



EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PRESS STATEMENT

SECOND MEETING OF FIFTH SESSION OF THIRD ASSEMBLY BY RT. HON. DANIEL F. KIDEGA – SPEAKER, EALA, ISSUED ON OCTOBER 10th, 2016

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press

Good Morning! On behalf of the Assembly and on my own behalf, I welcome you to the Press briefing convened to notify you of the commencement of the 2nd Meeting of the 5th Session of the 3rd Assembly which takes place here at the Zanzibar House of Representatives from today, October 10th, 2016 to October 21st, 2016.

This is the first time for the 3rd Assembly to hold its sessions in Zanzibar, a number of years after the 2nd Assembly, held its 4th Meeting of the First Session in Zanzibar (December 2007). We are therefore very pleased to be back.

On behalf of the Assembly and on my own behalf, I thank the President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, H.E. Dr Ali Mohammed Shein, for granting us this opportunity to meet in Zanzibar and according us honour to address the House tomorrow.

The Assembly is also grateful to the Speaker of the Zanzibar House of Representatives, Rt Hon Zubeir Ali Maulid, for extending to it the use of the Chambers during the two-week period. This is certainly, a sign of warm cordiality.

Notable business for consideration during the two-week session shall include:

1. Official opening by the President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, H.E. Dr Ali Mohammed Shein. The Official opening takes place here, tomorrow, October 11th, 2016 at 2.30pm.
2. Debate and possible enactment of three key Bills. The Bills are the EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill 2016, The EAC Counter-Trafficking in Persons Bill 2016 and the EAC Polythene Materials Control Bill 2016.
3. Consideration, debate and approval of various Reports of the Committees of EALA.
4. Briefings by the EAC Executives to the Assembly for consideration.

Members of the Assembly shall also find an opportunity to network with a number of stakeholders from Zanzibar and the EAC region as we maximize the two-week stay here in Zanzibar.

As alluded to earlier, the EALA Sittings are held on a rotational basis in the Partner States. The Assembly holds a total of 6 Sittings in the Partner States – one of

which is held in Arusha as per the requirement of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC. In the scheme of things, one other Sitting takes place in the United Republic of Tanzania, while the rest are held in the other Partner States. Through the rotational principle, EALA intends to take the Assembly to as many citizens of the EAC as is possible.

I wish to inform you that the laws enacted by EALA once assented to, take precedence over the national laws of the Partner States on similar matters within the purview of the Community. To date, the Assembly has passed over 70 pieces of Legislation. Over two-thirds of the laws (49) have been assented to while the rest are still in the process of assent, which is undertaken by all the EAC Heads of State in accordance with Article 63 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC. EALA has also passed a number of Resolutions and Reports which are all pertinent to the integration process.

The Assembly is keen to see EAC laws and Protocols effected, enforced and the timelines adhered to so that benefits of integration are enjoyed. The Customs Union which came into place in 2005, is now fully-fledged. Once the Single Customs Territory is in full force, the port of Zanzibar stands to be a major entry point into the hinterland for the entire region. With enhanced performance, this is one of the opportunities that Zanzibar and the United Republic of Tanzania can tap in to.

As an Assembly, we are also very supportive of the recent decision of the Summit to delay the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) until such time that all concerns of Partner States are addressed. Consensus is a key attribute of the Community.

Under the Common Market Protocol, there are still a number of bottlenecks especially with regards to delays in its implementation especially that of schedules of movement of workers. All East Africans need to reap the benefits of the Common Market. We envisage a situation where all Zanzibaris are able to freely move into the other Partner States, offer their expertise and to take advantage of the opportunities.

You may be aware the region embraced the Monetary Union having by signing the Protocol in 2013. While the single currency is based on the ten-year roadmap of the Monetary Union, it is vital for Partner States to stay the course when it comes to the deliverables of the pillar. Partner States need to maintain monetary and financial stability in order to facilitate trade and economic integration. We look forward to the establishment of the EAC Central Bank and the related institutions. EALA shall be ready to enact the relevant pieces of legislation.

With regards to the Political Federation, we hope Partner States shall in due course agree on the model and commence modalities of putting in place necessary building blocks.

On matters of democratization, I commend the Government and people of the Zanzibar for exercising peace during the elections late last year.

The Republic of Uganda also held peaceful Presidential and Parliamentary elections in February 2016. The Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Rwanda are expected to go to the polls next year. We wish them well as they commence their preparations. Elections are a key constituent and measure of democratization and the Partner States should strive for free, fair and credible polls.

Peace and security are important components of development. The Assembly is keen to see stability in all the Partner States of the region. There are regional measures in place to see stability realized especially in the Republic of South Sudan and Republic of Burundi. Such should be consistent and strengthened.

EALA congratulates the Republic of South Sudan for its full accession in to the EAC and urges the country to adhere to full tenets of democracy and good governance as enshrined in Article 6 of the EAC Treaty.

There are a number of challenges which the EAC is facing now with the major constraint being funding. We continue to appeal to the Partner States to remit the contributions in a timely fashion to enable the EAC to meet its obligations. At the same time, modalities on alternative funding mechanisms should be finalized.

I want to thank the Summit of the EAC Heads of State for the guidance towards strengthening the integration process. I assure the Summit of our unequivocal support as representatives of the people and of our commitment to play the part in delivering results.

Finally, I call on you, the Media to attend and fully cover the events of EALA over the next two weeks. I also invite East Africans of all walks of life to closely follow the proceedings of the Assembly closely during the period.

I thank you all for your kind attention.