EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

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

108TH SITTING - SECOND ASSEMBLY: FOURTH MEETING – FOURTH SESSION

Monday, 4 APRIL 2011

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 2.30 p.m. in the Chamber of Deputies, Rwanda National Assembly, Kigali.

PRAYER

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

The Assembly was called to order.

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PAPERS

The following Papers were laid on the Table: -

(by Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo (Rwanda)

    The Report of the Workshop on Parliamentary Champions on Aid Effectiveness

    The Report of the Bogotá High Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development

(by the Chairperson of the Committee on General Purpose (Ms. Sebtuu Nassor(Tanzania)

    The Report of the Committee on General Purpose on the On-Spot Assessment of the EAC Process on Harmonisation of Education Systems and Integration in Science, Technology, Sports and Culture in the Context of the Common Market

 (by Prof. Hellen Sambili, Member of EAC Council of Ministers(Kenya)

    The Supplementary Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2010/2011

The Speaker: It will be referred to the Committee on General Purpose and the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment.

BILL

Second Reading

The East African Community Elections Bill, 2008

(Resumption of Debate interrupted on 15 September 2010)

The Speaker: Hon. Members, as you are aware, and I am sure the Clerk has informed, we adjourned debate on this Bill so that we could get more input or for the Committee to meet the mover of the Bill. Now that we are here, debate is open on the Bill.

Mr. Gervase Akhaabi (Kenya): Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you have observed, when this matter was last before this House in Bujumbura, my brother Hon. Ogalo sought---

The Speaker: Hon. Akhaabi, I would like to remind you that you debated on this issue and as per the rules, you cannot debate again. So, what are you doing?

Mr. Akhaabi: I am not debating, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Subsequent to that adjournment, the Committee sat on the 28th of last month here in Kigali---

The Speaker: Hon. Akhaabi, you are still debating!

Mr. Akhaabi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am informing you---

The Speaker: I did not ask for information. Go directly to what you want to say.

Mr. Akhaabi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:-

> THAT, pursuant to Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure, further debate on this Bill be adjourned.

Dr. Aman Kabourou (Tanzania): Seconded.

Mr. Akhaabi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the debate on this Bill was adjourned when the House was meeting in Bujumbura, Hon. Ogalo had sought further consultations on the Bill in the light of the recommendations contained in the Committee's report to this House.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 28th of March this year, the Committee met in Kigali and on the request of Hon. Ogalo, it appointed a sub-committee to receive recommendations and suggestions and discuss and consult with Hon. Ogalo. The sub-committee consulted Hon. Ogalo on the same day in the afternoon and virtually every bit of recommendation in the Committee's report was accepted by Mr. Ogalo. Unfortunately, he had to go to some other assignments outside of Kigali and the Committee has not been able to meet.

Considering the importance of this Bill to the principle of democracy and good governance in elections in our region; I therefore seek that further debate on this Bill be adjourned to enable the sub-committee to make its report to the Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges so that the amendments that have now been accepted by Hon. Ogalo may be incorporated in the Bill to enrich it for the benefit of the people of East Africa.

I beg to move.

(Question proposed)

Mr. Frederic Ngenzebuhoro (Burundi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just want to support the Motion moved by Hon. Akhaabi because the Committee needs to consider the recommendations made by the sub-committee.

I beg to support.

(Question put and agreed to)

(Debate on the Bill deferred)

The Speaker: Hon. Members, before we go to the next Order, I think we have gone from one capital to another, telling everybody that we have an elections Bill coming up. I think if we don't finish this thing quickly, we would be looking like fraudsters who are moving from capital, telling people we have a Bill and we are adjourning debate on it in every Session.

Hon. Members of that Committee, you need to do your work quickly so that we can have this Bill before this House.

MOTION

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2010/2011

The Speaker: Honourable Members, as you are aware, we have already referred this matter to the two Committees; i.e. Committee on General Purpose and Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment. So, we expect a report from those Committees in this House.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

Question Reference: EALA/PQ/OA/09/2011

The Speaker: Is hon. Habumeremyi is not there? Then we drop the question.

(Question dropped)

Question Reference: EALA/PQ/OA/10/2011

The Speaker: I notice the Hon. Member has still not arrived. So, I will drop that Question as well.

Ms. Kate Kamba (Tanzania): Mr. Speaker, Sir, can I ask this Question on his behalf?

The Speaker: No, you cannot ask on his behalf unless he instructed you to do so.

Hon. Members, I can see that Hon. Habumeremyi is not here and he is the one who has Questions. I do not think we should be posing Questions to the Council when you do not intend to come and ask. I am surprised that it is coming from a Member of this House when we are always busy condemning the Council for not answering Questions properly.

Therefore, Hon. Members, next time you have a Question, you should be serious enough to come and ask it on the Floor. Why is the Counsel to the Community so happy? *(Laughter)*

MOTION

FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION, TRADE AND INVESTMENT ON THE ON-SPOT ASSESSMENT OF THE EAC ICT CONNECTIVITY

Dr. James Ndahiro (Rwanda): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move:-

> THAT, the report of the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment on the On-Spot Assessment of the EAC ICT Connectivity be adopted.

Ms. Valerie Nyirahabineza (Rwanda): Seconded.

Dr. Ndahiro: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg your indulgence that Hon. Valerie Nyirahabineza reads the Committee's report on my behalf.

Ms. Valerie Nyirahabineza (Rwanda): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to read the report on behalf of the Committee.

MR. SPEAKER, SIR**,** Under the Provisions of *Article 49* of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, it is mandated to exercise both legislative and oversight functions on all matters within the scope of the EAC. For the efficient functioning of the Institutions of the Community, programs conducted in form of workshops, study tours, on-spot assessments among other activities are a means for members to discharge their mandate.

Based on this background, the EALA Members of the Committee on Communications, Trade and Investment as part of their oversight role conducted an on-spot assessment on the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) connectivity in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania and Nairobi-Kenya.

In both Kenya and Tanzania the fibre optic marine cables have been landed at their respective coasts. This has provided a connectivity gateway to the hinterlands of East Africa and onsite visits to Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi provided the Committee with an opportunity to be appraised on the developments on these particular facilities. In addition, given that the pace and direction of information and communication technology (ICT) is changing the way of conducting business as well as its use in the health sector and sectors of the economy, it is no doubt important in the integration process.

By improving the interconnectivity among our Partner States, ICT can play a role in lowering the cost of doing business in the region, combating non-tariff barrier (NTBs), and put our region on a higher competitive footing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the overall objective of the tour was to assess Information, Communication and Technology networks and connectivity in East Africa.

The Specific objectives of the Tour were to:
1. appraise Members of the Opportunities and challenges the EAC has in respect of ICT;
2. assess the ICT facilities and infrastructure i.e. Fiber Optic Cable development in the EAC region;

3. establish the impact of these information and communication networks development in the region;
4. be appraised on the means and ways in which the environment and human population are protected from the negative effects of used ICT gadgets and equipments and Partner States' disposal policy and strategy.

In terms of methodology, the Members of the Committee on Communications, Trade and Investment visited various ICT sites in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. The Committee assessed facilities and infrastructure in place, and held meetings with ICT stakeholders who included regulators, operators and users of the ICT services. From these site visits and meetings with stakeholders, the Committee took stock of the observations and recommendations made during the tour.

FINDINGS FROM TOUR VISITS

East African Submarine Cable System (EASSy)
On 21st February 2011, Members of the committee visited EASSy East Africa project at ZANTEL Headquarters in Dar es Salaam Tanzania. It was found that EASSy East Africa is a privately owned submarine fibre optic cable system, which connects South Africa to Sudan via Djibouti and further to Europe.
The government of Tanzania initiated the ICT Project of National Broadband Back Bone (NBB), and the government encourages other related investments to supplement this initiative.

EASSy project therefore supplements the government ICT development agenda. It provides intranet connection, Code-Division Multiple Access (CDMA) internet - (mobile internet). It also offers international private leased circuits (IPLC) which provide secure and reliable point-to-point internet services, co-location services and IP transit (internet connection between servers) among others. The project, which started in 2006, has a lifetime of 25 years.

Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), Mandate and Duties:

The Committee noted that TCRA's mandate is to:-

• Develop and formulate strategic policy guidelines for both radios and telecommunication companies for the development of the Communications sector;
• Regulate Postal, Broadcasting, and Electronic Communications sectors.

It was further observed that TCRA comprises various Sections with each performing different responsibilities. These include:

i) **Radio**; this monitors the signals of frequencies for different operators both radio and telecommunications in the whole country.

ii) **Spectrum Management;** which consists of mobile/portable monitor and spectrum analyzer, which monitor illegal interferences.

iii) **Broadcasting;** under this, there is a content monitoring unit, managed by the Content Committee which monitors and inspects broadcasters and telecommunications.

iv)   **Postal;** this section grants licences to Courier Operators and also monitors their performance.

Post Code Project:
The government has established a new project of postal address system from Post Office Box to Street and House Numbers. This system divides the country into six categories which include; Zone, Region, District, Area, Ward and Cell. TCRA Project Coordinator and the entire Team include officials from TCRA, Ministry of Information Science and Technology and Tanzania Posts Corporation. The Project commenced after feasibility study in 2007. Implementation started in 2010 with a pilot project in Arusha with a timeframe of 5 years.

Benefits of Post Code System
  i.   It will enable every citizen of Tanzania to have physical address at home;
  ii.   It will assist in e-governance as it facilitates communication between Government agencies and the users of their services;
  iii. The project also helps in e-commerce as transactions can easily be effected between distant traders.

Delivery Standards:
This service is concerned with automatic mail quality measurement. It checks and balances the delivery standards of Tanzania Posts Corporation. Operators are responsible for building, maintaining info-communication infrastructure, providing efficient and affordable ICT services to consumers in rural and urban areas.

Achievements of TCRA

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority has registered among others the following achievements;

  i.   The introduction of the Converged Licensing Framework in 2005 after the end   of exclusivity of Tanzania Telecommunications Company Ltd (TTCL);
  ii.   Growth of the communication sector by introducing competition in infrastructure services, applications and subscriber growth;
  iii. Opening of zonal offices: Zanzibar, Dodoma, Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya and Dar es Salaam;
  iv.   Spectrum management;
  v.   Numbering management;
  vi.   Standards and Type Approval;
  vii. Overseeing interconnection rates;
  viii. Simcard registration;
  ix.   Overseeing the "Analogue to Digital Broadcasting" migration;
  x.   Introduction of the Postcode Project;
  xi.   Membership and participation in International organizations i.e East African Communications Organisation (EACO);
  xii. Construction of "Mawasiliano Towers".

SEACOM/Silver Sands
SEACOM is a privately funded African company, offering a 1.28Tb/s submarine fibre optic cable system linking Africa to Europe and Asia via the Middle East. SEACOM's Vision and strategy for Africa is to ensure availability of internet for all. SEACOM connects from Tanzania to the rest of East Africa through Namanga, Rusumo, and Kabanga. SEACOM is growing its network and aims at bringing the most reliable and state of the art value propositions to Africa.

Benefits of SEACOM
  i   Deliver efficient infrastructure support for the growth of the ICT sector, e.g. call centers, pharmaceutical research industries and education networks.
  ii)   Provides open access to broadband.
  iii)   Facilitate the development of high volume, low cost markets by encouraging emergence of new industries through, stimulating further demand.
  iv)   Compliment mobile and fixed line national carriers by providing low cost high capacity bandwidth.
  vi)   Intent to work within Public Private Partnership to deliver infrastructure support for the ICT growth and development.
  vii) Enabling connectivity for Global Enterprises focussing on developing their interests in Africa.
  vii) Access to entrepreneurial skills pool with a focus and passion for business development.

Tanzania Telecommunications Company Limited (TTCL)
TTCL is a Government appointed Manager of the Backbone to oversee the National ICT Back Bone (NICTBB) Project. The project has the following objectives:

i)   To make Tanzania an e-society and become a hub of ICT infrastructure and ICT Solutions;
ii)   Provide access of international submarine cables to neighbouring landlocked countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Uganda, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) hence promoting trade with Tanzania;
iii)   To facilitate the government's vision through enhanced socio-economic development and accelerating poverty reduction.

E-Government in Tanzania
The Vision of e-government in Tanzania is *"To be an effective government leading Africa in innovative public service delivery enabled by ICT."*   The Goals of e-government include:

i)   To deliver quality public services with improved accessibility, responsiveness, and efficiency.
ii)   To strengthen coordination across the government and its partners, and enhance productivity and knowledge sharing.
iii)   To provide integrated, secured and innovative solutions to enable quality service delivery and improvement of work processes.

Dar-es-Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT)

This was established in 2009 under a collaboration of the governments of India and Tanzania. This institute is regarded as a Centre of Excellence. The centre offers ICT training professional programs. These trainings are industrial tailored for example software network design. The centre is also connected to community information centres through e-learning facilities such as telemedicine and video conferencing offering consultation in the medical field from a distance.

The services offered include among others; seismic analysis, climatology analysis, weather predictions. The centre is currently using satellite but envisages using the fibre optic cable due to cost implications. Various parties are so far interested in utilising the DIT services; these include Mkapa Foundation in collaboration with Clinton Foundation, IBM South Africa and IBM Egypt among others.

Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)
In the Republic of Kenya, the Committee visited the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) and was briefed on how ICT is being utilized on cargo tracking throughout the Country. In terms of ICT infrastructure, it was found that KRA has two internet gateways via the undersea fibre connectivity, which include; The East African Marine System (TEAMS) and EASSy. These have up to 10 MBs with a backup of VSAT, routers, core switches, load balances, severs (hardware) and software.

There is a data centre which houses the servers that automatically monitor the cargo countrywide and outside through the Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS). It was observed that the system is efficient and has attracted some resistance especially from fraudulent stakeholders such as transporters.

The University of Nairobi: School of Computing, Informatics and ICT Centre

At this University, the Committee was informed of the core functions of the institution, which are teaching and learning, research and development for knowledge and innovations. The institution offers diplomas, degrees and PhDs.

Members wished to know the participation of this University towards the East Africa integration process. The management of the University informed the Committee that the University carried out a research on Electronic Waste in East Africa in 2010 and the findings of the research indicated that little has been done towards the effect of dumping of the IT gadgets in the region.

The University also carried out another regional project research in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania on Poverty and Information, Communication and Technology Systems in Urban and Rural East Africa (PICTURE). The objective of the research was to study the potential role of ICT in poverty alleviation initiatives. Research and communication networks have also been established to connect EAC Countries.

Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK)
CCK was established in 1999 under the Kenya Communications Act, 1998. Its mandate was enhanced in 2009 under a converged regulatory regime to develop ICT and promote ICT services.

Development of Communication Networks
- The East African Marine System (TEAMS) was established June 12th 2009 and covers 5,000km connecting Fujairah in UAE to Mombasa, Kenya. It is a Public Private Partnership project between the government of Kenya and other corporate stakeholders. It Provides high-quality, low cost transit and international connectivity on non-discriminatory and infrastructure sharing basis.
- SEACOM was established in July 2009, connecting South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya via a protected ring structure and has a capacity of 1.28 TB/s. The total length of the cable is 17,000km connecting Kenya to Marseilles (France) and Tanzania to Mumbai (India).
- East African Submarine Cable System (EASSy), established in April 2010, connects South Africa to Sudan via Djibouti and further to Europe.

National Optic Fibre Infrastructure (NOFI)
This is a government of Kenya funded fibre backbone project connecting all administrative (districts) in Kenya including the border towns. NOFI has an extension of about 4,500km and cost US$ 60 million. The cable is being managed by Telecom Kenya Ltd (TKL) on behalf of the government.

To enhance telecom infrastructure, the government of Kenya in 2009 created Universal Service Fund (USF) to provide incentives for connectivity in high cost areas. USF will be instrumental in enhancing expansion/reach of the national backbone to the un-served and underserved population in Kenya.

Regional ICT Initiatives
Regional ICT initiatives undertaken under the umbrella of EACO include:-

i)   Regional fiber optic link- EAC BIN
ii)   Cross-border roaming arrangements
iii)   Reduction of tariffs among countries
iv)   Addressing ICT accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
v)   Development of the ICTs and e-commerce in the postal sector
vi)   Development of the national addressing system
vii)   Improve on the quality of ICT and postal services in the region
vii)   SIM Card registration and implementation of the electronic identity register
viii)   Establishment of national/regional organs to promote cyber security and reduce electronic fraud.

Automation in Government
There are provisions for the e-Government Online Services such as Online Recruitment and Selection System, Online Exams and Form One selection Results, higher Education Loans Board, electronic tallying of Votes by the Electoral Commission, and SMS services. All

these services provided by the e-government are meant to efficiently deliver services through shared IT.

Impact of the Development of Communication Networks
Development of the communication networks and infrastructure in EA region has led to the following:
i)   Increased contribution of ICT to GDP;
ii)   Improved regional and international connectivity;
iii)   Enhanced regional and international competitiveness among market players;
v)   Promoted innovations and electronic products such as money transfer services such as Mpesa, Zap, Yu Cash and Orange Money which has transformed many livelihoods in the region;
vi)   Cheaper, affordable and accessible ICT services;
vii)   Increased investment;
viii)   Creation of synergies with other sectors of the economy – banking, agriculture, government;
ix)   Employment opportunities, among others.

Emerging Issues:
   a) Regional interconnection is industry driven, however East African Communication Organization (EACO) meets annually to deliberate on cross-border provision communication services.
   b) EACO is informal but promotes effective and efficient communication services in the EAC region and it should be taken onboard by the EAC mainstream.
   c) EALA Members were concerned that radiation from mobile telecommunication and broadcasting installations may cause health problems to human beings, however, it was said that energy from mobile telecom installations are so weak that they may not pose a serious health threat, while that of broadcasting which is strong, a provision of infrastructure sharing was put in place and this was done through constructing towers to accommodate those installations.
   d) Simcard registration is ongoing among the users. However in Kenya for example, there is no legal framework in place to terminate services once the Simcard is not registered, although legal measures are being worked out to that effect.
   e) Harmonization of call charges among telecommunication companies is a challenge. For example when airtime is bought in Kenya and used in Uganda, VAT will be charged in both countries and therefore this increases the unit cost due to double taxation.
   f) It was observed that National Environment Authorities always carry out environmental impact assessment and visit sites to find out the compliance by the telecommunication companies with environmental requirements.

Challenges facing Regional Communication Interconnections:

Mr. Speaker Sir, the development of ICT is also faced with the following challenges:-

i)   Lack of an interconnection framework in the region. There are only commercial agreements among operators in the region.
ii)   High cost of regional roaming.

iii)   Competition issues and concerns arising from market dominance, mergers and acquisitions.
iv)   Vandalism of ICT infrastructure.
v)   Limited access to ICT services in un-served and underserved areas due to high costs of investments in those areas.
vi)   High taxes levied (excise tax and value added tax).
vii)   Lack of broadband infrastructure.
viii)   High cost of ICT Infrastructure: National ICT Backbone, Backhaul Terrestrial Connectivity, Submarine Cables, bandwidth.
ix)   Spectrum Management is a challenge especially due to illegal interferers.
x)   Expansion of ICT services to rural areas.
xi)   Affordable Tariffs.
xii)   Cyber Security.
xiii)   Simcard Registration.
xiv)   Climate change.
xv)   Other Infrastructure: Power, Roads.
xvi)   Consumer Awareness
xvii)   The pace of rollout to the neighboring countries.
xviii)   Lack of harmonized implementation strategy for the EAC Member States
xix)   Fiber cut.
xx)   Ignorance.

CONCLUSION

The East African Partner States need to realise the potential of ICT in promoting development by coming up with harmonized ICT policy, legislations, licensing framework and regulations in line with shared regional Broadband Strategy.
The benefits of ICT are not fully utilized in most Partner States because ICT is often out of reach to the poor and those in rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Speaker Sir, the committee has made the following recommendations:-

1.   The Committee recommends that the Secretariat convenes a regional conference for young professionals to take advantage of the existing ICT infrastructure, be innovative and improve on the application side of the technology.
2.   The Committee through the Council of Ministers recommends that the Partner States reduce high cost of technology by sharing platforms and save money for applications and other ICT products.
3.   The Committee further recommends to the Council of Ministers to encourage paperless community by speeding up the introduction of e-commerce Bill to the Assembly, which should enable the recognition of e-solutions including e-signature, e-contracts, e-payments, e-documents among others.
4.   The Committee further recommends to the Council of Ministers and the Secretariat to work on a regional strategy and policy on disposal of ICT related wastes.
5.   The Committee recommends to the House to interface with the leaders and management of the public sector to take advantage of the ICT to transform operations and deliver quality services.

6. The Committee through the Council of Ministers further recommends to the Partner States to cause sensitization and awareness to the citizens about the benefits of fiber optic cable so as to minimize vandalism.
7. The Committee further urges the House to mobilize funds to enable the Committee to continue with the on-site assessment in the Republics of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.
8. Considering the critical role played by ICT in trade development and EAC integration, the Committee recommends that the Council of Ministers urgently introduces a Bill for enactment to harmonize ICT laws in EAC and promote EAC integration and trade development by promoting competition in the sector.
9. The Committee recommends to the Council to establish and operationalise the e-Government agencies to lead implementation and sustain the e-Government efforts through public-private partnership investments.

10. The Committee urges the Secretariat to examine the postal code project in the united Republic of Tanzania in line with the Common Market Protocol with the view to upgrade it to a regional project.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I beg to move. *(Applause)*

(Question proposed)

The Speaker: Hon. Members, anyone willing to debate? Hon. Members, while you gather your thoughts, I would also like to ask the Committee; when you look at page eight of your report, the last sentence, it says "it observed that the system is inefficient and has attracted some resistance especially from fraudulent stakeholders such as transporters." Since when did you observe that all transporters are fraudulent? *(Laughter)*

May be they should tell us more about that instead of making sweeping statements on transporters.

(Dr. Ndahiro stood up in his place)

The Speaker: Dr. Ndahiro, you will have an opportunity to reply later, being the Chairperson of the Committee.

Hon. Members, debate is open. Well, I can see that Hon. Members agree with the report completely and they have nothing to say.

Well, I will now call the mover to make his concluding remarks.

Dr. Ndahiro: Mr. Speaker, Sir, allow me first of all to thank the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania for their investment in the ICT sector.

During our visit, most Members were overwhelmed by what we saw. We are seated here without knowing that our region is rich. We have all it takes to make sure that trade in East Africa and global trade occurs cheaply and timely because of ICT.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we looked at the possible projects in Tanzania, it is going to change this region because they are getting rid of Post Office Boxes to replace them with postal codes so that each house has a number and mail, a product and any other communication could be delivered to your house. In the period that we are implementing the Common Market, we thought that project would be useful for the region. When we talk about

identification or readable identity cards, we thought that if that project is upgraded to a regional level so that each East African has a postal code, that would simplify and fast-track the implementation of the Common Market.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we visited the Kenya Revenue Authority, Members were able to track vehicles in Kigali from Nairobi. They were able to demonstrate to us that a container leaving Mombasa can be tracked all the way to Goma in DRC. This means, therefore, that the NTBs we see o the roads are unnecessary. If we are able to monitor a container from Mombasa even when a driver just takes off three metres away from the main road, the red signals will appear and people will know that this driver is trying to do something else. We were wondering, therefore, why do we have weighbridges on the way? Why do we have human beings stopping tracks on the way? Why do we have all those people increasing the cost of doing business in the region, yet we have simple solutions?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the amount of investment by Kenya Revenue Authority is enough to cater for the whole region. When you consider that Partner States are busy procuring similar technologies – when I made inquiries, some Partner States want to procure up to US$10 million to put the same technology in place. That is over US$50 million which we are going to use to put that infrastructure in place, yet we could use one and safe US$40 million to do other things in the ICT sector.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, although we have infrastructure in place, we could see little in terms of application and products; meaning, yes we have infrastructure, we have those cables but when you consider that the content that comes into the region and the content that goes out of the region, 86 per cent comes in and only 14 per cent goes out. That is in terms of emails, google search; nothing else. We are consumers of other people's products. It is time that we developed products using ICT. That is why we are recommending that the Secretariat calls young professionals together to show them the opportunities available so that they can be innovative and compete with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, another challenge we have in the region is that as we lay the fibre optic cables, some people go around at night to remove them in the hope of getting copper and other things for decoration or thinking they could actually find other things like gold inside there. So, the governments pay lots of money to lay those fibre optics and then at night other people go to remove them. It is very difficult for this region to develop if awareness is not properly focused. That is why we are recommending to get in touch with public offices to make sure those fibre optic cables are protected in the region.

We were further informed that the United Republic of Tanzania has managed to run to all Partner States borders; to Rusumo and others, but the other Partner States are yet to connect. We think that this demonstrates a weakness on our part as a Community. We must be doing everything in collaboration with our regional needs. It is only when things are done that we hear sometimes the Secretariat and others talking about them and trying to own them. But in the process of doing that, we don't see them. We are calling upon the Secretariat to take these regional projects up so that they facilitate our governments and help them make sure they deliver common services to our people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this report be adopted.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, when I gave you a chance to debate, you declined and that is why I called the Chairperson to conclude. I will now go ahead and put the Question.

(Question put and agreed to)

Resolution adopted.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker: Hon. Members, we have come to the end of business today. However, I would like to make some few announcements before we adjourn.

First and foremost, I would like to say as you are aware, His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza will be delivering the State of EAC Address to the Assembly tomorrow. So, you should be seated at 10.30 a.m. The programme will go on as usual and after that we are going to have a small cocktail. We will also have a small ceremony of launching the EALA Newsletter which will also be done by the Chairperson of Summit.

Hon. Members, I think you have also received notices that tomorrow we have a courtesy call on His Excellency Paul Kagame in the afternoon.

I have some keys here, which were left in the Senate. So, you may see the Sergeant-At-Arms after this.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Finally, I now adjourn the House until tomorrow at 11.00 a.m.

(The House rose at 3.30 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 5 April 2011 at 11.00 a.m.)