



## **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON. MARGARET NANTONGO ZZIWA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE ADDRESS OF H.E. YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA - JANUARY 21, 2014, KAMPALA, UGANDA.**

**Your Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda;**

**Your Excellency the Vice President of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi;**

**Hon. Phyllis C. Kandie, the Chairperson, Council of Ministers of EAC,**

**The Hon. Ministers and Members of the Council of Ministers,**

**The Secretary General of the East African Community,**

**Hon. Members of the East African Legislative Assembly,**

**Hon Members of the Parliament of Uganda,**

**Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,**

**Heads of EAC Institutions and Agencies,**

**The IGP and the Commissioner General of Prisons,**

## **Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Your Excellency, I warmly welcome you to the Chamber of the Parliament of Uganda on the occasion of the Special Sitting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of EALA. At the outset, allow me on behalf of all EALA Members to wish you a prosperous and progressive New Year 2014. I wish you good health and God's blessings as You continue to lead the Republic of Uganda and the EAC region to achieve their desired levels of integration.

**Your Excellency:** Let me register the Assembly's sincere and deepest appreciation to You and to the Summit of the EAC Heads of State for your outstanding leadership. We laud the Summit's significant contribution in spearheading EAC's extraordinary growth and performance as a pre-requisite to unparalleled development.

Individually, Your Excellency, this subject of integration is a matter that is close to your heart. As servants of the people, we are also firm believers in the cherished and long-held dream of a Politically Federated East Africa and we are certain this shall one day come to reality.

I thank you for your unwavering support to EALA. Indeed, since May 2008, when you first addressed the Assembly in Arusha, you have continued to offer us wise counsel. We are eternally grateful to you for continuously sparing your time to attend and participate in our EALA Programs. Early June, 2013 you officiated at the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Seminar (Nanyuki Series) in Entebbe. Only, less than a month ago, you graced the occasion of the finals of the EALA Inter-Parliamentary Games at Namboole Stadium. This was an important activity of EALA and we thank you.

Taking a cue on your attendance at the Inter-Parliamentary Games and from the few minutes of the soccer artistry that you displayed, I want to report that the Parliament of Uganda challenged EALA in an entertaining final to win the coveted trophy. I congratulate the Parliament of Uganda for the feat; but not without a word of caution

that this year, we as EALA, shall put up a stronger defence! I also congratulate the netball team for their exemplary performance in bagging the silver medal. I acknowledge all Partner States' teams and players for upholding this approach to integration.

**Your Excellency:** I similarly take the opportunity to salute, the Speaker, Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga, albeit in her absence, for her continued support to EALA. I am informed that Rt. Hon Speaker is attending a Global Commonwealth Speakers' conference in New Zealand while Hon Jacob Oulanyah, Deputy Speaker is also away in the United States of America on official Mission. Nevertheless, Your Excellency, the relations between the Parliament of Uganda and EALA are cordial and warm. Our Sitting here today is confirmation of the sign of true friendship and commitment to the EAC integration process. I humbly request the Parliamentary Commission to convene our warmest appreciation to the Speakership.

Allow me Your Excellency to congratulate you on the successful Summit held in Kampala on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The signing of the Monetary Union on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2013 was an important landmark, signifying the entry of the third tier of integration. I wish to congratulate the Summit of Heads of State, the Council of Ministers and our Partner States' technical teams for this historic milestone.

A number of activities are envisaged including attainment of macro-economic convergence targets, economic and financial integration and fiscal discipline amongst others; – all of which shall enable the EAC to be more competitive.

It is however important for the EAC to draw upon the experience and lessons learned from other regions and to manage the roadmap to the single currency carefully. It is in our best interest to consult widely as a region to avoid what befell the Euro Zone - which today, continues to reel from economic depression, huge public debts and unemployment.

Today, the EAC can lay claim to be the fastest growing economic bloc in the continent and the world, the challenges notwithstanding.

**Your Excellency:** I am pleased to note that the region has started to keenly address some of the Strategic bottlenecks that you pointed out in your speech to the Assembly in June last year.

Allow me to applaud a number of the positive accomplishments that have started notably, the EAC's Infrastructure program which has registered a boost with notable investors recorded in Rail, Energy, Ports and Harbors' sub-sectors. The construction of the Standard Gauge railway that has commenced on the one hand and in Kenya the concerted efforts being made to decongest the Ports of Mombasa and Dar es Salaam on the other hand is a big step in the right direction.

The EAC has further sustained efforts to rid existing NTBs as has been evidenced by the reduction of police roadblocks along the Northern Corridor. Though we commend this initiative, we recommend the involvement of all stakeholders if it is to be sustained. We advise the Private Sector for example, to devise mechanisms that hold the EAC accountable to her commitments, since the emergence or re-emergence of some of the NTBs arise from the passive or active complicity on the part of the business community. They could for example, oversee an industry developed, implemented, monitored and sanctioned code of conduct that checks out on NTBs or their re-emergence.

On the part of EALA, I am pleased to report with satisfaction that the activities for both Committees and the Plenary are on course and undertaken as planned. On legislation, the Assembly has so far enacted 7 key Bills. I congratulate you Your Excellency for signing **5 of the 7** Bills that have so far been brought before you.

EALA also received oversight reports of its various Committees, posed several questions to the Council of Ministers and debated, prior to passing over 20 Motions and Resolutions.

Our work was further punctuated by oversight visits to the EAC Institutions, Programmes and projects in the region. As the year 2013 came to an end, EALA held a series of oversight activities covering the following institutions of the EAC - Lake Victoria Basin Commission, East African Development Bank (EADB), the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA), the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and the East African Civil Aviation Academy (Soroti Flying School).

Members were also able to visit other organisations which provide significant services to the EAC, including the Kibos Sugar Factory in Kisumu and the Quality Chemicals Industries in Kampala. These elucidated the achievements that can be registered between private and public collaboration.

Allow me to share with you some of the major concerns noted during the visit.

At CASSOA, we were informed of the necessity for the aviation sector to harmonize the aviation laws and the unifying of the air space. We urge Your Excellency and the Summit to direct the unifying and liberalization of the air space given its strategic demeanor to enhance safety, adequacy and the reduction of costs to stimulate development in the region.

For the Soroti Flying School, we salute the Government of Uganda for the support and resources given towards its facelift including the availability of improved equipment. We also laud the Management's efforts to resuscitate the institution, which was a few years ago on the verge of collapse. But your Excellency, we again call for the transfer of the East Africa Civil Aviation Academy back to the EAC to be one of the Institutions of excellence. This would help in enhancing training in the

aviation industry, currently depleted due to the high costs of tuition and aviation machinery like aircrafts.

The EADB today is vibrant and plays a critical role in the financial and development sectors of EAC. But we call on the harmonization of its Membership with the Treaty Art. 9(3) so that it is recognized as a true institution of the EAC. This is also the same case for the LVFO. The Summit should urgently direct the Council of Ministers and the EAC Secretariat to operationalise 'the deeming' of these institutions and to re-align them into the realm of EAC operations.

As part of its representative function, EALA similarly contributed to the discourse on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by hosting a major continental Conference for the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat (GPH) in Arusha in August 2013. Legislators at the conference reiterated the need to take the Habitat Agenda to the next level as a panacea for unrelenting growth in the region and continent. The unplanned cities and deplorable housing conditions in the EAC were further noted to negate the objectives of the Common Market Protocol.

**Your Excellency;** Given our region's optimistic nature, we look forward a number of developments in 2014. We want to term this year a "year of deliverables". Such must include: the reinforcement of the Single Customs Territory (SCT) which I believe, would reduce cargo clearing costs by half, since the transit bond fees along the corridor would be scrapped.

This year, we also expect to see much more progress with regards to the free movement of citizens. The Common Market Protocol has also received a major boost - following the agreement on the use of Identity Cards as travel documents within East Africa for citizens of the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. We look forward to the full realization of this initiative. This move takes place in support

of the anticipated completion of the preparations and the procurement of the “next generation Internationalized East African Passport” which will be issued in 2015.

**Your Excellency:** During this Plenary, we intend to transact the following business:

- First Reading of the EAC Co-operatives Societies Bill, 2013
- Debate on three Bills: the EAC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Bill, 2012, the EAC Integration (Education) Bill, 2014 and the EAC Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2014
- debate and adopt various Committee Reports that shall be brought to the floor of the House.

We note your support towards EALA to undertake the sensitization role of the citizens of East Africa which is also in line with our EALA Strategic Plan (2013-2018). We are going to embark on this activity this year albeit with budgetary constraints. I am happy to report that the initial leg in Kenya has received some support from the Government of Kenya. We also call on your support so that we can intensify on this activity.

I wish to assure you of the Assembly’s commitment in 2014 in its quest to realize its mandate.

**Your Excellency:** As I wind up my remarks, I congratulate you on Uganda’s steady economic growth arising from a number of capital reforms, stability and a vastly improved infrastructure. We also congratulate the NRM Party and Government on its 28 years of good leadership to be celebrated this 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

We also acknowledge your contribution towards ensuring that peace and security are maintained at the EAC and the ICGLR regions. We fully support all your initiatives to deploy forces to conflict prone zones to ensure peace is maintained. The recent deployment of UPDF in Juba, South Sudan is timely since this was part of the

agreement during the Nairobi IGAD talks but more fundamentally because Uganda has an obligation to stop the conflict from degenerating any further.

Finally, Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure and honour that I execute my humble duty to welcome Your Excellency to address this August Assembly, today, Tuesday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of Jan 2014.