



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY RT. HON. MARGARET NANTONGO ZZIWA,
SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE ADDRESS BY RT. HON. ROSE
MUKANTABANA, SPEAKER OF THE RWANDA CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES
– APRIL 16, 2013, KIGALI, RWANDA**

**Your Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of
Rwanda;**

Rt. Hon Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo, President of the Senate;

**Rt. Hon. Rose Mukantabana, Speaker of Rwanda Chamber of
Deputies;**

Your Lordship Sam Rugege, the Chief Justice of Rwanda;

Hon Shem Bageine, Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers;

Hon. Ministers of Rwanda;

The Secretary General of the EAC;

Hon. Members of EALA and Chamber of Deputies and Senators;

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners;

Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish first of all to thank Rt. Hon. Rose Mukantabana, the Parliament of Rwanda and indeed the entire Government of the Republic of Rwanda for accepting to host us here at the Parliament of Rwanda once again.

The relations between Parliament of Rwanda and EALA are very cordial. I am proud that both Assemblies are pulling together as we collectively learn from each other and we are building ties across the Community. We consider the precincts of Parliament here as our second home and we have a sense of belonging whenever we sit in Kigali.

Allow me thus to thank Rt. Hon Mukantabana who has graciously offered us the use of the facilities of her Parliament. Such a move exemplifies the warm friendship both Assemblies share and is a gesture of the magnanimity of Rt. Hon Mukantabana. We are truly grateful.

The Rt. Hon. Mukantabana is a very active Member of the Bureau of the EAC Speakers, the umbrella body which the National Assemblies are using to spearhead and intensify the linkages of EALA and the National Assemblies as stipulated in Article 49 (2) and 65 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. As the current Chairperson of the Bureau of the EAC Speakers, Rt. Hon Mukantabana has continued to oversee the increase in interactive activities like the Inter-Parliamentary Games and on the proposal to establish the East African Parliamentary Institute (EAPI).

I must admit I admire the person of Rt. Hon Mukantabana for her leadership style, political philosophy, soft spoken, gracious but always firm. When the annals of history are written, Rt. Hon Mukantabana shall definitely grace the pages of history of modern times. I recall nostalgically that when Rt. Hon Mukantabana was elected in October 2008, she was the first woman Speaker in the Great Lakes region to become a Parliamentary Speaker. I later discovered that in addition, she was the sixth female Speaker in the Continent and the 31st in the whole world. These are remarkable facts to behold.

As the Presiding Officer of the House, she is already spearheading reforms including the introduction of radio broadcasts of Parliamentary proceedings and we expect much more to come in the near future. I congratulate the Parliament of Rwanda and wish her well.

On a personal note, let me thank Rt. Hon. Rose Mukantabana for the sisterhood she showed me when I assumed the Office of the Speaker. She warmly welcomed me to the Speakers Bureau and gave me many useful tips to ground me in this precious office. Indeed, she has always received me personally in this capital of Kigali.

Allow me also to appreciate the invitation extended to me to join Rwandans to celebrate the 50 years of Independence, giving me and EALA the opportunity to share the joyous memories of a nation breaking the colonial shackles. This was a great opportunity and congratulations once again.

I am aware that the Republic of Rwanda shall be holding Parliamentary elections in September this year. I wish Rt. Hon Mukantabana as well as all Parliamentarians and Senators all the very best.

Finally, My family and I cannot forget the honour you bestowed on me on 22nd September, 2012 when you joined us and presided over our thanksgiving prayers for God's providence. That left an indelible mark on our hearts. As Chairperson of Speakers' Bureau then, this was beyond the call of duty. I was humbled.

With these few remarks, I now take this opportunity to invite my very good friend, the Rt. Hon. Rose Mukantabana, Speaker of the Parliament of Rwanda to make her remarks.

Karibu Mheshimiwa Spika

April 16, 2013