



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**REMARKS BY RT. HON DANIEL F. KIDEGA, SPEAKER OF EALA
AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP ON MTEF BUDGETING, AUDIT PROCESSES AND
KISWAHILI LANGUAGE**

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2015, ZANZIBAR RESORT BEACH,
ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA**

Colleagues, Hon Members of EALA

The Deputy Secretary General, EAC, Mr Liberat Mfumukeko

AWEPA Program Representative, Ms. Geraldine Rwekaza

Lead facilitators

Clerk and staff of the Assembly

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I take this opportunity to welcome you to the beautiful coastal city of Zanzibar, Tanzania, for the week-long capacity building workshop on Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), audit processes and the Kiswahili language.

At the outset, I thank the EAC Secretariat for their collaboration in putting this important workshop together. Let me also take the opportunity to welcome on board the new Deputy Secretary General, Finance and Administration, Liberat Mfumukeko. This is indeed our first official engagement with the DSG and a perfect opportunity for us to network and to exchange information away from the usual setting.

In a special way, let me also record my deepest appreciation to our Partners, the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) for their continued support. Only last week, in Nairobi, Kenya, EALA and the AWEPA held yet another successful capacity building workshop on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I wish to thank the entire AWEPA fraternity led by the President, Hon Ms Miet Smet. I am also grateful to our colleagues in Arusha, Tine Hemelings, Anoenk Van der Vinne and Geraldine Rwekaza have continued to be very resourceful. We are indeed very obliged for their unreserved support.

Hon Members, this workshop is crucial and timely. As you may be aware, the Assembly as part of its core function as stipulated in Article 134 of the Treaty for the EAC, annually receives the EAC Report on Audited Accounts from the Council of Ministers for debate, consultations and other actions as may be deemed necessary.

You will also recall that EAC adopted the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) in its budgeting process about 4 years ago. In a nutshell, the MTEF allocates resources based on the priorities and ensures that these apportionments are consistent with the objectives of the organization. This is a good model for planning and implementation of activities.

This capacity building workshop thus presents an opportune moment for us as EALA to be able to harness our understanding of the technical workings of the MTEF budgeting and to comprehend processes that go on in the auditing processes. Interesting topics include the role of the Committee on Accounts and the Assembly in the Accountability process as well as the technical and political review of the Audit Commission Report. This is deemed necessary for the Members as a means to enhancing our oversight function.

Hon Members;

Besides the MTEF and Auditing, the programme has also been beefed up with capacity building sessions in the Kiswahili language. This is not by default but rather by design.

Kiswahili is the *lingua franca* of the Community as envisaged under Article 137 of the EAC Treaty. Kiswahili is widely spoken in diverse regions across the EAC region. It is also a language of communication in many parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in certain parts of the Republics of Zambia and Mozambique. Long-time interactions with other people bordering the Indian Ocean has seen the spread of the Swahili language and culture to distant places such as on the islands of Comoro and Madagascar.

Continently, the Pan African Parliament (PAP) has also adopted Kiswahili as one of its official languages.

Hon Members, we are proud of the historic origin of Kiswahili which is in East Africa.

I am pleased to state that Partner States long embraced Kiswahili. Kiswahili is the national as well as the official language in Tanzania - almost all Tanzanians speak Kiswahili proficiently and are unified by it. In Kenya, it is the national language, but official correspondence is still conducted in English. In Uganda, the national language is English but Kiswahili enjoys a number of speakers especially in the military. As a matter of fact, for those who may not have known, during the Iddi Amin's rule, Swahili was declared the national language of Uganda. However, the declaration was neither seriously observed nor repealed by the successive Governments. Rwanda and Burundi also embrace and speak Kiswahili.

Due to the fact that Swahili covers an extensive geographic area, regional differences and dialects did arise with variants spoken in our countries. The differences include accent, vocabulary, spelling and grammar. It nonetheless remains a versatile and unifying language for our region.

Kiswahili has been embraced as part of the curriculum in learning institutions. It is today a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools in the Partner States as a way of ensuring full integration.

As the integration deepens and specifically with the Common Market Protocol in effect, it is important for all EAC citizens to speak Kiswahili to avoid lagging behind. It is also expected to serve as an important tool in forging the much awaited Political Federation in the region.

Waswahili husema Mchele mmoja, Mapishi wengi, literally meaning; Rice is all one but that there are many ways of cooking/preparing it. Fundamentally in its application, one may state that though, it is the cooking that counts – there are different ways and approaches to the same. In this allegory, we can thus use a number of ways and means including sensitization through Kiswahili as we aim for the ultimate goal of realizing the Political Federation.

As an Assembly, we also have no choice but to perfect our Kiswahili. Already many of us are quite comfortable with Kiswahili, but this is no excuse for we need to be articulate, knowledgeable and fluent if we are to fully sensitise the citizens of this great region.

Let us thus embrace this opportunity as well to sharpen our Kiswahili – both spoken and written. **Nawatakia Kila la heri!!**

I take the opportunity to thank all our facilitators in advance for their worthwhile contribution to knowledge and to wish all fruitful deliberations.

With these few remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to invite the Deputy Secretary General to make some remarks.

I thank you for your kind attention