

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 REPUBLIC OF KENYA, OCTOBER 6TH 2015 - NAIROBI, KENYA**

Your Excellency, Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya

Rt. Hon Justin Muturi, Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly,

Hon. Dr. Harrison Mwakyembe, 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 Dr. Richard Sezibera, Secretary General of the EAC,

Excellences Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Former Members of EALA

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

Your Excellency; I take this opportunity to warmly welcome you and to thank you for gracing us with your presence at the commencement of the 2nd Meeting of the 4th Session of the 3rd Assembly.

I wish to thank your Government and the Parliament of Kenya for making our stay here comfortable. As an Assembly, we are eternally grateful to you for extending to us all the courtesies whenever we meet in Nairobi.

At this Session, we expect to deliberate on the following notable business:

1. The EAC Electronic Transactions Bill, 2014 – 2nd and 3rd Reading
2. The EAC Forest Management Bill, 2015 – 2nd and 3rd Reading
3. The EAC Disaster Risk Reduction Bill, -2nd and 3rd Reading
4. Debate and adopt Reports of various Committees of the House.

Your Excellency

We also expect your colleague and Chair of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State, H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete to grace us with his presence and to deliver a farewell Address to this *August* House on October 13th, 2015.

In between the Sittings, the Assembly shall as part of its mandate take advantage of its presence in Nairobi to hold consultations with a number of stakeholders from the Private Sector and the Civil Society.

Your Excellency, as you may be aware, EALA bore a tumultuous period since your last Address to us in March 2014 and for the better part of last year.

However today, it may please you to note EALA is back on track and stronger. I thank Your Excellency and the Summit for the concern and support but above all, for giving us democratic space to get organized by upholding and maintaining the principle of separation of powers.

Indeed, since January 2015, the Assembly has held three Sittings in Bujumbura (March 2015), Arusha (May 2015) and Kampala (August 2015) in line with its principle of rotation. In totality, we have passed x Bills, moved Y Resolutions and adopted x reports.

Besides the change in leadership in December last year, the Assembly also instituted adequate measures aimed at strengthening its governance systems by amending its Rules of Procedure and integrating within it a Code of Conduct as well as Rules governing the operations of its Committees.

Your Excellency, distinguished Guests ladies and Gentlemen;

I am proud that EAC has not looked back since we re-kindled the integration process, fifteen years ago. Indeed, the process has sometimes been punctuated by occasional stagnations or reversals in a few cases and modest achievements at best in others. But we have kept the faith and hope alive at all times.

EALA believes full integration shall be realized when more tangible benefits of integration are felt, coupled with a progressive environment that offers effective solutions to imminent challenges. Such include free movement of people in the region in search of opportunities, trade without barriers and the single currency.

It should be highlighted with emphasis that EAC citizens have a right to move freely and work in any other Partner State as enshrined in the Common Market Protocol, enforced back in 2010. Yet still today, only few of the EAC citizens would work in another Partner State because they feel and face too many obstacles with work/resident permit acquisition being one of the major challenges.

As EALA, we are alive to what citizens of the EAC continuously craving for; an enabling legal and regulatory environment for integration that is meaningful, is inclusive, that is capable of positioning them to take advantage of the available opportunities.

Similarly deemed worthwhile is the determination with which the citizenry attach to their full involvement in successful implementation of the integration process. In this regard, I laud the private sector and the civil society for demanding and rightfully so, their place within the fulcrum of integration and for their watchdog role in line with the Articles 127 and 128 of the Treaty.

Your Excellency, permit me to bring to your attention three issues to chew on;

1. The first been our keenness to see the EAC Treaty amended to reflect the current status of implementation. There is already some work in this direction – but EALA pleads that we speed up the process. Let us remain open to the hard fact that integration is living and that the process of amendments should be living as well.

2. Secondly, Your Excellency, let me speak to the issue of full autonomy of the Assembly – which I know is also the very intention of the Summit. At the moment, the Assembly is semi-autonomous – the ideal scenario would be full autonomy including the direct funding by Partner States. This is absolutely necessary for the betterment of the EAC. It is key that we sit down with the Executive to find a lasting solution to the matter.
3. Thirdly and an area we received positive response from H.E. Yoweri Museveni at the recent sitting in Kampala (1st Meeting of the 4th Session of the 3rd Assembly) concerns that of assent to Bills. EALA has proposed that we take advantage of the Summit sittings as opportune moment for the Summit Members to exercise their mandate of Assent of Bills as stipulated under Article 63. Such a move would help reduce the time taken and logistical mode of moving the Bills from one Partner State to another. We look forward to a time when Summit shall make pronouncement on this aspect.

We are comforted the end-goal is far much bigger than the issues we have to confront with. We are hopeful that if we collectively sought and brazen out the challenges, then all ranks and file of the citizens of East Africa shall enjoy the benefits of integration.

Your Excellency,

With regards to Kenya, I wish to congratulate you for your leadership which has seen the country progressively leap forward. Republic of Kenya continues to stir

further growth in the economy and transparency in government under the mantra of **Umoja, Uchumi, na Uwazi**.

The World Bank terms the Kenyan economy resilient, following a successful Eurobond issue in June last year which raised USD\$2 Billion. Your consultations with the IMF have also returned a positive assessment on debt sustainability amongst other indicators. Your drive/commitment to see the youth aspire to move out of the poverty bracket is therefore commendable. The Government has disbursed over Ksh51.6 billion, supported establishment of over 20,000 youth enterprises, trained over 200,000 entrepreneurs and set aside a programme supplemented by a new policy that ensures allocation of 30 per cent of all Government procurement to enterprises owned by the youth, women and people with disability. Such is commendable.

East Africa is proud of the several major development projects in Kenya including the world's largest Geothermal plant commissioned in Naivasha last year which adds 140 megawatts of power to the national grid, effectively bringing down electricity costs. These investments that you are making will go a long way towards empowering citizens, creating employment and combating social ills.

We are also proud of the contribution you are making to the EAC with the launch of the SGR running from Mombasa to Uganda, South Sudan and Rwanda.

Further afield, you continue to promote intra – African Trade and Pan-Africanism as Chairman of the AU's African Peer Review mechanism. Also laudable are the peace initiatives you spearhead in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Burundi and Somalia.

I wish you good health, abundance and prosperity. On a lighter note Your Excellency, let me take the earliest opportunity to wish you a happy birthday in the next few days, your third to celebrate at State House. I am informed and reliably so the only other birthday you ever celebrated in State House was in 1968 at age seven. Beyond that you spent less time at the "House on the Hill" during Mzee's reign, preferring to spend the growing years in Gatundu!!

Before I invite you to address this Assembly, may I briefly introduce to you some of the dignitaries present.

(LIST TO BE AVAILED)

Finally, Your Excellency, it is now with singular pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome you to address this *August* Assembly, today, Tuesday, the 6th of October 2015.

I thank you for your kind attention.