**DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING FORESTRY LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND TRADE (FLEGT) IN EAST AFRICA**

**(Dr. Ally-Said, MATANO)**

So far the Lake Victoria Basin Commission has been spearheading the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade since 2006 on behalf of the East African Community Secretariat. A number of key outputs have been realized. In the workshop held on 27th to 29th May 2013, in Nairobi Kenya on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance, with the theme “*moving the East Africa FLEGT agenda forward*, the workshop was informed that under the stewardship of the process by the Commission, relevant information and constructive mechanisms for evaluating and rationalizing FLEG process in the EAC region had been generated. A number of studies, roundtable consultations and analysis have provided useful lessons in understanding the EAC FLEGT initiative. The workshop strongly recommended the development of a regional FLEGT strategy which is envisaged to set out sustainable development of Forestry and related natural resources to effectively respond to socio-economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities in the region.

As a way forward, the LVBC/EAC secretariat, Partner States and relevant stakeholders were urged to commence work on:

1. Domestication of the Yaoundé (2003) Ministerial declaration and subsequent adoption by the Council of Minister of the East African Community;
2. Development of the Regional East African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (EAFLEG) Strategy to guide the EAFLEG process;
3. Adoption and approval of the strategy for implementation by the EAC Council of Ministers; and
4. Resource mobilization for the implementation of the EAFLEG Strategy.

Participants to the Experts Meeting to Develop EA FLEGT Strategy in Moshi, Tanzania

The Commission on 13 – 14 January 2014, held a joint meeting with the EAC Secretariat to among others share updates and develop terms of reference for developing a regional FLEGT Strategy. The meeting agreed on a roadmap towards development of the Strategy. On resource mobilization, the Commission is engaging with the Government of Finland to support through the Partnership Fund, the development and implementation of the Strategy. Once finalized and approved by the Council, the Strategy is anticipated to guide development of a regional forestry programme for EAC.