



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

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

SPECIAL SITTING - THIRD MEETING- SECOND SESSION- FIFTH ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 5th March 2024

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 10:35 a.m. in the Senate Chamber, Nairobi, Kenya

ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT OF KENYA

[His Excellency, Dr William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya, escorted by the Speaker of EALA (Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana) entered the Chamber]

[His Excellency the President (Hon. Dr. William Samoei Ruto) took the Chair of State]

(The Kenya National Anthem)

(The East African Community Anthem)

PRAYER

(The Speaker, Mr Joseph Ntakirutimana, in the Chair)

(The Assembly was called to order)

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PROCEDURAL MOTION

10.39

Mr Mashaka Ngole (Chairperson, Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges) (Tanzania): A resolution of the Assembly to Hold Sittings in the Republic of Kenya, Mr Speaker;

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 Procedure of the Assembly provides that the seat of the Assembly shall be at Arusha, in the United Republic of Tanzania;

AND WHEREAS Sub-Rule (5) of Rule 10 of the Rules of the Assembly provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint and shall meet atleast once in every year at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania and at a time to be determined by the Assembly;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to the provisions of Sub-Rule (5) of Rule 10 of the Rules cited above, the Assembly shall hold its Sittings in the Parliament of Kenya from the 3rd to 20th March 2024. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

(Motion seconded by the whole House.)

The Speaker: Hon. Mashaka, have you justified your motion?

Mr Mashaka Ngole: Mr Speaker, according to the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, Article 55 provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint. According to this Article, this Assembly is given power to decide on the places and time for these meetings to be held. I move for the Assembly to decide for the meetings of this Assembly to be held here at the Parliament in the Republic of Kenya. I beg to submit.

The Speaker: Hon Members, I propose that this House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55 (1) of the Treaty and Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings at the Parliament of Kenya in the Republic of Kenya.

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(Question put and agreed to.)

(Applause)

PROCLAMATION BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker: Honourable Members, amidst us today is His Excellency, Dr William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya and member of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State. I also recognise the Rt. Hon. Dr Moses Wetangula, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya and the Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi, the Speaker of the Senate of Kenya.

I have, in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, invited His Excellency the President to address this Assembly. I now proceed to make the following proclamation to welcome his presence in the Assembly.
(Applause).

WHEREAS Article 54(1) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community provides that the Speaker of the Assembly, may 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 Kenya 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, that I welcome His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya in this Assembly.
(Applause)

Given under my hand this Tuesday, 5th March 2024.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR WILLIAM SAMOEU RUTO, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Welcome Remarks by the Speaker of EALA

The Speaker: Your Excellency, Dr William Samoei Ruto, the President of the Republic of Kenya; Chairperson and members of the East African Community Council of Ministers

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present here - I recognise the Minister from the Republic of Rwanda; the Minister from the Republic of Kenya; the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers from the Republic of South Sudan; the Secretary General of the East African Community; Cabinet Secretaries of the Republic of Kenya present; Honourable Members of EALA; and the Parliament of Kenya; Permanent Secretaries and senior government officials in attendance; members of the Diplomatic Corps; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Your Excellency, our sittings in Nairobi will run from 4th until 20th March 2024, at the Parliament of Kenya. We are indeed honoured to have you amidst us, even with your busy schedule. I welcome you to this Special Sitting and your presence here today exemplifies the deep commitment you hold to the East African Community. Thank you for positively responding to our invitation. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, as you may know, the term of this Assembly which, is the Fifth Assembly, commenced on 19th December 2022. On that occasion, we were joined for the very first time by our colleagues from the DRC. Very soon, we shall have Members from Somalia. Allow me to thank the Summit for their vision of an expanded East African Community. With Somalia on board, the bloc now has eight Member states.

All in all, I have a very good team of Members of the Fifth Assembly and I am particularly blessed that Kenya sent to EALA a very seasoned, knowledgeable and hard-working team. Hon. Omar Hassan Omar, who is also the Chapter Chair; Hon. Zipporah Kering; Hon. Kanini Kega; Hon. Suleiman Shahbal; Hon. Kennedy Kalonzo; Hon. Falhada Iman; Hon. Winnie Odinga; Hon. Maina Mwangi Karobia and Hon. David Ole Sankok. We also have Members from different chapters.

(Members rose for recognition in their respective Chapters.)

Your Excellency, our sitting in Kenya is based on our desire to bring the Assembly to the peoples of Kenya. This is provided under Article 55 of the EAC Treaty, that the Assembly should have sittings in the Partner States. We are, therefore, grateful to the leadership of the Republic of Kenya for graciously accepting to host us. Special thanks are also conveyed to the Rt. Hon. Moses Wetang'ula, the Speaker of the Kenya National Assembly and the Rt. Hon. Jeffa Amason Kingi, the Speaker of the Senate of Kenya for according us very excellent facilities.

Your Excellency, our fore fathers supported the idea of rotational sittings because it enhances the visibility of the East African Community, it increases public awareness and participation of the people in the integration process. It also serves as an opportunity to enhance cooperation with the National Assemblies of the partner states in line with the

requirements of Article 65 of Treaty. It also provides an opportunity for Heads of State to speak to East Africans about their vision for a united and prosperous EAC. As EALA, we shall also tap into your wisdom on integration.

During our sittings, we shall consider five Bills, eight Committee oversight reports; nine questions to the Council of ministers; three petitions from the EAC citizens; six motions for resolutions of the Assembly and a report to amend the EALA Rules of Procedure. We shall also engage in joint activities with our brothers and sisters of the Parliament of Kenya in order to foster deep cooperation amongst our institutions. We shall also embark on outreach and sensitization of the peoples of Kenya, particularly through the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association; the Parliamentary Youth Caucus; and interface with Kenyan traders on cross border-trade. Members will also grace the International Women's Day celebrations in Embu County, while some will visit the Masai Community in Narok County. Hon. Sankok invited us.

Your Excellency, before I conclude, allow me, in a special way to thank you in person, and the Parliament of Kenya, as well as the Ministry responsible for EAC Affairs, for being the lead Partner State in completing her subscription to the EAC by 100 percent and in a timely manner. *(Applause)*

I also wish to commend you for your able and visionary leadership, which has enhanced the visibility and development of Kenya. Under your leadership, we note the positive and close working relations you have had with the leadership of both Houses of the Kenya Parliament and to us, this explains the progress you have made as a country.

On matters of peace, security and unity, you have done very well by championing home-grown solutions to issues that affect our Partner States and the region. For example, we all saw you recently with the Hon. Raila Odinga walking side-by-side with President Museveni - *(Applause)* - engrossed in deep discussions on how to advance regional peace, enhance freedoms for Kenyans and work for the common good of our peoples. It is only through such that the pursuit of home-grown solutions even to the DRC crisis, will make our region an envy to all and will spur development. This serves to portray the EAC mechanism for conflict resolution in high esteem.

I want to further thank you for the lead you are taking in promoting world peace by taking the mantle of stabilizing countries that are facing insecurity. It is a good move but not all the external forces may be happy about it because you have rightly challenged their inaction. You can, however, count on EALA, the EAC and Africa at large for support since these efforts renew your commitment to ensuring peace and security for Kenya, the region, Africa, and beyond.

On your calls for reforms in the international financial institutions, such as, IMF and the World Bank, we are proud to be associated with your bold statements calling for reforms to ensure fairness, inclusivity, equity and equal opportunities for developing nations like those in our region, who continue to be impoverished and marginalized by the developed world through these institutions. The debt cycle they put us in should end so that we can generate internal resources to spur growth on local industries, infrastructure and economically empower our citizens.

We, at EALA, have already adopted resolutions on promoting use of local currencies instead of the US Dollar to pay for services; resolutions to promote local leather industries by banning unprocessed hides; among others. *(Applause)* We also associate ourselves with your stand on reforming global action on climate change and the environment and the leadership you continue to give during global Summits. *(Applause)* As has been noted, in many quarters, your words of wisdom have often been inspirational.

Having said that, and before I invite Your Excellency to address the Assembly, I invite my brother, the Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers, to make brief remarks.

I thank you all for listening to me.

Remarks by the Chairperson Council of Ministers

11.01

Mr Deng Alor Kuol (**The Minister of East African Community Affairs, South Sudan/Chairperson, Council of Ministers**): Your Excellency, Dr William Samoei Ruto, the President of the Republic of Kenya; Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, the Speaker of the EALA; my colleagues, ministers and members of the EAC Council; Hon. Dr Peter Mathuki, the Secretary General of the EAC; Honourable Members; Ladies and Gentlemen; all protocol observed!

Your Excellency, let me start by joining the Rt. Hon Speaker in welcoming you to this Special Sitting of the Assembly and expressing the gratitude of the Council of Ministers to you for finding time in your very busy schedule to address the Assembly.

Your Excellency I bring greetings from the Chair of the EAC Heads of State Summit, H.E, Salva Kiir Mayardit. He registered his commitment to a peaceful Community as demonstrated by his ongoing consultations with Heads of State in the region with the view to ensuring a stable and peaceful region.

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Allow me to also congratulate you upon the new role of championing institutional reforms which the African Union Heads of State have entrusted you with. This is a testament of the strong promotion and unwavering advocacy for the African voice in regional and global matters, regional peace and security, and the effective and efficient functioning of the organs and institutions set up to deepen and widen our African integration agenda.

This being the first time that the Fifth Assembly is holding its Plenary session in Nairobi and in the Republic of Kenya and also the first time since your excellency is addressing the Assembly as a member of the Summit of EAC Heads of State, we are all keen to receive your guidance and wisdom on the direction and areas of focus for the East African Community from your perspective. I am pleased to inform you that in order to foster a unified economic landscape that benefits all Partner States, the Community continues to rely on the Assembly to enact regional laws that will create a more conducive environment for increased trade and investment and through oversight to highlight any inconsistencies and gaps in the trade policies and legal and regulatory frameworks of the Partner States as we look towards establishment of a functioning and efficient monetary union for the EAC.

Furthermore, I wish to confirm that the Secretary General has informed me that the Federal Republic of Somalia has formally deposited the instruments of ratification with his office and therefore the Federal Republic of Somalia is now a full member of the EAC. *(Applause)* On this note, I thank the Secretary General and his team for this good work done. As a Council, we are looking towards the Assembly to inform policy decisions as we continue to seek for prosperity for our people in order to enhance the EAC integration agenda and where necessary, make recommendations and seek the guidance of the EAC Summit of Heads of State.

Your Excellency, as I conclude, we are grateful to the EAC Summit for adopting a sustainable funding model to stem the financial challenges the Community has been facing, largely through none or delayed remission of contributions to the budget of the Community by Partner States.

Once again, I thank you, Your Excellency, for agreeing to address the Community through this Special Sitting of the Fifth Assembly in Nairobi. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: Your Excellency, before I invite you to address the Assembly, I would like to recognise in this Chamber the following dignitaries. We have the Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, the Prime Cabinet Secretary, Kenya; Hon. Salim Mvurya, Cabinet Secretary for Mining and Blue Economy; Hon. Katoo Ole Metito, State House Comptroller; Mr Abdi Dubat, Principal Secretary, State Department for EAC Affairs. *(Applause)* We also have members of the diplomatic corps, and among them is, Hon. Martin Ngoga, who was the Speaker of the Fourth EALA. *(Applause)* Thank you. He is my mentor - it is him who taught me how to behave.

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(Laughter) Former Members of EALA present - *(Applause)* - thank you so much for coming. I also recognise other senior state officials of the Government of Kenya and the members of the fourth estate present.

Your Excellency, finally, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome you to address us. You are most welcome, Your Excellency.

11.09

His Excellency, Dr William Samoei Ruto (The President of the Republic of Kenya): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker - *(Members rose)*- Honourable Members, you may take your seats.

This podium is a bit high. I do not know whether we can take it down abit? Anyway, the Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, the Speaker of the EALA; Honourable Members; The Secretary-General of the EAC; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me first take this opportunity on behalf of the Government and people of Kenya to welcome honourable members from EALA to Nairobi and it is my wish that you will enjoy deliberations in Nairobi and also have time to enjoy Kenya. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, let me apologise because I have been away from Parliament for now more than ten years and I found myself doing the wrong things. When it was time to applause, I found myself clapping - *(Laughter)* - and I know that is not the tradition in Parliament. I had to remind myself but I am delighted to join this august Assembly today to preside over the official opening of the Third Meeting, Second Session of the Fifth East African Legislative Assembly, and to have the honour of welcoming you back to our Parliament's chambers in Nairobi, after six years. *(Applause)*

It is immensely gratifying to note that the work of intensifying the integration of the East African Community has proceeded at an encouraging pace so that while much remains to be done for us to accomplish our aspirations, the progress we have made has taken us closer to it incrementally. It is no overstatement to acknowledge the contributions of this Assembly towards making this progress possible.

At the beginning of this Session, it is appropriate to reaffirm our collective devotion to the constitutive aspirations of our community and, therefore, the objectives of the East African regional integration. There is no denying that our vision, to be a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa is taking shape at a higher rate than before.

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The ultimate aim of this noble enterprise is to transform and translate economic, political, social and cultural integration into a positive impact on the well-being of every citizen of East Africa.

Our common agenda, therefore, is to set out optimal policies and strategies which unite us firmly in the singular pursuit of positive transformation in the political and economic, social and cultural, research and development as well as technology and innovation, defence and security and also the legal and judicial sectors of our society. *(Applause)*

It is fair to say that much of our efforts cannot proceed, let alone succeed, without the loyal contribution and hard work of our community's legislative organs - the EALA as well as the respective parliaments. This Assembly accentuates the direct linkage between common regional and specific intra-member State policies by performing the vital and simultaneous functions of embedding the regional integration agenda at the heart of domestic policymaking, while also ensuring that the EAC represents, articulates and projects the interests of member States as well as the entire collectivity of our Community.

Our peoples' journey to a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa entails the implementation of policies and establishment of institutions under the four well known pillars of our integration, namely: a Customs Union, a Common Market, a Monetary Union and a Political Federation.

The instruments and frameworks needed to bring into operation our semi-autonomous institutions, delineate our areas of cooperation and attend to the pillars of integration, are promulgated under the exclusive mandate of this Assembly, which has demonstrated exemplary dedication to its legislative function, conscientious deference to important lessons from the history of our regional integration efforts, and a vigilant commitment to deliver a robust architecture for the successful delivery of an ambitious programme of action for our Community.

By dint of a consistent drive to implement our collective vision for integration, this Assembly has enabled us to overcome the shortcomings which rendered the first East African Community so vulnerable that it ultimately collapsed, and to make significant progress on each pillar of integration, thereby making EAC a resilient, dynamic and progressive region on the threshold of historic transformation. *(Applause)*

Our Customs Union is on the move, with this Assembly creating legislative frameworks to establish a common external tariff, uniform customs rules and procedures, and common rules of origin. I want to congratulate members here for being patriotic to EAC and making sure these instruments are in place. These frameworks also provide for the elimination of non

tariff barriers and the implementation of a single customs territory, one-stop border posts, as well as the facilitation of the development of regional and national trade information portals. For example, in a couple of weeks, President Museveni and I will be launching the one stop border post in Suam, a border between Kenya and Uganda, complete with a road connecting both countries that was sourced by funding that was collectively undertaken by the Governments of Kenya and Uganda. *(Applause)* Similarly, the Assembly has provided the framework to conclude the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite free trade area, the signing of the agreement establishing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and the adoption of the EAC e-commerce strategy.

As you are aware, the bringing together of the Tripartite Agreement will bring 27 countries into one Common Market with a GDP of approximately USD 750 billion. *(Applause)* That will make it possible for East Africa, parts of North Africa and the whole of South Africa to trade together and to eliminate trade barriers that consistently stand in the way in our quest to enhance and expand business and trade enterprise in our region.

Consequently, the turn-around time for trucks has reduced significantly along all our transport corridors and the clearance time at border crossings has reduced by 84%, making trade more efficient in our region. This is why intra-EAC trade holds the highest position among trading blocks in our Continent at 25%. *(Applause)* With a collective GDP of \$350 billion, a population of approximately 350 million and an expansive area of five million square kilometres, the EAC member States are an attractive investment destination. *(Applause)* EAC's total trade in 2022 stood at \$74 billion. In the same year, Africa accounted for 44% and 25% of EAC's total exports and imports respectively.

This Assembly, likewise, has enabled the Community to implement the Common Market Protocol which guarantees free cross-border movement of persons, labour, services and capital, as well as the right of establishment and residence, through the use of standard identification systems, harmonised travel documents, mutual recognition of qualifications, and harmonised labour and social policy frameworks. The EAC e-passport is now internationally recognised, while several member States now permit citizens to travel using the national identity cards. Visa fees for cross-border movements have mostly been eliminated, and cross-border communities now enjoy free movement. Students can enrol and transfer with greater ease, and regional institutions now implement mutual recognition agreements for various professional qualifications.

To actualise the East African Monetary Union by 2031, because that is our aspiration, this Assembly must provide the necessary framework to anchor the full implementation of the Customs Union and Common Market Protocols, especially through the establishment of vital organisations such as the Monetary Institute, Bureau of Statistics, financial services as well as the surveillance and enforcement commissions. I know this is already in your radar and it is

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our hope as members of the Summit that you will discharge your responsibility of making sure these instruments are in place to facilitate the greater integration of our union. *(Applause)*

Additionally, the Assembly should facilitate the convergence of criteria for macroeconomic governance, and provide for the harmonisation of both fiscal and monetary policies.

The fourth pillar of the East African integration, the political federation, depends on effective cooperation in the fields of political affairs, regional peace and security, as well as defence cooperation. The transitional model for our federation is already in place, in the form of the East African Political Confederation, under which we have been able to deploy the East African Community Regional Force (EAC-RF) for example, to restore peace and security in Eastern DRC. Other achievements under the transitional model include the Chief Justice Forum to strengthen the rule of law, enhance access to justice and facilitate the evolution of a distinct East African jurisprudence.

Similarly, other platforms have been established to enable progressive engagement between national institutions through the exchange of information, skills and capacity, and developing common regional standards in such diverse fields as good governance, election management, human rights institutions and institutions that govern anti-corruption.

We now have in place protocols on defence as well as peace and security, together with the EAC Mutual Defence Pact, the EAC Early Warning Mechanism, protocol on combating illicit drug trafficking, an EAC inter-religious council and a framework for conducting public participation on the establishment of the Political Federation, which has already been concluded in Kenya, Uganda and Burundi and we already made a decision in Arusha, last year, that the process must be concluded in the other remaining states by June 2024 so that we can have a way forward. And I want to tell you when this exercise was conducted in Kenya, it received overwhelming endorsement by the people of Kenya - *(Applause)* - it received similar endorsements in Burundi and in Uganda.

I want to urge Members of Parliament who are here from our sister states of the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda, DRC and the Republic of South Sudan to assist the EAC Secretariat and the team that is mandated to carry out this exercise that this exercise be concluded as we have asked from the Summit of the Heads of State by June 2024 so that we can continue to make steps in the right direction and if there is an institution that will assist us in actualising the aspirations of East Africans, it is this Parliament. *(Applause)*

There is no doubt that as a result of the progress made in entrenching our regional integration as a social, cultural, political and economic reality, East Africa is emerging as a beacon of

unity, stability, security and progress, the beating heart of PanAfrican integration and engine of the AfCFTA, as well as the epicentre of Africa's move to position itself as the next frontier of global investment and industrial transformation. *(Applause)* That is why we have grown tremendously, from three founding Partner States to eight countries, connecting the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean, serving 350 million citizens and forging a major market. *(Applause)*. These achievements are chiefly due to the contribution to a greater extent by EALA.

The work that this Assembly does matters to us as Governments and matters to the people of East Africa. We must, therefore, remain focused on what is at stake, committed to completing the outstanding work, and determined to do our best at all times when called upon to serve the people of East Africa. Peace, stability and security must remain our foremost concern because they are the foundations that underlie all pursuit of growth, development and prosperity. A peaceful, stable and secure East Africa is a competitive and prosperous East Africa.

As we continue to work on such challenges to the growth of trade and investment as persistent non-tariff barriers, distracting and costly trade disputes, conflicting tax regimes, weak enforcement and inadequate resources, we must also take seriously the fundamental shortcoming to our agenda that is low involvement of the private sector, even as we prepare to get and stay on top of emerging threats in the digital space, as well as climate change. Now that we have adequately established that this Assembly possesses what it takes to drive our vision of a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa, I take this opportunity to pose a few issues to the honourable Members gathered here.

It is important for us to lay a strong foundation for East Africa to make a transformative contribution to Pan-African integration and the emergence of the AfCFTA as the next hub of global investment, trade and industry. In order to do this, we have to complete the implementation of all the pillars of EAC integration urgently - *(Applause)* - and, equally, critically align our integration agenda with the broader African transformational paradigm under the “*Africa We Want*”.

Secondly, we must provide a strong framework for achieving rapid leap-frogging and the development of sustainable competitive advantage in emerging hi-tech fields like the digital economy in general, and artificial intelligence, automation, robotics and machine learning, in order to stay ahead of both threats and opportunities that will continue to unfold in a rapidly digitizing global economy.

Thirdly, there is a need to lend your support to the African Leaders' Nairobi Declaration and Call to Action, which defines a strong and distinctly African contribution to the global discourse on humanity's foremost existential challenge, by affirming the nexus between

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climate action and sustainable development, and calling for increased investment in Africa to kick-start a green industrial revolution. Let me explain because it is important.

When we met in Nairobi, last year, we made a deliberate decision that we were no longer going to be in the corner where we are seen as victims of climate change and where our big pre-occupation is on complaining, finger pointing and doing what we have done for many years; that we are going to reposition our Continent as a place of opportunity, great potential and ready for investment because indeed it is no longer tenable for us to continue wearing the badge of conflict and disease and poverty when in our borders, we have the largest deposits of minerals. In fact 30% of world natural minerals and natural resources are in our Continent; we have 60% of all renewable energy resources globally.

We have 1.4 billion people market. In fact by 2025, it is going to be the single largest market in the world. We have two thirds of the world's uncultivated arable land that we can use for food security. Ladies and gentlemen, with those kind of resources, it is incorrect to classify our Continent as a continent of conflict, poverty and disease. *(Applause)*.

In fact, as one Nigerian great philosopher said, until the lion learned how to write their story, all stories glorified the hunter. So it is time for us to write our own story and our own story is not about disease, conflict or poverty. It is about great potential that we have. It is about the opportunities that we have. It is about the investment that is awaiting and position our Continent as the only place where the next industrial revolution is going to happen. Therefore, it is important for you as legislators from EAC to appropriate this position so that together we can push a new narrative for our Continent. *(Applause)*

To ameliorate the resource constraint which persistently hampers our progress, this Assembly is called upon to reflect deeply on the range of opportunities, and the various ways in which it can complement national and regional efforts to mobilise and allocate more resources for the regional integration agenda. And as you do that, you must have in sharp focus what we are doing in the EAC and how we can complement what we are doing as a Continent. In particular, I challenge you to apply your deliberative bandwidth to the forthcoming World Bank Group's International Development Association (IDA) Summit. Let me explain what we are going to do in the summit.

When we had this conversation last year and our development partners realised that we were changing the narrative about our Continent and that we no longer wanted to be victims, but wanted to be part of the solution, they asked me to host the first IDA replenishment here in Nairobi together with the World Bank. So we are going to host it on the 29th of April 2024. The conversation here is that East Africa will for the first time have the opportunity to

witness from a close quarter and contribute to the important deliberations of critical implementation of our growth agenda and development.

At this event, African leaders including many from the Global South and low income countries will articulate a strong case for an ambitious and robust 21st Replenishment of the IDA, which is the largest source of development assistance, and donor funding for basic social services for the world's 75 low-income countries, to support economic transformation in Africa and throughout the Global South. Let me contextualise this.

We have two fundamental problems and that is why many of our countries are struggling with debt. Problem number one is debt management. The kind of debt infrastructure that we have has a very short grace period, a very short tenure and therefore it becomes very difficult to undertake any meaningful development. Our position is that we should increase the grace period for money borrowed for development. Not three years - maybe ten years. We should increase the tenure of debt for development resources - not 15 years but maybe between 40 and 50 years. That way, when you mobilise resources for development, you have adequate time to be able to undertake that development without the constraints of having to repay this debt.

The other problem that we have in the whole of financing development is what we are calling responsible sovereign lending. It is no longer tenable for us to have this big animal called credit ready - where countries using an arbitrary formula are rated and if you do not do certain things, you are taken down and charged with more interest. We need to have a conversation about credit rating agencies and risk assessment because there is perceived risk that becomes larger than real risk. And that perceived risk is pushed by certain quarters to make Africa uncompetitive. *(Applause)* And that is the reason why, while others are accessing development resources at 1% or 2% most African countries are accessing development resources in markets between 10% and 15%. Explain to me, honourable members, if one group set of countries are accessing development resources at 1% or 2% and another is accessing between 10% and 15%; is it realistically possible for us to grow at the same rate?

This is the conversation we must have. And we must remove this arbitrary unfairness from global financing and that is why we are saying we must have a thorough conversation about the reform of multilateral development, banks and the whole international financial architecture as a whole.

When we started this debate, a year ago, we looked like mad people but I promise you, today, in every meeting, everybody has come to the conclusion that there is a problem with the architecture of international financing. *(Applause)* And the conversation is no longer if; the

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conversation is now, when are we and how are we going to reform it. That is why it is important for institutions like the EALA to apply your mind to what kind of contribution you are going to make in this reform that is going to make our economies access development financing. It is the only way we can make meaning to our development.

The last IDA Replenishment in 2021 raised US \$91 billion, which was disbursed to eligible beneficiary countries over a period of three years. The Kenya Summit that we are holding in April aims at highlighting to donors and other development partners critical priority target areas of development financing in Africa and in our region, to make the case for a significantly higher level of financing in the IDA21 cycle and to support East African countries to effectively address development challenges and exploit the huge opportunities that we have in our region. This is the candid conversation we are going to have. And I am very confident that the fact that the World Bank accepted that this was a necessary exercise, confirms to us that somebody somewhere is listening. Our position is that it is not going to be done until it is done. *(Applause)*

I have invited my fellow Heads of State and Government to participate in this highly important platform. Being confident of this Assembly's capacity to facilitate transformative interventions, I urge you honourable members to join this cause and formulate your contributions to this endeavour with urgency, imagination, and ambition so that together we can push an agenda that is going to support all our economies. *(Applause)*

I am highly obliged to you, Rt. Hon. Speaker, for inviting me to address this Assembly. I do not take your consideration for granted and I believe we are going to have a discourse that is going to be beneficial for all our countries. I wish you all honourable members productive engagements, insightful debates and fruitful deliberations as you usher in the Third Session of this Assembly. Feel at home while you are in Kenya - it is called magical Kenya, the home of all humankind. I urge Hon Omar Hassan, Chair of the Kenyan Chapter of the Assembly, to use this session to introduce you to the warmth and hospitality of our country. *(Applause)*. I urge you, Hon. Hassan, to make that only in places that are licensed. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members I really wish you well while you are in Kenya and maybe by conclusion, the Speaker did make reference to what we are doing as East Africa; to give you the impression of what East Africa is doing. You must be very proud people that East Africa in our Continent is the most progressive Community.

Our inter-trade between East African countries is the highest on the African Continent. We are providing the leadership and therefore you occupy a very special place and I want to urge you to continuously apply yourself to this huge responsibility. You are not only doing this for

East African citizens, you are trail blazing for the Continent of Africa. (*Applause*) Continue with diligence but also a pace to make sure you help us move the Continent together.

It is the reason, for example, as members of the Summit in East Africa - as you are all aware, the Chair of the African Union is coming up next year. As the term of Moussa Faki, our current Chair comes to an end, it is going to be the turn for East Africa to provide the Chair of the African Union. We have sat down in the spirit of the East African Community, we have consulted as Heads of State from the EAC together and we have agreed to sponsor one candidate as East Africans - (*Applause*) - because that is the strength of our Community. That we can do things together and that we can consult with one another. So it speaks to the spirit of the leadership that is being provided by our region.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you very much. May God bless you, may God bless Kenya, may God bless East Africa and thank you very much for listening to me. *Asanteni sana.* (*Applause*)

VOTE OF THANKS

The Speaker: Thank you, Your Excellency, for your great speech of a statesman. As Members of EALA, we have to implement a lot of your guidance. It is now time for Hon. Paul Mwasa Musamali to move a vote of thanks. Honourable Members, we shall have the opportunity to debate this great speech and we will do it when it is still fresh in our memories. Therefore, it will be done tomorrow, the whole day. Hon. Musamali you have the floor. (*Applause*)

11.49

Mr Paul Mwasa Musamali (Uganda): Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Kenya and Member of the EAC Heads of State Summit - Mr speaker, allow me in the interest of time, to stand on the protocol as you already observed it. I also want to take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to thank you and the Members of EALA for entrusting me with moving this vote of thanks.

Your Excellency, as already mentioned, my name is Paul Musamali. Among our people, where I come from, that is the Bukusu of Uganda, they say that when a big drum sounds, the small one cannot be heard. Now, I am conflicted because you have sounded a very big drum but let me seek your indulgence and permission because of this wonderful and elaborate speech you have made, to allow me sound this small drum and thank you for this very important speech. (*Applause*)

Your Excellency, I want to take this opportunity again, on behalf of EALA Members, to congratulate you upon your election to that office, as President of Kenya - (*Applause*) -

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because this is the first time we are meeting since you were elected. I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for the work you have been doing in the service of the people of Kenya and the people of East Africa. We also want to take this opportunity, Your Excellency, to thank you for the statesmanship you have demonstrated in the service of the people of Kenya and in the service of the people of East Africa and the Community.

It was already mentioned by the Rt. Hon. Speaker that we are very happy whenever we see you having or taking on efforts to ensure the unity of the people of Kenya and the people of East Africa and Africa in general. We were happy, in particular, when we saw you with President Yoweri Museveni and the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga in Uganda. Incidentally, you were all armed with sticks - (*Laughter*)- but you did not harm each other. Among cattle keepers, the sticks are basically used to ward off the wild animals and to defend those very animals. So, we are happy that you are working very closely with the President of Uganda and your other colleagues, the Heads of State of East Africa, but above all, even with the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga. I am sure that we are going to see bigger things come.

Your Excellency, we thank you for the speech you have delivered to this House. From what you have delivered, I made some few notes but I have come to understand that the integration of the East African Community in particular and Africa in general is not a matter of luxury but a matter of necessity. This is because it is about our lives as the East African people and the African people. As you may all be aware, honourable members and the public, Africa just like the President has put it, has been a victim of circumstances and some of the things are not our responsibility. You are aware, the African people were traded as slaves. We were herded like cattle into the market which they referred to as slave markets. Time came, when the African people were divided and that is why you find that I am on the other side and the Rt. Hon. Wetang'ula is on this side. (*Laughter*) We were divided as if they were dividing a loaf of bread. We were not responsible for that. And as we fought, because colonialism was physical, the colonialists withdrew but have now come back in form of neo-colonialism. In fact, this time, they are now controlling us both physically and virtually.

Your Excellency, that is a serious threat to the African people and it is therefore our responsibility for those of us in the leadership of Africa to ensure that we insulate Africa against these disruptive forces. You have just given a number of examples but let me just bring out the two last points you mentioned about debt management and responsible sovereign lending. These are part of the disruptive forces. It is, therefore, our responsibility either to stand up to be counted or we are herded like they did before.

Your Excellency, we have three points that we would like to bring to your attention, for us to achieve our integration agenda. Our Mission and Vision rotates around deepening integration and widening cooperation but it will require us to make sacrifices if we are to achieve our integration agenda. I would like to bring to your attention three issues in as far as the

integration agenda of East Africa is concerned and you have talked about them. But while you were addressing us, you again gave us an assignment, that could someone summarise what you have said, blood started flowing from my head to the toes because I had been asked to move a vote of thanks and I wondered if I was not going to have a retake in this assignment. But let me put it this way. In East Africa, so far, as noted, we have made tremendous achievements but if it were a child, we have not even started crawling. This child is only starting to sit and that is where East Africa is.

One of the challenges which we have is about funding to the Community. Your Excellency, I am now serving my second and last term in EALA. For us, we only have two terms if you are lucky to be re-elected. When we joined in 2017, each Partner State was contributing US \$8.3 million which was not enough. As you are aware, some countries would pay on time and others would pay even much later meaning that, even the Community budget would be affected by the funding mechanism. Yet, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Republic of Kenya and to thank you, Your Excellency, because Kenya has always been at the fore of disbursement of the funds to the Community. As we talk now, Kenya has already contributed 100% of its share. So we thank you. But, this money has come down from USD 8.3 to USD 7.3 million.

Your Excellency, are we going ahead or we are driving in reverse? More institutions are being created and you have just tasked us here to ensure that the laws for fast-tracking the Monetary Union are done, which also necessitates us to create institutions for the same. Yet we are reducing the budget.

Your Excellency, what we would like to bring to your attention as a member of the Summit is that, much as we are aware that there is a sustainable funding mechanism that has been proposed, when you analyse it very well, it is just looking at how to generate the USD 7.3 million but not to increase it. We are, therefore, requesting that you reconsider this position to increase funding to the Community such that the organs and institutions are able to be facilitated well to promote the integration agenda. We request that you escalate this to your colleagues and we are sure that if you prioritise East Africa; you have just told us we shall have an expanded market and where there is market, there will be production, and where there is production there will be investment and therefore employment. All these hustlers where you also belong will be absorbed. We request that you prioritise East Africa.

Your Excellency, I informed you that we have three issues and now I am moving on to number two. This one is even yours. You are a champion of reforms. You have championed reforms at the UN, the African Union, the World Bank, to mention but a few. But now what happens to East Africa. We are requesting that you champion reforms also in EAC. *(Applause)* Those will entail:

- (i) We are aware that there is consideration of the Confederation Constitution but that is going to take time. You have just appealed to the colleagues from the Republic of South Sudan to ensure that they go and mobilise the population and governments to participate in their proposals. So we are proposing that as we work on the confederation constitution, we amend the Treaty to enable us work where we have not been able to work well.
- (ii) EALA is not autonomous. We are requesting that you make EALA autonomous such that we are able to have the power and the ability to bite. We are supposed to carry out oversight on the organs and institutions of the Community. But these are the very ones who are facilitating us and deciding when and where we go. So we end up becoming toothless - essentially, we are almost becoming toothless dogs because we can only bark but biting becomes a very big problem. The same applies to the EACJ. It is also not autonomous. To make matters worse they have even put us in the same building, EALA, EACJ and the EAC Secretariat which is the cabinet. Now, everytime you want to do oversight on the Secretary General, you collide with him in the corridor asking you what is happening and whether everything is okay. We need your support, Your Excellency.
- (iii) Your excellency we need to fast-track some of the things. We have achieved some levels of the Customs Union and the Common Market Protocol. EALA, Your Excellency, passed almost all the laws responsible for the implementation of the operationalisation of the Monetary Union Protocol. However some of the Bills were returned for re-consideration but we are ready to work on them. In fact, I am sure using your intelligence, you may have got wind of this - there is a social media hoax going around that EAC has introduced a single currency. The population out there is very excited about a hoax. Therefore, some of these things need to be fast-tracked.

Bernard Shaw remarked and said that progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Let us work on all those things that look like they cannot be changed. And you have demonstrated that you are a champion of change.

Your Excellency, for your information, when they were counting and tallying votes during the last Kenya Presidential elections, my wife and I did not sleep. We were following keenly and when you were announced as the winner, we celebrated. I do not want to say what followed next. So we have been admiring you. We are your supporters even though we are across. And if we had the opportunity to vote, we would have. But we are happy that you won and you are championing reforms and change. Let it be part of East Africa. You are already there but *yongeza moto*.

Lastly, it is about human resource in the EAC. Your Excellency, in each and every organisation, the human resource is the most important aspect. I want to bring this to your attention that there is need for all Partner States' Governments to ensure that when you are deploying people in the service of the Community, they should be people who are ideologically oriented and clear about the Vision and Mission of the EAC integration agenda. Otherwise, if we do not pay attention to whoever is deployed at the EAC, right from the Secretary General to the lowest cadre, we risk employing merchants who are simply going there to look for money. We risk employing corrupt people who will start squandering the little that there is. We also risk, in as far as East Africa is concerned, deploying collaborators.

When we were colonised, we had fellow Africans who collaborated and worked as agents of the slave traders, collecting people and taking them to the slave markets. Others worked together with the colonisers and we were colonised. That is the same scenario at the Community. The Secretary General is the focal point, the center and the accounting officer of the Community and the current holder is you, as Kenya, Mr President. So I want to implore you, Your Excellency, to take keen interest in ensuring that the Secretary General delivers to the expectations and aspirations of the people of East Africa. *(Applause)* Thank you very much. May God bless you and bless East Africa. One people! one destiny! That is the slogan that guides us, Your Excellency. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: That is Hon. Musamali. Your Excellency and honourable Members, before I adjourn, I would like to remind you that we have a photo session shortly after the sitting. The protocol team will guide us.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: I now adjourn this Special Sitting *sine die*.

The EAC Anthem

The Kenya National Anthem

(The House rose at 12.12 p.m and adjourned sine die.)