



EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**REMARKS BY RT. HON DANIEL FRED KIDEGA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE
SESSION ON MOBILISATION AND QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE
AWARENESS WORKSHOP AT THE EALA CHAMBERS ON JUNE 3Rd 2016
ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

**Your Excellency Haram Fatima Aycl, Commissioner for Trade and
Industry, African Union Commission;**

Honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly;

Officials of the East African Community Secretariat;

The ARSO Secretary General and PAQI Chairman;

Officials of the PAQI Pillars (AFRIMETS, AFRAC and AFSEC);

ARSO and PAQI Staff;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed

On behalf of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), let me extend a warm welcome to you all. We are delighted to have you here today for this important one day Workshop on Mobilization and Quality infrastructure Awareness.

I note with satisfaction that this session is taking place at the request by ARSO and following a meeting with EALA Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources, led by Chair, Hon Christophe Bazivamo on 16th October 2015 in Nairobi, during which Legislators were sensitised on the Role and Benefits of the Quality Infrastructure in the continental integration agenda, Trade Facilitation and Economic Development.

Post this successful event in Nairobi, our Members urged ARSO to hold a similar event for the whole House and also target the Pan-African Parliamentarians in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, at the Seat of the African Union. I am confident at an appropriate time we shall get there, but for today we are happy to be here.

Karibuni!

Our gathering is historic. It underscores the commitment of EALA towards addressing quality infrastructure challenges and improving regional trade as we progress towards the Continental Free Trade Area.

The EAC aims at deepening economic, social and political integration and enhancing the region's competitiveness through enhanced value chain, trade and investments. To achieve such goals, EAC Partner States established a Customs Union in 2005 and a Common Market in 2010 to significantly boost trade and investments and enhance free movement towards a more productive and prosperous region.

The Abuja Treaty (Chapter XI, Article 67) justifies a common Policy for Standardization and Measurement Systems and quality assurance of goods and services among member states to promote trade, economic development and

integration within the Community and strengthen African national and continental organizations operating in this field.

Global world trade requires standardisation of products and services in line with the requirements of the WTO and its attendant regulations on technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Formerly, only tariffs were, in principle, recognised as restrictions to export/import and international trading. However, following globalization, the days when nations could afford to indulge in bilateral tariff-cutting negotiations are gone. Attention has shifted to addressing technical, and the non-tariff, barriers to trade.

This situation puts pressure on African producers not only to improve products and services to meet customer expectations but also to enhance penetration into new export markets. Participation in world trade in a variety of sectors requires that suppliers comply with international standards. Statistics shows that non-compliance with international standards deprives African producers access to key international markets and has led to a further reduction in global market share (3% in 2010 and projected to 4% in 2030).

This calls for increased cooperation between the Quality Infrastructure organisations (RASO/PAQI) and the policy makers (African Union and RECs) to ensure effective legislations for resource mobilisation to strengthen the Quality Infrastructure in the region.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, EAC can hardly underestimate the importance of adopting and implementing internationally recognized and accepted Quality Infrastructure practices given the vital link to global trade, market access and export competitiveness. Quality further contributes to consumer confidence in product safety, quality, health and the environment.

The region must pride in keeping the momentum towards accelerating African regional integration manifested by the Tripartite Initiative among the members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a move aimed at creating a common Free Trade Area (FTA), for the 26 African countries with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than US\$630 billion.

The Tripartite initiative has galvanized interest towards a much broader Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), thus the declaration at the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2012 to fast-track the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by an indicative date of 2017.

The CFTA would definitely dismantle national boundaries and create a single continental market for goods and services, free movement of business persons and investments. The CFTA hopes to pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union by 2019 as provided for in the

Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and African wide Common Market by 2023.

EALA attaches great importance to the Tripartite Agreement and the proposed Continental Free Trade Area to facilitate convergence on regulatory measures, and enhance trade facilitation. We are supportive of the transformation necessary for African countries to achieve the ambitious targets of the global Agenda 2030 and Africa's own Agenda 2063, and specifically motivate such country based visions including Kenya's Vision 2030, Uganda's Vision 2020 & 2040, Burundi's Vision 2025, Rwanda's Vision 2020 and the United Republic of Tanzania's Vision 2025.

I similarly take note of other various initiatives been undertaken at the regional level to champion stronger quality Infrastructure within the EAC. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the EAC and ARSO that gives the EAC an opportunity to strengthen quality infrastructure within the region is one such example. Further the adoption of the ARSO-RECS guidelines for cooperation on issues of Quality infrastructure at the ARSO-RECs (EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS) following series of consultations are other areas.

Hon Members, Ladies and gentlemen,

The role of standards in facilitating trade cannot be over emphasized. In this respect, the ARSO and PAQI family have a full menu in their hands with the proliferation of the sub-standard goods in many African nations. Regional and continental trade will suffer terribly if the issue of standards are not properly addressed and given prominence. Quoting the South African Bureau of Standards, let me emphasise that **"Standards may be thought of as the oil that**

lubricates the machinery of economic growth and international competitiveness”

Finally Ladies and Gentlemen, let me reaffirm that EALA remains fully committed to collaborate with the ARSO and PAQI towards implementing your mandate of facilitating unhindered intra-African and Global Trade.

Sadly the current intra-African trade stands at around 13% compared to approximately 60%, 40 %, 30% intra-regional trade that has been achieved by Europe, North America and ASEAN respectively, while the continent currently performs at the periphery in global trade at just 3% and predicted to be 4% in 2030. Global trade remains strongly clustered in and around the manufacturing hubs in Europe, North America, and East Asia.

It is now my singular honour to declare this one day Parliamentary Session on Quality Assurance and Infrastructure Awareness officially open. I thank you for your kind attention.