

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON. DANIEL F. KIDEGA, SPEAKER OF
EALA AT THE ADDRESS BY H.E. UHURU KENYATTA, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA, NOVEMBER 29TH 2016 - NAIROBI, KENYA**

H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya,

Speaker of the Senate, Rt Hon Ekwee Ethuro,

The Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers,

The Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers,

**Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the
Parliament of Kenya,**

Amb Liberat Mfumukeko, Secretary General of the EAC,

Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Former Members of EALA,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Your Excellency; I am delighted once again, to welcome you to the Special Sitting of the 3rd Meeting of the 5th Session of EALA. EALA is indebted to you for consistently prioritizing it in your agenda and for all courtesies that Government of Kenya has extended to us over the last two weeks, making our stay here, comfortable. I wish to thank you Excellency for your Government's total commitment to the East African integration.

At this Session, which commenced on November 21st, 2016, EALA has deliberated on key notable business:

1. Passed One Key Resolution of the House and posed questions to the Council of Ministers.
2. The Administration of the East African Court of Justice Bill, 2016 sailed through the First Reading and was committed to the Committee.
3. Debated and adopted three key Reports. These are the Audit and Risk Committee Report, Report of EALA's Sensitisation activities and a key Committee on an Oversight Activity on Harmonisation and Approximation of National Laws to the Acts of the Community.
4. Two key Bills on Polythene Materials Control 2016 and the EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill, 2016, have been discussed at Committee level and so were pending public hearings on key matters of the Community.

Excellency, you may recall that EALA was formally inaugurated by Heads of State of the (then) three EAC Partner States at its first Sitting in Arusha, Tanzania on 30th, November, 2001, with Hon. Abdulrahman O. Kinana, as the first Speaker. As we commemorate 15 years of service, we are committed

towards actualizing the dream of the EAC's founding fathers on strengthening integration. EALA shall strive to fortify its place as the Legislative Organ of the Community, as it serves East Africans.

Immediately after the Sittings here, EALA shall hold the 10th Inter-Parliamentary Relations Seminar anchored on the theme: **Good Governance and Poverty Reduction**. The Seminar also known as the Nanyuki Series (synonymous with the location where the first Seminar took place a decade ago), brings together Legislators from EALA and the National Assemblies/Parliaments. To sum up our activities, the Assembly shall proceed to Mombasa for the 7th Inter-Parliamentary Games Tournament. The Tournament brings together all Partner States' Parliaments and the disciplines include football, netball, golf, athletics, tug-of-war and volleyball.

Excellency, Members, Ladies and Gentlemen;

EALA regularly consults with citizens in their work. Over the years, two fundamental points keep coming up: One, that EAC citizens are keen to see a united region and secondly, they demand for a progressive environment with real tangible benefits of integration.

Under the Customs Union, citizens prefer to see products freely sold within the ambits of the Protocol, Non-Tariff Barriers totally removed and evidence of an effective operationalization of the SCT.

I can confirm the Assembly is often inundated by citizens' concerns to see the Common Market agenda become a reality. Essentially, it is important that we open our East African markets to African people and beyond to create jobs and opportunities. Likewise, we must avoid situations where we export jobs and allow cheap goods from outside the EAC to permeate the local markets.

The second EAC Common Market Scorecard 2016, launched last month, reveals a number of reforms that have been undertaken since 2014. However, the scorecard still depicts non-conforming measures when it comes to trade liberalization of services and compliance to the tenets of the Protocol. Fundamentally, it seems there are many fears and suspicions that hamper the total free movement of persons and the rights to establishment.

Perhaps **Mr President**, a time has come for the Summit of EAC Heads of State to take a firm stand on the matter if it is to instill confidence in the citizens.

Excellency: Permit me to bring to your attention some additional issues for your consideration and that of the Summit for EAC Heads of State;

1. The first being the desire by stakeholders to see the EAC Treaty amended to reflect the current status of implementation. EALA for example, passed a Resolution to make Kiswahili one of the Official languages of the EAC – a move that can only come to fruition when the Treaty is amended. Integration is a living project and the process of amendments should be alive as well.
2. Secondly, funding constraints need to be urgently addressed. To date, Excellency, the level of contribution to the EAC coffers for the FY 2016/17 is worrying. I say this with much humility - aware of the fact the entire globe, leave alone the EAC, is struggling against harsh economic times. While the liquidity challenges are short term, we need to look for long term alternative funding mechanisms as solutions for the stability of the EAC.

3. Key to this is enhanced discipline on the part of Partner States with regards to timely remittance of dues. Excellency, the Budget Performance last year at this time stood at 65%. Today, as at half way the Financial Year, the amount stands at 30%, which is worrying. Ideally, the Assembly and the other Organs and institutions of the EAC have in the last few months failed to undertake some of their projects and programmes.
4. Thirdly, the desire to see assent to Bills at the Summit sittings – a matter we have raised and one for which has received your support and that of the other Summit Members. We hope that the implementation shall be effected in earnest.
5. Fourth, the fight against Corruption needs to be taken a notch higher in the Partner States. At the regional level, EALA is on the verge of enacting a Bill on Whistleblowers and on Anti-Corruption, thereby, putting in place a legal framework to report instances of corruption to authorities – given the fact that the vice knows no borders.
6. Fifth, the approximation of the national laws in order to create uniformity within the Partner States in line with the Article 126 (2b) of the Treaty for the EAC is fundamental. EALA adopted the report at this Sitting showing that Republics of Rwanda and Uganda have each approximated ten pieces of laws each, Republic of Kenya (6 laws), United Republic of Tanzania (6 laws) and Republic of Burundi (3 laws).
7. **Excellency**, lastly, peace and security matters continue to be of paramount importance to the region. I appeal to the Summit of EAC Heads of State to continuously do all that is within their means to ensure tranquil in the Republic of Burundi and the Republic of South Sudan and in

all other Partner States. In addition, the fight against terrorism must be sustained and won for the progression of the region.

Excellency: With regards to Kenya, EALA is proud of the economic growth attributed to a number of factors. Within the infrastructure sector, the progress of the SGR shall transform the region and promote intra-regional Trade. It is important for other Partner States to stick to the work plan hook their infrastructure in to the SGR. The tremendous development of road network is another. Only recently, Chairperson of the EAC Heads of Summit, H.E. Dr John Pombe Joseph Magufuli and yourself, commissioned the Southern By-Pass that opens up to the Northern Corridor. This is progressive.

In the energy sector, EAC is proud of the world's largest Geothermal Plant commissioned in Naivasha which adds 140 megawatts of power to the national grid. Energy is a strategic game-changer and such investments go a long way in employment creation.

On matters of elections, EALA is cognizant of the fact that the Republic of Kenya shall in August next year elect new leadership across all levels. EALA wishes the Republic of Kenya peaceful elections. We salute you for showing leadership in re-constituting the IEBC in readiness for the forthcoming elections. At the end of the day, devoid of all political affiliations, there is only one country, and that is the great Republic of Kenya.

Before I invite you to address this Assembly, permit me **Excellency** to re-state the term of the Assembly ends in June 2017. I wish to congratulate the Republic of Kenya for sending to EALA, a team of committed and dedicated Members. While the rest are still legible for re-election to the 4th Assembly, you may wish to

know **Excellency**, that one of your own, daughter of the soil, Hon Sarah Bonaya, has successfully completed her tenure of duty. I consider her to be still energetic enough and ready to take on additional responsibilities.

Permit me if you will, to briefly introduce to you some of the dignitaries present.
(LIST TO BE AVAILED).

Finally, Excellency, it is now with singular pleasure and honour to welcome you to address this *August* Assembly, today, **Tuesday, the 29th of November 2016**. I thank you for your kind attention.