



## **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 110<sup>TH</sup> SITTING - SECOND ASSEMBLY: FOURTH MEETING – FOURTH SESSION**

**Tuesday, 5 APRIL 2011**

*The East African Legislative Assembly met at 11.30 a.m. in the Chamber of Deputies,  
Rwanda National Assembly, Kigali.*

#### **BURUNDI NATIONAL ANTHEM**

*(Played by the Rwanda Army Brass Band)*

#### **PRAYER**

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

*The Assembly was called to order.*

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### **COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**

**The Speaker:** Hon. Members, amidst us today is H.E Pierre Nkurunziza, the President of the Republic of Burundi. *(Applause)* 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 the 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 Burundi and Chairperson of the EAC Summit of Heads of State is desirable in accordance with the Business now before the Assembly.

***NOW THEREFORE, It is with great pleasure and honour, on your behalf Hon. Members, to welcome His Excellency in this Assembly.***

- (Applause) -

### **WELCOME REMARKS**

**The Speaker:** Your Excellency, Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the Summit of EAC Heads of State;

H.E President of the Rwanda Senate; Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers; Hon. Ministers; Hon. Members of Parliament and EALA; Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great honour that I take this opportunity to welcome Your Excellency to deliver to this Assembly the State of the Community Address in your capacity as the Chairperson of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State.

Your Excellency let me also take this belated opportunity to very warmly congratulate you for assuming this exciting and challenging office of Chairperson of Summit.

You have taken leadership of the Community during a very important and sensitive stage of the integration process i.e. the Customs Union is fully operational; we are in process of operationalization of the Common Market Protocol; and the fusion of the Partner States' monetary and fiscal policies. The on-going negotiations towards the EAC Monetary Union will no doubt be the highlight of your tenure of office.

I am confident that with your wise counsel and leadership, this third and crucial level of the integration process will succeed and the Community shall be able to meet its set deadlines.

The people of East Africa have patiently waited and urged their leaders on as they weave through the complex processes of bringing the hitherto disparate economies together.

The EAC Monetary Union is the Marquee stage of the integration process. After the complex negotiations and boardroom trade-ins, we are confident that the people of East Africa shall be able to hold a single currency of the Community and stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of very few other Regional Economic Communities who have been able to attain this fete; never mind the huge economic gains that shall accompany that development.

Your Excellency, let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you and your government for keeping the peace in your country since the last elections. It is our prayer as a people of the region that your continued wise and pragmatic leadership will continue watering the tree of peace in Burundi and lay the foundation for democratic governance.

I would like once again to thank your government for your continued intervention in the situation in Somalia. The decision of your Government and that of the Republic of Uganda to volunteer troops to the African Union Mission to Somali was indeed very foresighted. That your country, having barely recovered from war, has been able to send peace keeping troops to Somalia through AMISOM is evidence of your desire to see to it that this region and Africa in general attains meaningful peace for its people. For our East African region to be peaceful and prosperous, we must ensure that there is peace in our neighbouring countries.

Otherwise, if we do not take concrete measures the gains of our integration may never be realized.

Your Excellency, we therefore look forward to your leadership of the Community, and we pray that you succeed in all you plans that you have during your tenure of office.

Your Excellency, it is now my humble duty and honour to welcome you to address this August Assembly.

*Karibu Mheshimiwa Rais. (Applause)*

### **THE STATE OF THE EAC ADDRESS**

**The President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the Summit of EAC Heads of State (H. E. Pierre Nkurunziza):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Rt Honourable Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly; Honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly; Distinguished Guests, all protocol observed; Ladies and Gentlemen. May the Almighty God be praised for his Greatness! (*Amen*)

It is for me a real pleasure and a great honour to be here in front of this majestic Assembly, to take the floor on this important occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the East African Legislative Assembly, which is taking place in this beautiful city, Kigali.

Allow me first of all to sincerely thank the Government and the People of Rwanda for hosting this Assembly Session in Kigali, and for the warm hospitality extended to me and to my delegation.

Before starting my remarks, let me reiterate first of all the importance of this annual address delivered each time by the Chairperson of the Summit of the East African Community Heads of State. As indicated by His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, in May last year while addressing this Assembly as the then Chairperson of the EAC Summit, a focus in these addresses is to reflect on matters of general policies relating to the progress that our Community is realizing, while outlining the strategic challenges which require greater attention.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, My annual address of today comes at an important moment of the political evolution in our Region. Here, I think particularly of the context of the busy electoral period, after general elections in Burundi, the Constitutional Referendum in Kenya, Presidential Elections in Rwanda, General Elections in Tanzania last year, and Elections in Uganda early this year.

These democratic, peaceful, free and fair exercises are a cornerstone of the promotion of democracy and good governance in our respective countries, as well as a strong foundation for the East African Community integration process. This democracy is understood like a patriotic and participative manner of the public management, before, during and after elections.

Moreover, these political developments taking place in Our Region constitute an important part of our objectives, to consolidate political cooperation in various facets, as a way towards

our quest for a Political Federation. We are proud of important achievements in sectors such as co-operation on questions in connection with defence, the coordination of the foreign policy, and other domains of peace, security and governance.

Furthermore, the major preoccupation of our integration is to live, to move together towards political stability, supported by a climate of mutual trust and solidarity among our respective countries. We are one people, and we have a common destiny.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, On the economic front, economies of Our Region are presently facing currency depreciation, with serious repercussions on inflation. These challenges arise from the recent extended drought that hit most parts of the Region, as well as from the recent rising prices of fuel and other imports, following the political events in the Maghreb and Middle East. The growing incidents of piracy in the Western rim of the Indian Ocean have also negatively impacted on our region. It is important for the EAC to reflect on this issue.

The East African Community is about to launch its fourth, Five-Year Development Strategy 2011-2016». This Strategy is of a paramount importance as a broader development perspective, which the East African Community is engaged in. Our common ambition should be to transform Our Community into a Region that is truly united, peaceful, and prosperous.

The integration process has achieved much over the past ten years. In maintaining the momentum already gathered, and moving the East African Community forward into larger growth and deeper integration, it is important that We then direct greater attention at getting the strategic drivers right. There are several drivers, but I may prioritize them as follows:

First of all, and in the context of the current low level of intra-EAC trade which stands at 11 percent of our total share in global trade, it is important that we address the factors that limit or constrain the construction of a larger EAC internal market.

We should seriously ask ourselves why this share of regional trade could not be more than that level. We have to accept the fact that it is a larger internal market, which will create the much needed new jobs for our youth, who today feel left behind in what we see as promising economic performances in our respective countries. This will also promote higher living standards of Our People.

Technology innovation, intensive irrigation, and adding value to agricultural products through transformation and conservation techniques are among factors that can help boost higher intra-regional trade.

Similarly, the importance of roads and other infrastructures that connect agricultural production areas to markets and industrial centers is part of our concerns. In this regard, our focus on infrastructure development cannot therefore be limited to regional inter-connections. It must extend to the improvement of national infrastructures in general.

Besides, in all our national economic plans, we must constantly ensure that there are strong ties with what we are planning to realize a deeper regional integration.

Let me elaborate by saying that the East African Community is totally committed to the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite arrangement, with its central focus on the establishment of

the «Grand Free Trade Area». I wish to commend the work that has so far been done in this direction, and we are looking forward to the second Tripartite Summit, which will move Africa forward towards the realization of the African Economic Community.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, The second driver focuses on opening our borders to allow for trade to intensify. Trade flows are for the time being impeded by a good number of Non Tariff Barriers that remain a big disturbance today. The removal of Non Tariff Barriers would indeed constitute a solid basis for the success of the Monetary Union, whose negotiations are underway.

The introduction of One Stop Border Posts will provide part of the solution in enabling a freer flow of goods and services across our borders.

Allow me to reaffirm the important role of businesswomen in socio-economic development in general, in line with Chapter Twenty Two of the Treaty on the Establishment of the East African Community, and I am pleased to note that the East African Community is organizing the First Women in Business Conference, which is expected to chart out policies and strategies, to put women at the heart of the East African Community integration.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Thirdly, We need to pursue regional infrastructure development more vigorously. The elaborated Regional Master Plans for Roads, Railways and Energy, have to be transformed into genuine infrastructures on the ground. We can no longer keep these plans in the drawers, since the expectations of the East Africans are very high.

We are also encouraged to note the developments in the implementation of the supportive regional infrastructure projects, in particular the new railway extension from Isaka, Tanzania, to Kigali in Rwanda and Keza-Musongati in Burundi.

This is a significant signal of getting the Region land linked, which can be supported by similar projects in the sectors of air and **maritime** transportation.

In the same spirit, immediate action must be taken in the strategic field of energy, source of development, to deal with power shortages that hamper regional industrialization.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable members of the parliament, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen, Fourth, One of our greatest challenges lies in quality assurance of our education systems at a global level, where science and technology are the prime drivers of social and economic transformation. We are then in need to strengthen the leading role of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) in quality assurance and in accreditation, harmonization of the higher education systems, to ensure high standards of the products of our academic institutions, in order to favour free movement of workers and services.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I cannot fail to mention the positive side on the horizon of the East African Community. As a matter of fact, with the Customs Union almost in full operation and the launching of the Common Market, we have

laid a strong foundation to realize deeper integration of our economies and reinforce investments.

That's why when the East African Community Heads of State meet on 19 April, we are also expected to examine the proposal to establish a Single Customs Territory, which is intended to improve efficiencies in the collection of customs duties in our region. This decision should also reduce tax evasion. Ultimately, however, the success of the Customs Union relies on the establishment of a Regional Customs Management Authority, to oversee its effective operations.

However, we are calling upon EAC Member States to put in place legal and regulatory frameworks that will **breathe** life into declarations on the various free movements under the Common Market operations.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in December last year, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission organized the first Lake Victoria Investment Conference in Mwanza, Tanzania. This conference was a huge success and attracted potential investors in our region.

The East African Community should plan a similar investment conference for the Lake Tanganyika Basin. This Conference should also involve the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia, which are also river countries of the Lake. We believe this can be another pole of development in the Region, with high stakes impacting on COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Member States.

In addition, in its commitment to move forward the agenda of the Political Federation, the next Summit of the East African Community will examine a roadmap of the Council of Ministers on this important subject, as it is the political integration that will sustain and safeguard all the gains of Integration.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Over the last one year, a major exercise has been ongoing to re-examine, in the light of experience, the efficiency and effectiveness of the East African Community as an organization. We will analyze major challenges, which the Community is facing, as well as future prospects. A major Institutional Review has been undertaken, and I am glad to note that Honourable Members of this Assembly have been involved in its overall process.

It is within this framework that we are calling for the institutionalization of the Kigali Retreat, so that institutions and organs of the EAC can collaborate better. The East African Community Summit, on its part, will give the support needed in ensuring that the East African Community becomes a more vibrant and robust institution. Therefore, any institutional transformation demands additional resources. We will have to look into the best option for sustainable Community funding to run the Community strategic programmes.

Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I close these remarks, allow me to sincerely thank Partners of the EAC for their various support. I encourage them to continue doing so! I would like, once again, to call upon the media to be aware of their role in the society. Media people

should portray what is beneficial to the community; they should write or publish promotional stories, to ensure visibility of the EAC in other regional blocks and beyond.

Last, but not least, allow me to pay tribute to the Speaker and to Members of the East African Legislative Assembly for their unfailing commitment, as they continue to play a leading role to push forward the integration process of the East African Community.

Long Live the East African Community

Long Live the East African Legislative Assembly

May God Bless You All

Thank you for your kind attention.

*- (Applause)-*

#### **VOTE OF THANKS**

**Mr. Gervase Akhaabi (Kenya):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Your Excellency, President Pierre Nkurunziza of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the EAC Summit of Heads of State, all protocols observed;

Your Excellency, on behalf of the Members of EALA and the Speaker, we wish to express our deep thanks and appreciation for your taking off time to be with us this morning to make this remarkable Address on the State of the EAC.

Your Excellency, your act of leaving your busy schedule is a clear demonstration of your commitment and that of the people of Burundi to the Community.

Your Excellency, we thank you for highlighting a number of aspects of importance, that drive the Community and have taken the Community this far.

Your pointing out the constraints that hinder quicker progress towards our integration is the direction that we in the leadership of the Community yearn for.

Your pointing out the need to improve infrastructure cannot be over-emphasised. It is our sincere hope that the leadership of the Community from the Summit down to the membership of the ordinary citizens of East Africa will take this seriously because poor infrastructure is a constraint not only to trade but also to personal relationships, when we cannot quickly travel and meet people from other parts of East Africa.

Your Excellency, in the field of education, you have underscored the critical role that is to be played by the IUCEA. I hope that the Council of Ministers will take this up seriously and consider that the IUCEA could play a much more important role in the education and technological development in East Africa as well as in research and development. It does appear that we want to do things the way we used to do, but this Assembly is pleased that you

have indeed, directed that this body should play a critical role in the area of quality assurance and accreditation. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, you have also touched on the area of funding. There are cases when we have been a little worried that probably the Summit may not be getting it right on the priorities of funding of the EAC operations. These worries have been allayed by your statement that this has to be reviewed. Specifically, there should be identification of important programmes and projects, and in this regard, I may single out the negotiations on the Economic Partnerships Agreement. We feel that this should be a matter that the Partner States at the highest level, i.e. the Summit should take up and fund these negotiations rather than relying on donors. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, again, I thank you most sincerely for emphasising the need for further and deeper integration. I wish to say that the Protocol on the Common Market as signed is a retrogressive step. It is taking us back; it is not helping in the integration in the sense that it removes whatever little functions were at the Community level to the Partner States. We would urge you and other Heads of State in the Summit to re-look at this Protocol with a view to correcting it. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, we really wish to thank you for all your comments, pointing out the challenges and we are sure that with support from the Summit, we as the Assembly will take up the challenge and work closely with all the Organs to move the EAC integration forward.

Thank you, Your Excellency and Mr. Speaker, Sir. *(Applause)*

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Akhaabi. I thought Hon. Akhaabi was debating the IUCEA (Amendment) Bill and the EPA (Supplementary) Bill. *(Laughter)*

Anyhow, I think the Ministers have heard.

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**The Speaker:** Your Excellency, we have come to the end of business today. I would like to thank you for gracing our session today. I will not add anything more than what Hon. Akhaabi said.

Before I adjourn, I would like to make the following announcement. After this, we are going to have a group photograph with H.E the President at the usual steps.

I would also like to invite all the dignitaries here to a cocktail that will be held at the Parliamentary Dining Hall.

At the same time, we will also have a brief launching of the EALA Newsletter at the same venue.

Finally, this is to inform all Hon. Members to assemble at the parking yard at 1.45 so that we can go to H.E. President Kagame's office for our appointment.

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Speaker:** With those remarks, I now adjourn the House until tomorrow at 2.30 p.m.

*(The House rose at 12.30 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 6 April 2011 at 2.30 p.m.)*



