EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

AN OVERVIEW
0 INTRODUCTION

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is established under Article 9 of the Treaty, as the Legislative Organ of the Community. Article 48 of the Treaty spells out the Membership of the Assembly as comprising of nine (9) Members elected by each Partner State; Ex-Officio Members consisting of the Minister responsible for the East African Community Affairs from each Partner State; the Secretary General and the Counsel to the Community.

The EALA was inaugurated by the Summit on 29th November, 2001. On the same occasion, the First Assembly, comprising of 27 elected Members and 5 ex-officio Members, were sworn in.

The term of the first EALA ended in 2006 after the expiry of five years and the Second EALA commenced its term in June 2007 and expired in June 2012. During the tenure of the Second EALA, the Republics of Burundi and Rwanda acceded to the EAC Treaty and become full Members in July 2007. In May 2008, EALA swore in the new Members from Rwanda and Burundi. The numbers of elected Members of EALA thus increased from 27 to 45 and totaled to 52 (including the 7 ex-officio Members). The Third EALA commenced its term in June 2012. The term runs until June 2017.

Since its inauguration in 2001, the EALA has maintained a steady legislative programme as well as a robust oversight role. It has also conducted broad-based outreach programmes in the Partner States.

0 VISION OF EALA

To be an efficient, effective and people-centered regional legislature.

0 MISSION OF EALA

To promote timely legislation, effective oversight and broad representation through programs that facilitate a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united region in order to enhance the welfare of East Africans.
O MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS OF EALA

According to Article 49 of the Treaty, the EALA:

- shall liaise with the National Assemblies of the Partner States on matters relating to the Community;
- shall debate and approve the budget of the Community;
- shall consider annual reports on the activities of the Community, annual audit reports of the Audit Commission and any other reports referred to it by the Council;
- shall discuss all matters pertaining to the Community and make recommendations to the Council as it may deem necessary for the implementation of the Treaty;
- may for purposes of carrying out its functions, establish any Committee or Committees for such purposes as it deems necessary;
- shall recommend to the Council the appointment of the Clerk and other officers of the Assembly; and
- shall make its rules of procedure and those of its Committees.

O STATE OF PLAY AT THE ASSEMBLY

Arising out of the above mentioned mandate and functions, the EALA:

- formulates appropriate legislation and policies aimed at establishing and strengthening the EAC Institutions and programs furthering regional integration. To date (December 2015), the EALA has passed over 60 Bills;
- provides legislative oversight and promotes good governance, by adhering to and establishing a culture of transparency and accountability in Partner States, as well as Community Organs and Institutions, on matters of regional integration and especially, on questions related to public expenditure and budgets;
- establishes a systematic process and structure of dialogue among and between East African citizens on key integration matters, through holding public hearings and disseminating proceedings of the Assembly throughout the East African Region;
• provides a strategic link between the different National Parliaments of the Partner States on specific thematic issues related to the EAC integration;

• provides a strategic link between the EAC and other Regional Parliaments, such as ECOWAS, SADC-PF and the Pan African Parliament, and uses these linkages to represent and promote the EAC’s economic, political and cultural interests internationally, through identification of key opportunities for EAC’s participation, engagement and benefit in such topical issues and forums;

• holds periodic consultations and promotional events on EAC integration issues establishing clear communication lines between EALA Members and the citizens of East Africa, which encourage their participation in key debates and developments in the EAC.

**EALA ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Assembly:

• has institutionalized the Annual State of EAC Address by the Chair of the Summit; and successfully had all its Plenary meetings in Partner States addressed by the host President;

• has passed over 69 pieces of legislation as at December 2015 (44 have already been assented to)

• has spearheaded the establishment of the East African Parliamentary Institute;

• in the last 14 years, has evolved, developed and distinguished itself as the only Regional Parliament of its kind in Africa with full legislative powers. Under the EAC Budget Act, 2008, the Assembly has also played a significant role in the budget process – making it transparent, timely and participatory;

• has maintained an East African outlook and debated and made decisions beyond the national domains. EALA has thus remained true to the ideals of East Africa;