



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

IN THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

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

163rd Sitting – Third Assembly: Fifth Meeting – Fifth Session

Monday, 6 March 2017

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 11:30 a.m. in the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Rwanda in Kigali.

(Rwanda National Anthem)

(East African Community Anthem)

PRAYER

(The Speaker, Mr. Daniel Fred Kidega, in the Chair)

(The Assembly was called to order.)

PROCEDURAL MOTION

The Chairperson, Legal Rules and Privileges Committee (Mr. Peter Mathuki) (Kenya): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable members.

I move that this House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55(1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali, in the Republic of Rwanda.

I beg to move – *(Applause)*.

The Speaker: Thank you, honourable. Seconders? Hon. Dora Byamukama, hon. Kimbisa and all the members standing.

Hon. Mathuki, you may justify your motion in a very short time.

Mr Mathuki: Thank you. Your Excellency, Mr President, hon. Speaker, honourable Members -

“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 provides that the seat of the

Assembly shall be at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania and;

WHEREAS Rule 10 provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint and shall meet at least one in every year at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania and at a time to be determined by the Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE this Assembly do resolve as follows:

- 1. That pursuant to the provisions of Rule 10 stated above, the Assembly shall hold sittings in the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies from today 6 March 2017 up to Thursday 16 March 2017."*

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Peter Mathuki. Honourable Members, the motion before this Assembly is

This House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55(1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of our Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali in the Republic of Rwanda.

Debate is open.

Honourable Members, you know this is a tradition, and I think we are all unanimously in support of the motion. Allow me, therefore, to put a question to the motion moved by hon. Peter Mathuki, Chair, Committee of Legal Rules and Privileges-

That this House, pursuant to the provisions of Article 55(1) of the Treaty and Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure, do resolve to hold sittings in Kigali in the Republic of Rwanda.

(Question put and agreed to.)

The Speaker: Honourable members, amidst us today is His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. *(Applause)*

I have, in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty, invited His Excellency the President to address this Assembly.

I now would 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 Rwanda is desirable in accordance with the business now before the Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE it is with great pleasure and honour, on your behalf, members, to welcome the President of the Republic of Rwanda in this Assembly." *(Applause)*

REMARKS BY THE SPEAKER OF EALA TO WELCOME THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE TO MAKE HIS REMARKS

The Speaker: Your Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Rt. hon. Makuza Bernard, President of the Senate of the Parliament of Rwanda, the Chairperson and Council of EAC Ministers, honourable ministers of the Republic of Rwanda, the Secretary General of the East African Community, honourable Members of EALA, Members of the Senate and Members of the Chamber of Deputies

of the Parliament of Rwanda, Members of the Assembly emeritus, Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I wish to thank the Rt. hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate of Rwanda and, indeed, the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for accepting to host the Assembly for the entire duration of the Fifth Meeting, of the Fifth session. *(Applause)*

I, on your behalf, congratulate hon. Makuza for leading the Senate with much dedication and charisma since assuming the office or the position of the President of the Senate in October 2014. *(Applause)*

I vividly recall your subsequent election as President of the Senate, where you garnered 25 votes out of 26 votes cast then and with no opposing candidate. Rt. hon. Makuza, that very act was indeed a vote of ultimate confidence in your ability and leadership. *(Applause)* Over the last few years, I have observed with contentment the extreme passion and dedication you exhibit as you continue to offer leadership at the Senate.

Rt. hon. Makuza, your experience in leadership makes you a natural and perfect choice to lead the Senate, owing to your previous experience in top government roles, including that of being Prime Minister of this great Republic, Ambassador to Germany and to Burundi, and Senator, among many other roles you have held.

In many ways, you have gone the extra mile in creating avenues for the interface between the ordinary Rwandan and the legislature of Rwanda. This aspect has been extended to the region.

Rt. hon. Makuza has made tremendous contribution towards the Annual Inter Parliamentary Games of the East African Community, which is a key aspect of building relations between the Assembly and the national legislatures on the one

hand, and on the other hand, it serves to sensitise and create rapport with the citizens of the region.

I acknowledge your actual participation as captain of the Rwanda football team, although we missed you in Mombasa, where you did not come to dribble the ball like you always do – *(Laughter)*.

As EALA, we are proud of you. You have not let the legislators down, you have not let the Legislature of Rwanda down, you have not let the children, women, and men of this great nation down and you have not let the Republic of Rwanda down. *(Applause)*

I wish to commend His Excellency President Paul Kagame who in his wisdom continues to empower citizens in all spheres of life, including the likes of the Rt. hon. Makuza and many others, to make their contribution in nation building.

Rt. hon. Makuza, I am confident that under your leadership, the legislature of Rwanda in general shall continue to make significant contributions and achievements, and its role as the legislature in oversight and in representation will, indeed, be strengthened in this great republic. I can vouch that your contribution as the legislature of Rwanda in helping the country to achieve its development targets as envisioned in Vision 2020 will remain steadfast.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, EALA has recently revised the rules of procedure that govern the EAC Bureau of Speakers to include Speakers of the respective Senates in the Partner States. I am sure that we shall benefit from the experience and resourcefulness of the Rt. hon. Makuza as he joins the Bureau of Speakers to enable us intensify the linkages between EALA and the national parliaments.

EALA is truly grateful for the spirit of sisterhood, and looks forward to further

strengthening and solidifying the relations between the legislature of Rwanda and us.

Before I finish, permit me to note the fact that both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies are concurrently holding their sessions during this period. In a very special way, therefore, permit me to thank both, you, Rt. hon. Makuza, and the Rt. hon. Donatille Mukabaliza, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, for your magnanimity in according the regional Assembly an opportunity to have its sittings here in spite of your busy schedules. We shall be forever grateful for this – *(Applause)*.

I assure you of my unreserved support and the support of this Assembly, and I hereby wish you every success in the coming years. *(Applause)*

With these few remarks, I now take this opportunity to invite you, my brother and friend, Rt. hon. Bernard Makuza, to make your remarks. *Mheshimiwa, karibu. (Applause)*

The President of the Senate, Parliament of Rwanda (Mr Bernard Makuza): Your Excellency Pau Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, Rt. hon. Daniel Kidega, Speaker of EALA, honourable ministers, honourable Secretary General of the East African Community, honourable Members of EALA, I am very pleased to express to Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, the gratitude of the Parliament of Rwanda for honouring this occasion with your presence to address this special sitting of the EALA. *(Applause)*

On behalf of my colleagues, Members of the Parliament of Rwanda, I would like to welcome all EALA Members warmly to the Parliament of Rwanda.

We thank the leadership of EALA for convening this session in our capital city of Kigali, and we appreciate the resolution for the rotational sittings of EALA, which

enables regular interaction with the people of all the Partner States. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency the President, as we all know, this session of the EALA is held in Rwanda at a time when the Assembly is approaching the end of its term, and the process of electing a new Assembly is underway in the Partner States. The address to this Assembly by Your Excellency is therefore certainly going to be an opportunity to reflect on the route the Community has travelled during the past five years, and on how the organs of the Community and national institutions are playing their respective complementary roles. We take forward our vision of transforming the region into an integrated, prosperous and self-reliant Community serving the interests of our people.

The issue of integration and cooperation remains critical for all initiatives, activities and programmes of the Community in the framework of Vision 2050. The East African Community indeed has as its primary objective, to establish a Community reflective and responsive to the aspirations of its people in the context of globalisation. It will therefore be ineffective and inefficient to move forward, each Partner State in isolation on matters that concern our region and our continent as well, such as women empowerment, building happier and cohesive families, ensuring suitable and green environments, which are reflected on the agenda under the Bills to be considered.

It is a cause for pride that the Members of EALA, cautious of their position and drawing from their diverse experiences and backgrounds, have tried to advocate and promote the common good of the region. *(Applause)*

We thank the members of this Assembly for their contributions on critical matters of the Community, and we hope that their experience will continue to serve the

Community beyond their term of EALA.
(*Applause*)

At this juncture, I humbly would like to request this august gathering to take advantage of this privilege of being addressed by His Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, to guide all of us in our responsibilities to meet the aspirations and concerns of the people of East Africa.

I thank you, Your Excellency, and once again, I welcome our colleagues from EALA. (*Applause*)

The Speaker: Thank you, Rt. hon. Bernard Makuza for that wise counsel.

Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, Rt. hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate of the Parliament of Rwanda, Chairperson and Council of EAC Ministers, honourable ministers of Rwanda, the Secretary General of the East African Community, honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and of the Parliament of Rwanda, members of EALA emeritus, members of the diplomatic corps, senior government officials in attendance, representatives of the private sector and civil society invited, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I welcome you to address EALA at the commencement of the Fifth Meeting of the Fifth Session. On behalf of the Assembly, I thank you and the entire Government of the Republic of Rwanda for accepting to host the Assembly. (*Applause*)

At the onset, I wish you a progressive year, one full of good health, good tidings and prosperity as you lead this great Republic to greater heights. (*Applause*) EALA is pleased to be back again in the beautiful city of Kigali, which is effortlessly considered our second home.

At this plenary session, EALA seeks to debate on three Bills: the East African Community Polythene Materials Control Bill, 2016, moved by your own, hon. Patricia Hajabakiga; the East African Sexual and reproductive Health Rights Bill, 2016, also moved by your own, hon. Dr Odette, and the East African Gender Equality and Development Bill, moved by hon. Nancy Abisai, in addition to receiving many reports and motions in the House.

Your Excellency, the World Bank African Regional Integration 2016 Index lists East African Community as one of the top performing blocs in the continent. Such a positive scorecard calls on us not to entertain complacency but rather to redouble our efforts. This is something that the Assembly has always been keen on achieving.

Your Excellency, we are grateful to you for your support to the integration process, and for the greater and common good of the African continent. Indeed, you have been previously quoted as urging the continent not to let its history be written by others, but rather that we own our problems and, therefore, write our own story.

Recently on 13 February 2017 when addressing thousands of residents in Nyagatare district, you remarked, “*We were not created to remain poor. We may have a history of poverty but we must work to leave it in our past*” - (*Applause*). Those were your words, and we simply share into this wisdom. Both pronouncements are replicable in our context as we strive to consolidate the integration agenda. Time has come for the East African Community to draw on its collective economic, social and intellectual resources to address the eminent challenges we face as a Community.

Your Excellency, of equal importance is tolerance by Partner States within the framework of the integration process to tackle the region’s pursuit for peace and

security, drought, climate change, unemployment, and other pressing issues that we need to tackle.

Similarly, there is need to resolve the underlying currents preventing efficient and smooth operations of the Customs Union Protocol. Time and again, the East African citizens contend with bureaucratic processes, administrative restrictions, and misuse of the Rule of Origin principle, among others, which hampers implementation of the protocol.

There is need to embrace industrialisation by instituting positive trade related policies and frameworks that grant Partner States the right to nurture nascent industries in order to develop their competitiveness so that they can grow our economies.

The region is likely to benefit a great deal from the operationalization of the single customs territory resulting in increased intra-regional trade. In this regard, we must emphasise building investor confidence, not only of foreign investors but also of our local investors.

Your Excellency, on enterprise and creation of conducive environment to spur trade under the Common Market Protocol, the EAC is yet to realise harmonisation of its labour, employment, education and social policies, among others, despite the political will at the top.

EAC citizens need to enjoy the tangible benefits of the free movement of labour, services, goods and capital, as well as right of establishment. A few years ago, for example, the Republics of Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda abolished the work permit fees, thus encouraging workers to move freely in search of opportunities. The implementation of inter-state passes also promoted free movement of the citizens. We salute your leadership in this, and we appeal to other Partner States of Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania and the

Republic of South Sudan to follow suit. *(Applause)*

The harmonisation and approximation of laws in the EAC context is also fundamental. A report of the EALA Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges on an oversight activity on approximation of national laws in the Partner States adopted by the Assembly in November 2016 indicates that the Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Uganda have harmonised 10 laws, the United Republic of Tanzania has harmonised six laws, the Republic of Kenya four laws, and the Republic of Burundi three laws. Your Excellency, this is an area that we as an Assembly think we can do better to promote our integration.

With regard to the Monetary Union, EALA is keen to see the establishment of the East African Community Central Bank to backstop physical and monetary harmonisation. As an Assembly, we are ready to enact relevant legislation, including the EAC Monetary Institute Bill, the EAC Financial Service Commissions Bill, and the EAC Surveillance and enforcement Commission Bill.

Your Excellency, perhaps it is also time that the debate on the Political Federation, a stage we cannot wait to witness, is resuscitated. The Assembly would be keen to sensitise our citizens about our fourth pillar of integration, the political unity of our governments and people. *(Applause)*

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, a Pan Africanist and founding father of our great Community, while addressing participants on the topic of stability and change in Africa at a symposium at the University of Toronto on 2 October 1969 had this to say, "If a door is shut, attempts should be made to open it. If it is ajar, it should be pushed until it is wide open. In neither case should the door be blown up at the expense of those who are inside." That is the wisdom of our founding father.

Inevitably, differing levels of development among the Partner States, their respective economies, as well as differing policies in the various sectors have and will result in short term imbalances. However, it is the way we manage this asymmetry in the distribution of benefits and costs, and the sensitivity we demonstrate when they occur that will determine the constructive effects of our integration. *(Applause)*

It is necessary for EAC technocrats to shorten the long tapes associated with the bureaucracy and strive for service delivery. The Council of Ministers has, for example, instituted a matrix that reveals status of implementation of decisions arrived at for which we are very grateful to Council. *(Applause)* This is positive, but a more result-oriented approach is necessary. Ultimately, the integration process is steadfast, and there should be no going back.

Your Excellency, this is perhaps your last official speech to the Third Assembly before its dissolution on 4 June. Therefore, permit me quickly to present to you our scorecard, or report card, for the last five years as the Third Assembly.

We have passed 27 Bills, many of which are undergoing assent, we have debated and approved 80 reports, adopted 63 key resolutions, one key one was recently passed that Kiswahili be added to the official languages of the East African Community. Kudos to hon. Zein and hon. Shy-Rose who championed this.

Your Excellency, I wish, at this juncture, to congratulate the Republic of Rwanda for recently approving the use of Kiswahili as an additional official language.

We have received and processed five petitions, enhanced oversight of the EAC programme and projects, enhanced sensitisation activities to bring the citizens on board on integration, and we have

revised our Rules of Procedure to make our work more efficient.

Your Excellency, this report card was not devoid of challenges. We have worked under a very difficult work environment because of a few challenges, and specifically - in the interest of time - the funding challenges that the Community as a whole faces. These men and women you see before you, Your Excellency, have been working in committees without sitting allowance. I thank you for your sacrifice. *(Applause)*

The Community, not only the Assembly but also the Court, the Secretariat and the institutions are all facing unprecedented financial challenges that hamper our hard efforts to realise the integration agenda. I appeal to you, Your Excellency, in your leadership philosophy of efficiency, to talk to your good brothers in the Summit to make sure that Partner States remit their contributions to Arusha to enable the Secretary General do his work.

We appeal to you because we know your commitment to this integration agenda, and we salute the commitment of your brothers in the Summit to this agenda. Bureaucracies should not hold us back. The integration is a must, not an option.

Your Excellency let me now take the opportunity to congratulate you for steering the Republic of Rwanda to greater heights under your leadership. Rwanda enjoys peace and stability under your leadership. This is something that some citizens often take for granted. Peace and stability are the hardware and software for every nation. We thank you, sir, for stabilising this country. *(Applause)*

Rwanda has realised significant progress by investing in ICT, science and innovation as a springboard to growth and diversification of its economy in line with its Vision 2020. Over the years, the per capita GDP has moved more than three times to about

US\$1,700, outpacing bigger and more resource rich African countries. We congratulate you for this great achievement. *(Applause)*

The opening of the country's fourth national ... **Gipoa Tirukura** and that of the vast official facility, the Kigali Convention Centre are laudable. The Kigali Convention Centre has proven to be an icon and a signature for this great city. We thank you, Your Excellency, for your guidance, leadership style and governing philosophy, and most important, the mentorship you offer to many African young people. *(Applause)*

I wish you well as the Republic of Rwanda goes to the presidential polls in 2017. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, the Republic of Kenya will also elect new leaders in August. Kindly extend our message of good will to your colleague and brother, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya. This Assembly wishes him and his government well. *(Applause)*

Finally, I would like to thank you for sending a dedicated and supportive team of members to EALA under the good leadership of hon. Patricia Hajabakiga as the chairperson of the chapter. *(Applause)*

In addition to the Chairperson, hon. Patricia, the hon. Dr James Ndahiro, hon. Straton Ndikuryayo, hon. Dr Odette Nyiramirimo, and hon. Valerie Nyirahabineza have duly served their two terms and they are not legible for re-election. They are joining many others and me in retirement outside of EALA work.

Your Excellency, this has been a great team and I hand the team over back to you, sir. I urge them to continue to be good ambassadors of the integration process. *(Applause)*

Your Excellency, four other members, hon. Martin Ngoga, who joined us mid the term

but has caught up, hon. Oda Gasinzigwa, hon. Francoise Xavier Kalinda, and hon. Celestin Rwigema are still legible for re-election in the Fourth EALA. Your Excellency, as the headmaster, I have the pleasure to present to you their report cards. They all got distinctions, sir. *(Laughter)*

In the same breath, allow me, Your Excellency, to congratulate three historic members who are going to be institutional memory for the Fourth Assembly from the Republic of Uganda. They appeared clear of the controversy of democracy and they have won their election to be members of the Fourth Assembly. Hon. Chris Opoka is transiting to the Fourth Assembly, hon. Susan Nakawuki is transiting to the Fourth Assembly, and hon. Mukasa Mbidde is transiting to the Fourth Assembly. *(Applause)* Uganda has set the tone; 100 per cent return of the eligible. I know we can rely on Rwanda to send a very strong and committed team like the one we have been working with.

Your Excellency, before I invite you to address this Assembly, may I briefly introduce to you some of the dignitaries that we have invited. May I introduce to you your own, the President of the Senate of Rwanda, the ministers for EAC affairs led by the Rt. hon. Kirunda Kivejinja, the Second Deputy Prime Minister of Uganda, the honourable ministers of the Republic of Rwanda - may you please rise up for recognition - our good friend the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the rest, Ambassadors and high commissioners, especially of our great Partner States. May you rise up for recognition? We thank you for coming.

Allow me now to introduce my colleagues, the members of EALA. May I start with members from the Republic of Uganda? May you rise up for recognition? I thank you.

(Members from the Republic of Uganda rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members from the Republic of Kenya, may you rise up for recognition? I thank you.

(Members from the Republic of Kenya rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members from the United Republic of Tanzania, may you rise up for recognition? I thank you.

(Members from the United Republic of Tanzania rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members from the Republic of Burundi, may you rise up for recognition? I thank you for the spirit of East African integration.

(Members from the Republic of Burundi rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members from this great nation of Rwanda, may you rise up for recognition?

(Members from the Republic of Rwanda rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members of the Rwanda Chamber of Deputies, our honourable colleagues from this country, please may you rise up for recognition?

(Members of the Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Rwanda rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Members of the Senate, may you also rise up for recognition?

(Members of the Senate, Parliament of Rwanda rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: In a very special way, we would like to recognise our former Secretary General who is a member of the Senate now, hon. Dr Sezibera. We welcome you to the world of elected leadership.

(Dr. Richard Sezibera rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: I have not forgotten our great Secretary General who steers our administrative course at Arusha, hon. Ambassador Liberat Mfumukeko.

The Speaker: The Counsel to the Community, hon. Dr Anthony Kafumbe

(Dr Anthony Kafumbe rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: Former Members of EALA who come from this republic, our great friends who still bear our flag wherever they are, if you are present, can you rise for recognition? We thank them wherever they are. Our good friend, thank you.

(Former Members of EALA from Rwanda rose up for recognition)

The Speaker: The private sector who are represented here in the gallery, we recognise your presence. Members of the civil society and all those who have come to grace this occasion, we thank you for honouring our invitation.

Now, it is with great pleasure and honour, Your Excellency, that I take my humble responsibility to invite you to address this august House. Thank you, sir. I am humbled. *(Applause)*

The President of the Republic of Rwanda (Mr Paul Kagame): Rt. hon. Daniel Fred Kidega, the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Rwanda Senate, honourable ministers of the EAC, honourable members of the East African Legislative Assembly, the Secretary General of the East African Community, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I wish to start by welcoming you to Rwanda. Please feel at home. *(Applause)*

Honourable Speaker, thank you for the invitation to address this special sitting of the East African Legislative Assembly.

Rwanda's commitment to the East African Community for the last 10 years has heeded the Treaty, and it is stronger than ever. *(Applause)*

The East African Community members have worked together and significantly deepened regional integration. Much of this progress is because of political will and responding to the needs and aspirations of our people. People move more freely than ever before, the communication in the region has become more affordable and convenient.

It is easier to trade and do business with each other, and we are collaborating to expand energy and transportation infrastructure. All this has generated a good deal of excitement amongst our people, and in the markets as well.

East Africa is increasingly perceived as a region on the move. We have to continue to meet these high expectations. We therefore count on you - on the oversight role of our regional legislature - to help ensure that we maintain the momentum and stay on course.

The work before you reflects issues of concern to all East Africans such as gender policy, protecting children from abuse and providing appropriate reproductive health.

I also commend your work on the Polythene Materials Control Bill, among others currently under consideration. A clean and healthy environment is the priority for all. Prohibiting plastic bags is the policy that has worked well for us in Rwanda.

Collective action and harmonised policies will help us to manage the consequences of economic growth as we work to stimulate the manufacturing sector. I am happy, as has been mentioned, that Rwanda has adopted Kiswahili as an official language in line with one of the key resolutions of the East African Legislative Assembly – *(Applause)*. This is a logical move, which

brings Rwandans closer to our brothers and sisters in East Africa. More and more Rwandans are using Kiswahili, and the subject is being introduced in our schools.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the recently adopted decision to complete institutional reform of the African Union and to ensure that it is sustainably financed from Africa's own sources.

We urgently need an African Union that is fit for our purpose. Our continent must also have a strong and unified voice that clearly communicates the aspirations and positions of Africa on the global stage. The reforms agreed upon will bring us much closer to this goal if they are implemented without delay.

Of particular note for the EALA is the decision to direct more responsibility for the implementation of Africa's common development agenda to the regional economic communities. *(Applause)* To that end, a series of states decided that the annual July Summit of the African Union would be transformed into a coordination meeting with regional economic communities.

This means that greater contributions will be needed from all of you as East Africans, East Africa's legislators, both as strong advocates for the imperative of reform and urge champions for closer cooperation between East African Community and the African Union Commission.

However, whether at the continental or regional level, our goals will not be attained if we get lost in counterproductive divisions and prioritise narrow interests over the common good as we keep seeing in various conflicts. It is really about working together to advance everybody's interests. *(Applause)*

There are two tasks of this to keep in mind. First, when the good progress made internally by each country is aggregated,

the benefits are even better for everybody in our region. Second, there is no disadvantage from minding each other's business, which simply means taking our respective needs and interests seriously and adopting them as common. *(Applause)*

This is because integration is not a zero sum game. When we work together, we are all better. When we work against each other, everyone is worse off and the loser. So, let us empower our institutions to do what they are supposed to do in support of our collective prosperity. The East African Legislative Assembly clearly has an important role to play.

Napenda kumalizia kwa kuwakaribisha tena Rwanda na kuwatakia kila la heri katika wakati wote wanakilishi wa bunge la Afrika Mashariki kinachoanza leo. Asanteni sana. (Applause)

VOTE OF THANKS

The Speaker: Thank you so much, Your Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. It is quite refreshing to hear you speak passionately from your heart with deep belief in every single word that comes out of you. We thank you so much for the wise counsel. *(Applause)*

Just at the time when you tuned to the Kiswahili channel, I thought you were just beginning and we were just wishing that you continue, sir and irrigate us with your wise counsel. We thank you but on behalf of the Assembly, I would like to invite hon. Nusura Tiperu to move a vote of thanks to His Excellency and our guests on our behalf.

Ms Nusura Tiperu (Uganda): Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Your Excellency Rt. hon. Bernard Makuza, Speaker of Senate, Rt. hon. Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, the Secretary General of the East African Community, honourable ministers present, honourable members of Parliament, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Your Excellency, I want to thank to thank you for allowing me to use this presidential podium. I feel honoured.

Your Excellency, it is a tradition of Parliament that after giving remarks before the Assembly, one of us comes in to give a vote of thanks. I therefore want to use this opportunity to thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the chance to move a vote of thanks on behalf of all the members seated here, to His Excellency.

Your Excellency, the members of the Assembly are honoured to have you. It is a great honour because every time we call upon you to come and give us words of wisdom, you have always come, and you have always encouraged us to take on the integration agenda.

The members seated here are very excited. Every time we look at our calendar and we know that we are about to go to Rwanda, we get excited. Our experience in Rwanda is always different. Every time you come, you find a country with a people full of smiles. You enter Kigali airport and see the degree of professionalism and efficiency. In the hotels where we stay, we are always treated in a manner that we feel we should not go back. That experience makes us want to stay here forever. *(Applause)*

We do not leave before we eat some of the delicacies from Rwanda, including taking some of the things like *Akabanga* and many others that I will not go into.

Your Excellency, we want to thank you in particular but also allow me to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating you in having taken up the reforms of the African Union. We know that you are busy and you would have opted not to accept but you accepted it, and for us as East Africa, we feel proud. *(Applause)*

We feel that you have honoured our forefathers to take the agenda for a united Africa forward because the East African integration is a stepping-stone towards a united Africa. So, with you at the helm of the reforms at the African Union, we believe that East Africa will take the lead in ensuring that we get to a united Africa faster.

This is also an opportunity as Africans, for us to work together as a people at a time when other countries are getting inward looking. You have heard the remarks from countries like America, and so it is time for Africa to be proud of its people, to mobilise and to ensure that we do everything that we can to make Africa proud and to get back to compete with the rest of the world.

The members gathered here wish to congratulate you because we know how far Rwanda has come. We remember the many years back when we entered Rwanda, we

saw a population that had been dilapidated due to genocide, but today when we come to Rwanda, we see visible improvements. When I speak about Rwanda, I speak from the heart. Whatever I say is something that I have seen. So, it is not a matter of just praising but your progress is indeed commendable in its entirety. In the East African Community, we look at Rwanda as one of the countries that has taken off. We could say that Rwanda is competing with the world.

Your Excellency, allow me to congratulate you based on the scorecard that the Speaker has read. I am sure that in the docket of the Secretary General it is clear that you have led in the implementation of the decisions of the EAC.

Your Excellency, a case in point is that while the Members of the Summit of the East African Heads of State are grappling with the issue of second hand clothes, Rwanda has led the way by banning the importation of second hand clothes. We therefore call upon the rest of East Africa to follow what Rwanda has done so that we can have our region having our home-grown industries emerging.

Your Excellency, we are proud of you because of your focused leadership. You are an action-oriented man; you have zero tolerance for corruption.

Your Excellency, we got an opportunity to go to Nyabugabo at the Bus Park, and I saw what was happening. Business is booming. I decided to transport one of my items to my mother in Uganda, and I was assured that I will only be given a reference number and within a few hours, whatever I needed would be found in Kampala as long as I gave my mother the reference number. This is an indication that the ICT revolution has not only remained in the town centres, but it has even gone down to the local population.

I also got an opportunity to go to the Rwanda-Burundi border over the weekend, and I happened to pass a place called Getera. When I looked at the manner in which the environment was managed, I saw a location befitting someone to settle there.

I would like to congratulate Rwanda for the manner in which you have managed your environment – (*Applause*). Every time we enter the airport, whatever polythene bag you may have is removed from you, an indication that you do not only talk but whatever is said is put in force. We are forced to leave our polythene bags at the airport, and we pray that that kind of enforcement should be undertaken by the entire region. You have protected Rwanda's environment and saved the entire East Africa because countries that are not doing so will end up depending on the environment of Rwanda to be able to sustain the population of the rest of East Africa.

We are proud of Your Excellency. As we move on Rwanda Air, we meet a number of passengers who seem to be using Rwanda as a connecting point. To me, Rwanda has now become the second Amsterdam in East Africa – (*Applause*).

As travellers in the region, we are constantly faced with issue of loss of properties, among others, but when you go to Kigali airport, it is one of the airports where if you lost your parcel or wallet, you would find it intact. (*Applause*)

Your Excellency, the East African Legislative Assembly thanks you, once again, for having given equal opportunities for both women and men. Your progress on the side of women is visible. The women of Rwanda now feel that they are part of the development. Your laws on family protection are excellent, and I pray that the next EALA will ensure that we get a regional law on family protection, borrowing from Rwanda as a model.

Members seated here wish to thank you for joining your comrades in the region and sending your peace forces to support our other African nations that are grappling with issues of security. A case in point is Sudan and Liberia, among others. One unique thing that we get from Rwanda is the manner in which your peace-keeping forces have behaved in the countries where they have gone. They have taken the Rwanda module of supporting communities, building bridges instead of breaking them, a module that has left Rwanda admired by the rest of Africa. *(Applause)*

Indeed, all our Partner States have been urged to ensure that we implement the Millennium Development Goals but I want to make it clear that my colleagues are very happy with Your Excellency because Rwanda is one of the few countries in Africa that has fully implemented the Millennium Development Goals and now has embarked on Sustainable Development Goals.

We still support you, and we are proud of you because of your home-grown solutions to issues. For example the *Umuganda*. The members seated here will be here for two weeks, and I believe that we will be able to participate in one of your activities of *Umuganda*.

We continue to be proud of you for the Girinka Programme, the Umurenge Programme, and the *Gachacha* courts, among others. We recently heard you talking about the kind of foreign aid that you wish for Rwanda, and I want to say that that should be the kind of foreign aid we need to ask for East Africa, aid that can be used to transform the population instead of leaving the population more burdened than before.

Your Excellency, I can say a lot, but in conclusion, I wish to say that we were very proud when Rwanda came up with its Vision 2020. You had an ambitious plan to transform the community, to empower the

women, to build an economy that was admirable by all, to transform the agriculture sector, and we thought it was just a dream but as we speak, whatever was planned in Vision 2020 has been realised, an indication that you just do not talk but you ensure that you fulfil what you say. *(Applause)*

I also want to end by congratulating the people of Rwanda. They have been solidly behind you. They have walked with you and they are committed to you, a sign that when a population is determined to follow their good leader, everything happens.

Rwanda is a success story, we are proud of you once again. I wish to bring you greetings from Uganda where I come from. I will not say much because you know the people of Uganda love you very much. I just wish to conclude by sending you greetings from the rest of East Africa but all the achievements that are visible in Rwanda could not be done without the support of the Rwanda Patriotic Front under your able leadership, Your Excellency. *Asanteni sana. (Applause)*

The Speaker: Thank you so much, Your Excellency. With those few words from hon. Tiperu, *Mheshimiwa Rais, tunaomba tuseme kama bunge ati asante sana.*

We are very grateful for your presence here, and I thank you, hon. Tiperu, for that insight on our behalf. Thank you so much.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker: Before I adjourn, I wish to make the following announcements. We will move from here after adjournment for a photo session. His Excellency has been gracious enough to allow us have a photo session with him. After the photo session that shall be directed the Sergeant-at-Arms, we will go for a cocktail party. His Excellency has tried so much, within his very busy schedule, to give us this moment this morning and afternoon but he will not join us in the cocktail. However, we shall

continue with the rest of the leadership of this great republic in the cocktail party. We are very grateful.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: I now adjourn the House to tomorrow at 2.30 p.m. The House is adjourned, thank you.

The East African Community Anthem

The Rwanda National Anthem

(The House rose at 12:45 p.m. and adjourned to Tuesday, 7 March 2017 at 2.30 p.m.)