



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**  
**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON. DANIEL F. KIDEGA, SPEAKER  
OF EALA AT THE ADDRESS OF H.E. PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA – PARLIAMENT OF RWANDA,  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2015, KIGALI, RWANDA**

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**Your Excellency, Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of  
Rwanda;**

**Rt Hon Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate;**

**Rt. Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa, Speaker of the Parliament of  
Rwanda, Chamber of Deputies;**

**Hon. Chairperson and Members of the Council of Ministers;**

**The Secretary General of the East African Community;**

**Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and the  
Parliament of Rwanda;**

**Distinguished guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I warmly welcome you to deliver your Address at the commencement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly.

I thank you and the entire Government of the Republic of Rwanda for accepting to host EALA. Kigali is indeed home to EALA and we feel honoured and privileged whenever we convene here for the Plenary Sittings.

Since the last Session here in Kigali, Rwanda in October 2014, I wish to report that the Assembly is today stable and committed to

The Assembly is today much stronger and more united in serving East Africans. 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 enacted 7 Bills, passed 7 Resolutions and adopted 13 reports.

At this Plenary Session, EALA shall receive Bills and analyze several oversight reports of its Committees. We shall also put important questions to the Council of Ministers, debate crucial Motions and pass Resolutions.

Of these, two Bills are fundamental; the x and the y.

Your Excellency, immediately thereafter, the EALA in collaboration with the Parliament of Rwanda shall host the 6<sup>th</sup> Inter-parliamentary games here in Kigali. I must take the earliest opportunity to invite you to sample some of the finest

dribbling moves in soccer, excellent shoots in netball and a quick 100 meters dash off the boards that may make one

One **Jennifer Blanke**, a leading Chief Economist and member of the World Economic Forum offers insightful, opinions. In one of them, she says and I quote:

***“Regional integration is key to addressing economic growth and that any existing weaknesses may be addressed through the delivery of wider social and economic benefits and should be prioritized by Africa’s leaders as they look to ensure that Africa delivers on its promise in its wider context. (end of quote).***

**Your Excellency**, in many ways, you have lived to the dictum and your leadership has seen the integration process dully strengthened and consolidated.

That said, Your Excellency, the region is today witnessing a number of challenges in terms of implementation of the Community’s initiatives – occasioned sometimes by real or perceived nuances. Indeed, this is at times healthy for so long as we embrace consensus, which is a hallmark of the Treaty. History shows that even the great Romans did not build their great City in one day. We similarly cannot expect the region to realise unification instantly.

However, sustained or diversionary approaches are certainly not good for integration. We must find a formula to address imminent challenges should they occur.

Your Excellency, of equal importance is tolerance between Partner States within the framework of the integration process.

The one thing I have always believed is that Democracy in Africa which is heavily borrowed from the western model is still evolving and a learning process each day. Historically, our very own model was interrupted and perhaps flashed down and re-installed by colonial regimes when they handed back power, post the scramble and independence. Many years later, the model still causes confusion and is perhaps contributing to the myriad of challenges we face in the continent today as we strive to adapt.

That said, when one of our sister Partner States suffers, then we all do. It is in this regard that we as an Assembly, are concerned and perturbed about what is happening in the Republic of Burundi. Many lives have been lost and property worth millions damaged. I have had the opportunity of meeting with the President of the Senate of Burundi and urged legislators to play their part in restoring peace and stability.

Beyond that the image and credibility of the EAC could be drastically affected if we do not find a lasting solution to the problem afflicting

Burundi. It is important that all sides of the divide convene and urgently so in order to prevent any further spill and loss of lives.

On behalf of EALA, I wish to laud the initiatives that you and your colleagues in the Summit of EAC Heads of State are doing to remedy the situation in terms of mediation.

I wish to underscore our collective confidence in the EAC Summit of Heads of State to positively resolve the challenges and to put in place mechanisms that prevent repeat in any of the Partner States now and in the future. We are duty bound to find solutions to the challenges that affect our people to enable them enjoy their full democratic rights as enshrined in the EAC Treaty, should it call for drastic measures such as the fast-tracking of the establishment of an EAC Standby Brigade and Political Federation in the long run. I am of the view that adherence to the Provisions within the Treaty leading to admission to the regional bloc is eternal to their continued stay within the bloc if citizens are to continue to enjoy the fruits of integration.

Looking closely at the implementation of the Common Market Protocol; there is considerable progress, in amending national laws to conform to the Protocol, albeit, slow, five years later. The region continues to contend with surmountable challenges – a notable one being the slow pace with which

Partner States are “opening up” thus denying citizens the tangible benefits of free movement.

The Republics of Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda have however abolished work permit fees thus encouraging workers to move freely in search of opportunities. The Inter-State passes have also been implemented. So far this is working well. This should now serve as a case study and be extrapolated in the entire region.

With regards to the Customs Union Protocol, East African citizens further contend with bureaucratic processes, administrative restrictions and misuse of the Rules of Origin principle among others, which hamper free movement of goods – and as such should be speedily addressed.

However Your Excellency, I congratulate you and the Summit for pushing for the operationalization of the Single Customs Territory. In Dar es Salaam, we are aware that in addition to enhanced efficiencies registered in cargo handling, the presence of Revenue Offices (and Officers) of the Republics of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and the DRC in effect means that goods destined for the countries have been streamlined and enhanced.

The improvement at both the Dar and Mombasa ports will make both the Central and Northern Corridors attractive in terms of facilitation of trade. The completion of the Standard Gauge Railway further spur business and to reduce the number of days for goods coming to Kigali.

The one thing that stands out significantly, is the will at all levels starting with political levels to ensure integration leaves.

**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 in, work and be proud of. It is in this vein that the Assembly is reaching out to the Summit of 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. Already we have received positive response from H.E. President Yoweri Museveni and H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta when we were in the capitals for the EALA Meetings.**

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Last week, Kigali successfully hosted the investment forum. I congratulate you for the feat. Investment is very key for the region. It is time for the region to reap from investments. These are opportunities that we cannot permit others to benefit from, more than us. However, to get maximum benefits from this situation, we must create conducive environment for doing business. It further demands that we increase the level of intra-African trade and investment and extend integration across the continent. We must of course strengthen the EAC first even as we look outwards to Pan-Africanism. We expect that soon, a Private Members Bill on Investments shall be brought to the House for debate.

Another challenge is that of Non Tariff Barriers. The NTBs include weighbridges, police roadblocks, non-recognition of the EAC certificates of origin, lack of mutual recognition of quality marks, re-testing of products, delays by statutory boards in releasing the results of analysis of samples and delays in issuance of import licenses among others.

A report titled the "***Current Status of NTBs in East Africa***" that was released here in Kigali, in August, indicates the continued existence of unjustified and improper application of Non-Tariff measures such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures and other technical barriers to trade. On a more positive note however, the report shows that Rwanda is leading having resolved up to 72 % of documented NTBs and that work is ongoing to remove the balance of 28% of the barriers to trade.

While lauding the country for the significant steps taken, I appeal that Kigali shows the way by speedily aiming for zero sum. Other Partner States should likewise replicate the move.

Your Excellency, it is necessary that we reinforce the NTB Monitoring Committees so they can be effective and felt on the ground. EALA is supportive of the campaign to rid EAC of all NTBs and is eagerly awaiting for the Council of Ministers' NTBs Elimination Bill, 2014 for consideration.

Very quickly the following are the Bills:

We have four pending Private Members Bills which are:

- a) The East African Community Electronic Transactions Bill, 2014.



- b) The East African Co-operatives Societies Bill, 2014.
- c) The Education (Integration) Bill 2014 that is undergoing public hearing and
- d) The EAC Cross Border Legal Practice Bill, 2014.
- e) The EAC

Your Excellency, permit me albeit belatedly, to congratulate you and the people of this great Republic, following last year's 50<sup>th</sup> independence celebrations which was an opportunity to share the joyous memories and to reflect on the future of the young nation.

May I also take the opportunity to congratulate you for steering the Republic of Rwanda to greater heights. Rwanda enjoys peace and stability, two decades after the horrendous Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda is the ICT hub of the region and the country is environmentally conscious and clean and this is reflected in the peoples' attitudes.

Your Excellency, you continue to be an inspiration to many given your focus to addressing national and regional issues. Under your leadership, Rwanda's vision to prioritise national development including the launch of a programme aimed at progress to a middle income country by 2020, remains on course. As of late 2013, Rwanda had realized growth indicators in health care and education with annual growth over the last eight years

recorded at average of 8% per year. EALA too, adds its voice in heralding you for the great achievement.

On a more personal note, I want to acknowledge your tech-savvy approach of using the internet as a means of communications to bridge interaction with the citizenry. Recently while undertaking some research online, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that you have several accounts; - including a personal website, blog, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter. Today, you have close to 550,000 followers on Twitter and you are one of the most followed leaders in Africa.

Your Excellency, there are a number of other accolades under your belt including the prestigious Andrew Young Medal for Capitalism and Social Progression by the Georgia State University. Four years ago, I recall a British magazine, New Statesman, named you as one of the 50 most influential figures of the year.

Closer home in my household, I have keen football followers who follow a number of tournaments including the prestigious Kagame Interclub Cup, which incidentally, this year, was held here in Kigali where Rwandan Champions APR lost narrowly to El-Merrikh of Sudan in the finals. You have continued to personally support the tournament and I thank you for using football to strengthen integration in the region.

Your contribution towards overseeing genuine democracy, peace and tranquility in a continent facing a myriad of challenges is outstanding. I

urge you to continue to steer the Republic of Rwanda and the EAC region to even greater heights. I wish you good health and prosperity as you celebrate your birthday in the next two days but more so as you reflect on the country's development in the coming years ahead.

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

Finally, Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome Your Excellency to address EALA, today, Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2014.

I thank you for your kind attention.