



EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
PRESS STATEMENT

FIFTH MEETING – FIRST SESSION – THIRD ASSEMBLY
BY RT. HON (DR) MARGARET NANTONGO ZZIWA – SPEAKER EALA

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press

Good Morning

I welcome you all to this press briefing convened to notify you of the 5th Meeting of the 1st Session of the 3rd East African Legislative Assembly, scheduled to take place at the Parliament of Rwanda, from 12th April 2013 to 26th April, 2013.

On behalf of the Assembly and on my own behalf, allow me to salute His Excellency, President Paul Kagame for accepting once again to address EALA on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. EALA appreciates the wise and able leadership of President Kagame in steering the Republic of Rwanda to greater heights and for the significant contribution H.E. Kagame is making at the EAC as a Member of the Summit.

The Assembly is also particularly grateful to H.E. President Yoweri Museveni for graciously accepting to make the State of the EAC Address on Thursday, April 18, 2013. We are elated by the fact that this is the first State of the EAC Address to the 3rd Assembly by the Chairperson of the Summit of Heads of State.

We thank our host, the Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda, Rt. Hon Rose Mukantabana for granting us access to the Parliament of Rwanda for our session. We hail the existing warm and cordial relations between the Parliament of Rwanda and EALA.

By holding this important Session in Kigali, EALA also offers to its Members, an opportunity to interact with citizens of Rwanda and to share experiences with the political leadership of this country. We are privileged that this coming weekend, Members shall be undertaking a three day visit of industries and the countryside, courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Visit takes us to among other places: the Muhanga Concession mining in Muhanga District, Kinazi Cassava Plant in Nyanza District and the Kigali Special Economic zone. We are also scheduled to tour the East Africa Granite Industries in Nyagatare in addition to participating in commemorative activities at the Gisozi Genocide Memorial Museum and at Rebero. Such visits definitely open 'our eyes and ears' to development placing us at a vantage position when it comes to legislation and further strengthen our collaboration with citizens of this great Republic.

Over the two-weeks, the notable business for consideration shall include:

- the State of the EAC Address by H.E. Yoweri Museveni
- debate on the following Bills: the EAC Vehicle Control Bill and the One Stop Border Posts Bill
- debate and adoption of various committee reports on oversight of EAC activities

The Sitting shall be interspersed with a seminar on Millennium Development Goals for all Members. Such 'convening of minds' is a necessity, now guided by the fact that the period set for the realization of the MDGs soon expires, thus any impetus to plan for the post 2015 agenda is crucial.

Generally, EALA has taken centre stage in the integration process by providing the required legislative framework and oversight to ensure the integration agenda continues to be a priority. The involvement of East Africans in the process is fundamental given the fact that the Treaty recognizes their participation as "a people centred process". As such, the Assembly has and will continue to engage the citizens of the region, by taking their views into account when enacting legislation.

The EAC is at an important period in the integration process as provided for in Article 5 (2) which calls for accelerated and harmonious development in meeting the four-tier phases of the Customs Union, the Common Market, the Monetary Union and ultimately, the Political Federation. However, there are challenges we need to collectively resolve.

Looking at the Common Market Protocol for example, there are a number of benefits that the region needs to exploit. Such include the free movement of goods, free movement of persons and free movement of services among others. Today, the region is yet to fully achieve free movement of persons owing to delays in the introduction of the generation machine readable identity cards. Another area that should be speeded up concerns the Common Social Security regime which would greatly benefit workers of the region. The region should tackle the challenges as it

prepares to move into the Monetary Union phase which is envisaged to commence in November 2013.

However, for these opportunities to be realised Partner States need to review their domestic laws to conform to the commitment and undertaking made in the Protocol. EALA is encouraging the Partner States to rise up and to address the issue swiftly. We shall thus be appealing to the Summit once again to guide the region on the matter. The Assembly is committed to work closely with the Council of Ministers in areas of legislation that shall superintend the full implementation of the pillars.

I want to thank the EALA Members (Rwanda Chapter) for the hard work and collective efforts in rendering service to the people of Rwanda and the citizens of the EAC region.

Finally, we take the opportunity once again to commiserate with the people of Rwanda as they commemorate the 19th Anniversary of the Genocide. We take note of the positive progress that the country has continued to realize since that horrendous period in its history.

END

April 10, 2013