



EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

For Immediate Release

EAC Speakers' Bureau concludes its Extraordinary Meeting in Arusha, approves 16th Edition of the Inter-Parliamentary Games to be hosted by EALA in Arusha

ARUSHA, Tanzania — June 12, 2026 — The Bureau of Speakers of the East African Community successfully concluded its Extraordinary Meeting on June 12, 2026, at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, with landmark decisions on the hosting of the 2026 Inter-Parliamentary Games, approval of a digital registration system, and urgent deliberations on the financial sustainability of the Community.

The meeting was convened following the inability of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the current Chair of the Bureau, to host the 21st regular session previously scheduled for May 2026 due to ongoing political processes. Chaired by **the Rt. Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi**, Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Kenya, the session brought together Speakers and representatives from across all Partner States, both physically and virtually. Participants included delegations from Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the East African Legislative Assembly.

A call for urgent action on regional integration

In his opening remarks, Speaker Kingi underscored the gravity of the moment, calling on the Bureau to move with urgency on preparations for the 2026 East African Inter-Parliamentary Games, describing them as a flagship event that has become a powerful symbol of regional unity.

"These Games have evolved into much more than a sporting event. They are a powerful symbol of regional integration, solidarity and friendship among our legislatures. They embody the resilience and enduring commitment of our parliaments to strengthen the bonds that unite the peoples of East Africa," said Kingi. "However, with regard to this year's event, I must reiterate that time is not on our side. We are already at the halfway point in the year, and preparations ought to move into a higher gear."

2026 Inter-Parliamentary Games: EALA to host in Arusha

After extensive consultations and careful consideration of scheduling constraints faced by previously designated hosts of the 16th Inter-Parliamentary Games, the United Republic of Tanzania, due to congested schedule. the Bureau resolved that the 16th Edition of the East African

Inter-Parliamentary Games will be hosted by the East African Legislative Assembly in Arusha, Tanzania, in December 2026 as a fallback position. South Sudan expressed their inability to host the games due to ongoing national preparations for its first post-independence elections, scheduled for December 2026.

The Bureau then directed EALA to prepare an indicative budget and communicate it to all national parliaments by June 26, 2026. Partner State legislatures will share the costs to ensure the successful organization of the Games.

The **Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana**, Speaker of EALA, welcomed the decision. "The Inter-Parliamentary Games are a vital platform for promoting unity, friendship, solidarity, cultural exchange, and regional integration among East African legislators and parliamentary staff. Hosting them here in Arusha, at the heart of the Community, carries deep symbolic meaning," he said.

The Bureau also discussed a proposal to hold the Inter-Parliamentary Games biennially in future, aimed at enhancing planning, reducing financial pressures, and improving predictability in hosting arrangements.

Digital registration system approved

In a significant step towards modernization, the Bureau approved the rollout of a digital registration application developed by Mr. Amos Kimanthi to modernize participant management and improve administrative efficiency in organizing the Games. The system will provide end-to-end registration and credential management, real-time results tracking and reporting, automated scheduling and certification features, and multi-device accessibility with secure access controls.

Speaker Kingi commended the developer, Mr. Amos Kimanthi of the National Assembly of Kenya, for his contribution. "Once adopted, the application will ensure efficiency, reduce manual errors, and provide a seamless experience for all national delegations," Kingi said, pledging support from the Parliament of Kenya in the validation process.

Financial crisis threatens EAC stability

A significant portion of the proceedings was devoted to what Speaker Kingi described as a growing financial crisis facing the East African Community, driven by persistent budgetary shortfalls arising from delayed and unpaid contributions by some Partner States.

"Reports indicate that the EAC Secretariat is facing severe financial constraints, with operational funds nearly exhausted, resulting in challenges such as unpaid retirement benefits and staff layoffs," he warned.

The Bureau expressed deep concern over the financial constraints affecting the Community and took note of the recent decisions by the Summit of EAC Heads of State, including the adoption of a new funding formula. Critically, the Bureau noted that from December 2027, EALA Members will be remunerated by their respective national parliaments, with the EAC covering allowances

only — a reform that will require legal and administrative action at both regional and national levels.

Kingi called for stronger collaboration between the legislative and executive arms to ensure the Community's financial sustainability. "Our parliaments must work hand in hand with the executive to secure the future of the EAC. The decisions we make today will determine whether this Community thrives or falters," he said.

New leadership, renewed commitment

The meeting served as a platform to welcome newly elected Speakers to the Bureau. Speaker Kingi extended congratulations to the **Rt. Hon. Mussa Azzan Zungu** of Tanzania, the **Rt. Hon. Joseph Ngere Paciko of South Sudan**, and the **Rt. Hon. Jacob Markson Oboth** of Uganda on their assumption of office, expressing confidence in their contributions to the regional agenda.

The Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana echoed this sentiment. "I welcome our newly elected colleagues and assure them of the Bureau's full support. Their leadership will undoubtedly enrich our consultations and strengthen regional legislative cooperation," he said.

Delivering remarks virtually on behalf of Uganda, the **Rt. Hon. Thomas Tayebwa**, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, conveyed greetings from Speaker Jacob Markson Oboth and expressed gratitude for Uganda being selected to host the highly successful 2025 edition of the Games. "The 2025 edition set a high benchmark for the region, and we are proud to have contributed to the legacy of these Games," he said.

South Sudan: Solidarity despite constraints

The **Rt. Hon. Joseph Ngere Paciko**, Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, addressed the Bureau in his first participation since assuming office in April 2026. While reaffirming his country's unwavering commitment to the EAC, he explained that national preparations for South Sudan's first post-independence elections made it impossible for the country to host the Games.

"Although South Sudan possesses the infrastructure and willingness to host this event, the demands of preparing for our nation's first post-independence elections require every available national resource," Paciko stated. He pledged that South Sudan would send its largest-ever delegation to participate and proposed innovative measures to ease financial pressures, including a temporary cost-sharing arrangement, increased private-sector sponsorship, and a reduction of the Games' duration from ten to five days.

"We remain unwavering in our commitment to the principles and objectives of the EAC. I am confident that our deliberations here will strengthen parliamentary cooperation and contribute to the successful organization of the 2026 Inter-Parliamentary Games," he concluded.

Rwanda calls for strengthened parliamentary diplomacy

The **Rt. Hon. Gertrude Kazarwa**, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of Rwanda, commended the Chairperson for convening the extraordinary meeting and urged all parliaments to intensify their engagement with citizens on the objectives of regional integration. "It is essential that we prepare our respective parliaments to participate actively in the 2026 Games. This is not merely a competition; it is a celebration of our shared destiny as East Africans," she said, while also congratulating Uganda for the resounding success of the 2025 edition.

Institutional reforms and future meetings

The Bureau committed to the ongoing review and final validation of its Rules of Procedure to strengthen institutional stability, streamline decision-making, and clarify governance frameworks. Adoption and validation of the revised rules will be deferred to the next ordinary meeting for comprehensive consideration.

The Bureau agreed that the next ordinary meeting will be held in Arusha, Tanzania, at the end of August or early September 2026.

Looking ahead

The Extraordinary Meeting concluded with a renewed sense of purpose among the region's parliamentary leaders. Speakers reaffirmed their collective commitment to advancing the aspirations of East Africans through parliamentary diplomacy, cooperation, and shared action.

As Speaker Kingi put it in his closing remarks: "A finalized set of rules, modernized systems, and the unifying power of sports will ensure that the bonds of unity across East Africa continue to strengthen. Our parliaments remain fully committed to the goals of the East African Community."

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