account our own realities. Therefore, we would like to say that, we who are one people, with one destiny would continue to push for this. I say all this taking into account that there are issues that are happening in the region that do not seem to be helping us push in one direction.

In conclusion, I want to thank you, once again, and may God bless you. Thank you - *(Applause)*.

The Speaker: Thank you so much, Hon. Dora for the vote of thanks on our behalf.

Last but not least, Your Excellency, Rt. Hon. Makuza, allow me to introduce our most senior Members of this Assembly starting with the Chair, Council of Ministers being represented here by Hon. Shem Bageine; Hon. Amb Valentine, the Minister of EAC Affairs from Rwanda here; Hon. Ambassador Dr. Richard Sezibera, the Secretary General of the Community. These have been pillars for our success as an Assembly. We thank you for standing with us - *(Applause)*.

Honourable Members, before I adjourn the House, I would like to make the following announcements; the Office of the Speaker has arranged for a cocktail after here. You are all invited with our guests who are with us this evening. But prior to the cocktail, we shall have joint photo sessions that shall be guided by the Sergeant –at-Arms.

I thank you so much with those few remarks. I now adjourn the House to tomorrow 2.30.

(The House rose at 3: 53 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 25 November 2015 at 2.30 p.m)