



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

The Official Report of the Proceedings of the East African Legislative Assembly

106TH SITTING – SECOND ASSEMBLY: FOURTH MEETING – FOURTH SESSION

Tuesday, 29 March 2011

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 11 a.m. in the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Rwanda, Kigali

(The Rwanda National Anthem was played)

PRAYER

(The Speaker, Mr Abdirahin Abdi, in the Chair.)

The Assembly was called to order.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Chairperson, Committee of Legal Rules and Privileges (Mr Frederic Ngenzebuhoro: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali, in the Republic of Rwanda. Mr Speaker sir, I beg to move.

Mr Abdullah Mwinyi: Seconded.

Mr Ngenzebuhoro: Mr Speaker, sir,

“WHEREAS Clause 1 of Article 55 of the Treaty provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint and

WHEREAS Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedures provides that the seat of the Assembly shall be at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania and

WHEREAS sub rule 7 of Rule 11 provides that the Assembly may, on the resolution adopted by a majority of its Members, decide to hold one or more sittings elsewhere within the Partner States other than at its seat,

NOW THEREFORE this House do resolve as follows:

That pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty and sub rule 7 of Rule 11 stated above, the Assembly shall hold sittings in the Chamber of the Parliament of Rwanda from today Tuesday 29th March 2011 up to Wednesday 16th April 2011.”

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the proposal on the floor is that this House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali in the Republic of Rwanda. Debate is open.

(Question put and agreed to)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker: Hon. Members, amidst us today is His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

I have, in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty, invited him to address this Assembly. I would now like to make the following proclamation to welcome his presence in this Assembly.

PROCLAMATION

“WHEREAS Clause 1 of Article 54 of the Treaty provides that the Speaker of the Assembly can invite any person to attend the Assembly, notwithstanding that he or she is not a member of the Assembly, if in his or her opinion the business of the Assembly renders his or her presence desirable and

WHEREAS in the opinion of the Speaker, the attendance and presence in the Assembly of the President of the Republic of Rwanda is desirable in accordance with the business now before the Assembly

NOW THEREFORE it is with great pleasure and honour, on behalf of hon. Members, to welcome His Excellency to this Assembly”. (Applause)

WELCOME REMARKS

The Speaker: Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, Your Excellency, President of the Rwanda Senate, Rt Hon. Speaker of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, Your Lordship Chief Justice of Rwanda, Rt Hon. Prime Minister of Rwanda, the Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers, Hon. Ministers, hon. Secretary General of the East

African Community, hon. Members of Parliament and EALA, Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great honour and humility that I warmly welcome you, Your Excellency to this special sitting of the Assembly.

As an Assembly, we are humbled by your continuous acceptance and generosity to avail yourself, despite your heavy schedule, to address this Assembly whenever we are here in this country. *(Applause)*

This singular gesture goes a long way to distinguish you as a true friend and ally of this Assembly and the integration process as a whole.

We also take pride in the words of encouragement and wisdom you always provide to us.

Your Excellency let me take this early opportunity to congratulate you, albeit belatedly, for your resounding victory in the presidential elections held in August last year. *(Applause)*

That the people of Rwanda chose you to lead them for another seven years, is a testimony and evidence that they have great confidence in you and your government's policies and programs. *(Applause)*

It is further gratifying to note that despite its recent monumental challenges, Rwanda was able to conduct the elections in a largely peaceful, fair and transparent atmosphere, thereby earning plaudits from the EAC, Commonwealth and other observer missions.

We take pride, as an Assembly, for having been part and parcel of the team that participated in observing the elections. Under your wise and able leadership, Rwanda has managed to put in place standards that guarantee free and fair elections and mitigate challenges identified thereof.

We, as East Africans, are proud to be associated with the Republic of Rwanda. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, the giant economic, social and political strides this country has made in the last 16 years of the genocide cannot be gainsaid. Rwanda is now regarded as one of the safest and indeed most productive and competitive country in Africa to do business with. The ever-changing skyline in Kigali city is evidence of a booming construction industry and is reminiscence of the fact that there is a master plan being adhered to.

Furthermore, during our field visits throughout the country, we have noticed frantic efforts by *wananchi* and government to move away from poverty and embrace modernisation.

This is in line with one of the EAC objectives of promoting public private partnership under the auspices of a people centred community.

Similarly, I take this opportunity to congratulate the government for embarking on a unique campaign to eradicate grass thatched housing (*Nyakatsi*) in this country. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, we were privileged to have joined you in the construction of homes during the monthly community work (Umuganda) over the weekend in Nyarugenge district.

The success of this important program will propel Rwanda forward, thus making it probably the only country with Africa without grass thatched housing that is often, if not, always associated with poverty and generally poor hygiene. (*Applause*)

Your Excellency, *Umuganda* is an initiative that should be replicated in the region. We are pleased that you are ready to take the lead in spearheading the gospel of *Umuganda* to the rest of the EAC countries. (*Applause*)

Your Excellency, as you are aware, the EAC is at a critical stage in its integration process. The Customs Union is now fully fledged while the Common Market is also in force. The EAC, over the next twelve months, shall hold negotiations on the Monetary Union. The high-level task for negotiations for this important stage requires sober and reflective leadership of all actors in the integration process.

I take this opportunity to request you and the members of the Summit to give importance as well as leadership in the processes to ensure sterling success and realisation of the full benefits of integration for all East Africans.

Your Excellency, last week Members of the Assembly together with the leadership of the Secretariat participated in a workshop on the Draft Policy Instruments organised by the EAC Political Federation department.

In the course of the next two weeks, the Assembly will consider important business of the Community including the Second and Third Readings of the EAC Elections Bill, the EAC Service Commission Bill and the Inter-University of EAC East Africa (Amendment) Bill respectively, debate and adoption of various committee reports as well as to hold an interactive session with Members of both Houses of the Rwanda Parliament. The Assembly shall also participate in the activities marking the commemoration of genocide.

Finally Your Excellency, let me take this opportunity to congratulate your new Cabinet for earning the respective positions to lead this great country from now and for posterity.

Your Excellency, it is now with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome you to address this August House. *Karibu sana*, Your Excellency. (*Applause*)

The President of the Republic of Rwanda (Mr Paul Kagame): Hon. Speaker of the East African Assembly, Mr Abdulrahin Abdi, hon. President of the Rwanda Senate, hon. Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Hon. Ministers of the East African Community, our Secretary General of the East African Community, hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr Speaker for inviting me to address the East African Legislative Assembly as you begin consideration of important bills and reports that we will have to further consolidate our efforts towards fuller integration of the East African Community.

I also wish to thank members of this Assembly for joining your Rwandan brothers and sisters in *Umuganda* and contributing to better housing for our citizens. *(Applause)*

Your participation is an expression of solidarity among East Africans and makes the East African Community more meaningful.

The government and people of Rwanda appreciate the efforts of the East African Legislative Assembly in promoting East African Community integration process especially by enacting enabling legislation and in your oversight and representative roles.

As the East African Community progresses along our integration trajectory, we are now focusing our energies on implementing the Common Market, which should serve us with a larger market for both East African and foreign investors through the free movement of factors of production across the region.

To do this effectively, we will need the continued commitment of all stakeholders. Obviously, the East African Legislative Assembly has the unique responsibility to promote the benefits of the Common Market to your respective constituencies.

Mr Speaker, hon. Members, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that the East African Community Partner States, through their individual and regional development agendas, are making efforts to create a better social and business environment in the region. However, we must also recognise that there are still a number of challenges that slow down the process and therefore require our urgent and concerted attention.

First among these is our limited financial capacity, which hampers the development of the wider range of activities and services that are the basis of greater integration. Among these we can mention infrastructure linkages of transport, ICT, energy and financial services, human resources, rural sector development and cross border trade and investment.

Of equal concern is the lack of an integrated East African strategy and framework for public private partnership investment in infrastructure and utilities that is crucial to the economic development of the region. Inadequate infrastructure and high non-tariff barriers in our region continue to lead to high costs of doing business.

The limited level of awareness of the East African Community Common Market Protocol by regional and international investors means that they have not taken full advantage of it and as a result, the potential for investment is not maximised.

Finally, until we sufficiently strengthen the institutional capacity of our communities, organs and institutions, we will not proceed at the pace we would like. It is evident that in order to drive our

integration agenda forward, we must urgently find solutions to the challenges we are facing in its implementation.

We have to recognise the inter dependence of the different stages of the integration process and note that delays in effecting one affects progress in others. It is important therefore to undertake an in depth analysis of the institutional requirements in order to address the linkages between the Common Market and other stages of integration and the various challenges we are facing.

In this regard, I am pleased to note that in this session in Kigali, you will be considering a draft East African Community Service Commission Bill and briefs from the respective Deputy Secretaries General on the status of implementation and programs in different areas of cooperation.

The effective implementation of the Common Market Protocol calls for increased trade, research and statistical capability and the development and enforcement of harmonised regulatory systems and authorities across the Partner States.

This in turn will require that we devise mechanisms for achieving a fully-fledged Customs Union, one of whose key prerequisites is the removal of non-tariff barriers.

I must say that progress is there in this area but has been slow and more work needs to be done as a number of these barriers remain in place. I believe the area with the greatest potential for advancing the East African Community Integration agenda is infrastructure development.

We have already designed a number of very important infrastructure projects such as the East African Road Map Network Project, the East African Trade and Facilitation Project and the East African Community Railway project.

It is now time to move from the drawing board and on to the next level that should see results on the ground.

Mr Speaker and hon. Members let us not forget that it remains our responsibility to keep the process of integration on track and for this to happen, we need to adopt certain regional strategies as a matter of priority.

We have to establish sustainable funding of the integration process. In addition and as I alluded to earlier, we must promote public-private partnerships in financing regional projects.

It is also necessary to prioritise areas of common interest to address regional problems and sequencing of regional projects taking into account initiatives, which can be implemented using available resources within the Partner States.

In conclusion, let me state that we have chosen the paths of integration as the means to develop our region and it will take all our efforts and commitment, as political leaders, different organs of the Community and above all, the citizens of East Africa to make it succeed.

There can be no room for wavering or delay. I thank you for your kind attention and it is now my pleasure to declare this meeting of the East African Legislative Assembly open. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

VOTE OF THANKS

Mr Leonce Ndarubagiye (Burundi): Your Excellency President of the Republic of Rwanda, Your Excellency President of Rwanda Senate, Rt Hon. Speaker, Rt Hon. Speaker of the Rwandan Chamber of Deputies, the Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers, Hon. Ministers, Secretary General for EAC, Members of Parliament of EALA, hon. Members of the Rwanda Senate in Parliament, your Excellencies ambassadors, high commissioners, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I stand here before you with the authorisation of the Speaker to give a vote of thanks to His Excellency, President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda.

Your Excellency, it is an honour to stand here before you and to, on behalf of my colleagues, the Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, to express our gratitude for the so many things that you have done for us.

Your Excellency, we remember with pleasure that it is during the time you were chairing the Summit of East Africa that the Common Market was signed and agreed upon, a task that was previously seen as impossible- *(Applause)* - thus opening the gate for negotiations for Monetary Union and later on political federation.

Your Excellency, we remember with pleasure for quite a long time, the retreat in Kigali that you initiated to heal some mistrust and misunderstanding between the organs of the East African Community. We thank you very much, sir and that spirit still remains.

Your Excellency, Rwanda is a role model in quick development as has been said by our Rt Hon. Speaker but please allow me to say again that today Rwanda is considered, with Malawi, as the two countries that have developed quickly agriculturally in Africa, congratulations. *(Applause)*

When we had the opportunity to visit the platform at Lake Kivu for the exploitation of Methane gas, we remember with pleasure that the Minister of Energy told us the vision of the program to put electricity all over primary and secondary schools, dispensaries, all centres and communities in Rwanda. We believe that this program is going on fast and we congratulate you. We will borrow a leaf from your program. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, the list of things that we are grateful for is long but please allow me to end this brief vote of thanks by stating a fact that is also valid for the other four Partner States. That fact is that we are grateful to Your Excellency and to Parliament to Rwanda for having sent Members of EALA whose seriousness and contribution are highly appreciated, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

I am even glad to report that the small problem of language for some few members from Burundi and Rwanda that was there in the beginning has been overcome and once again, Your Excellency, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: Thank you very much, hon. Leonce. Your Excellency, people did not know who hon. Leonce was because after Umuganda, he looks very young, he is not the way he was. *(Laughter)* So people are wondering who this person is who is speaking on behalf of hon. Leonce. I do not think I have anything else to add but to say again, thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Hon. Members, before I adjourn I would like to make a few announcements. One is that after we leave here, we are going to go for a photo session for all members of EALA with His Excellency and you will be led to where you are supposed to go.

I would also like to invite all the other distinguished guests who are here for a cocktail in the gardens of Parliament.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we are going to adjourn the House until 9.30 a.m. and not 10 a.m. as it says on the program.

(The House rose and adjourned until Wednesday, 30 March 2011 at 9.30 a.m.)