



THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

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

48th SITTING – SECOND MEETING – THIRD SESSION: FIFTH ASSEMBLY

Monday, 23rd June, 2025

*The East African Legislative Assembly
met at 12.44 p.m. virtually*

PRAYER

(The Speaker in the Chair)

(The Assembly was called to order)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker: Hon Colleagues, Good Afternoon! We had a Commission meeting in the morning, ahead of our Plenary Sitting this afternoon.

Honourable Members, I attended the Official Opening of the 5th Session of the 11th Parliament of Uganda and State of Nation Address by H.E. President Yoweri Katuta Museveni on 5th June 2025 in Kampala, Uganda. I was accompanied by the Hon. James Kakooza.

Allow me in a special way to appreciate the Rt. Hon. Annet Anita Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, for always honoring and inviting EALA to such

special national events, a symbol of strong unity that exists between EALA and our sister legislatures. Other Speakers present at the event in Uganda were as follows; the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the DRC and the Speaker of Senate, Kenya.

I recognize the Members and staff who serve the Committee on General Purpose. They have been working extremely hard despite the time constraints and challenges associated with online meetings, as opposed to the physical meetings. There has been connectivity challenge.

I would also like to inform you that I have been invited by the Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania to attend the parliamentary session during which H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan is expected to dissolve the current Parliament on 27th June, 2025 in Dodoma, Tanzania.

Honourable Members, during our Commission meeting today, the Chairperson of the Committee on General Purpose informed us that they have considered documents of more than 1,300 pages on the budget.

However, they have not had time to consider the Supplementary Budget due to time constraints. They therefore requested for more time to consider the Supplementary Budget. The Committee was granted more time. Therefore, we will have our plenary sittings until 14th July, 2025 as we have extended the period of time.

With that, let us proceed to the next order.

THE EAC BUDGET SPEECH FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026

The Speaker: Chair of the Council of Ministers, move the motion.

The Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers (Hon. Beatrice Askul Moe, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of East African Community (EAC), ASALs and Regional Development (Kenya): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do resolve itself into –

1. A Committee of Supply to consider and approve the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2025/2026; and
2. A Committee of Ways and Means to consider and approve the Financial Statements for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The Speaker: Do you have seconders?

The Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers (Hon. Beatrice Askul Moe, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of East African Community (EAC), ASALs and Regional Development (Kenya): Mr Speaker, yes, I do.

(Seconded by the Council to the Community, Hon. Dr. Anthony Kafumbe,

Hon. Caroline Rwivanga Kayonga, Hon. François Ngate Mangu)

Honourable minister, you can proceed to read the budget speech.

The Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers (Hon. Beatrice Askul Moe) (Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of East African Community (EAC), ASALs and Regional Development) (Kenya): Mr Speaker, I beg to present the budget speech for the FY 2025/2026. The theme is Theme: Inclusive Economic Transformation through Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Resilient Strategic Investment for Job Creation and Improved Livelihoods.

I. Introduction

Mr Speaker Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly resolves into a House Committee to debate and approve the proposals by the Council of Ministers for the Budget of the East African Community for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The theme of this year's budget is: Inclusive economic transformation through domestic resource mobilisation and resilient strategic Investment for job creation and improved livelihoods.

Mr Speaker, in this Budget Speech, I shall present the following:

1. An overview of the region's economic performance and outlook;
2. Review of EAC Programme Performance for Financial Year 2024/2025 and the sector priority areas for Financial Year 2025/2026;
3. The Audit report for the Financial Year 2023/2024; and

4. A highlight of global priority areas; expected outcomes; budget proposals and assumptions for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

II. Economic Performance and Outlook

Mr Speaker, despite ongoing global challenges-including geopolitical tensions, climate change, and shifts in international aid- the EAC economies demonstrated resilience, achieving an average growth rate of 5.5 per cent in 2024. This outpaces both the global average of 3.3 per cent and the Sub-Saharan Africa growth rate of 4 per cent. The outlook for 2025 is even brighter, with projected growth rate of 5.8 per cent, driven by robust performance in agriculture, construction, and services sectors, supported by sound policies and macroeconomic stability.

III. Review of EAC Programme Performance for the FY 2024/2025 And Priorities for the FY 2025/2026

Mr Speaker, this August House approved a Budget of USD114,425,882 for the Community for the Financial Year 2024/2025 on 29th June, 2024. Subsequently, Supplementary Appropriation Bills amounting to USD 5,386,753 were tabled for consideration and approval. The performance on implementation of the above Budget by the EAC Organs and Institutions, as well as the plans for the FY 2025/2026 are as follows:

3.1. EAC Secretariat

3.1.1. Customs Union

Mr Speaker, trade remains the cornerstone of our regional integration. In 2024, the EAC's total trade with the rest of the world

increased by 14.17 per cent to USD 124.9 billion, up from USD 109.4 billion in 2023. EAC exports grew by 24.72 per cent to USD 56 billion, while EAC imports rose by 6.83 per cent to USD 68.9 billion. Intra-EAC trade also expanded by 9.35 per cent to USD 15.2 billion.

a) Implementation of the Single Customs Territory

Mr Speaker, we have made significant strides in implementing the Single Customs Territory. The enhanced Centralised Information Sharing Platform now supports the digital exchange of electronic Certificates of Origin across Partner States streamlining cross border trade, reducing errors, and strengthening regional integration.

b) Blueprint for the Achievement of the Customs Union

Mr Speaker, to further consolidate the Customs Union, the Community is implementing a comprehensive Blueprint aimed at deepening integration, harmonising legal frameworks, and improving trade facilitation. It prioritises practical outcomes such as faster clearance of goods, enhanced compliance, reduced trade costs through coordinated reforms and capacity support.

c) Strategic measures to enhance Intra-EAC Trade

Mr Speaker, during the Financial Year, 47 Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) were reported, of which 16 were resolved. The remaining NTBs are at various stages of resolution. The Community is committed to eliminating these barriers to unlock the full potential of regional trade.

During the period under review, the 24th EAC Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Trade Fair was held in Juba, South Sudan. The trade fair attracted over 1,500 exhibitors from across the region and facilitated business-to-business deals, underscoring the vibrancy and potential of our small businesses.

Mr Speaker, to inspire excellence, quality management and product excellence among EAC enterprises, the Community awarded 12 enterprises from various sectors across the Partner States with the 2024 EAC Quality Award.

Mr Speaker, in the FY2025/2026, the Community will:

1. Enhance trade facilitation through simplification, automation of processes, promote EAC Partner States' exports to external markets including accelerating the roll out of the full Customs Union;
2. Support Partner States in the Implementation of key priority measures in the EAC Regional Trade Policy and enhance Cross-Border E-Commerce;
3. Strengthen the monitoring and elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers and free movement of services;
4. Strengthen Quality Infrastructure (standardisation, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation) to facilitate innovation, industrial development, consumer protection, Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise

participation in the Intra EAC Trade and MSMEs Development.

3.1.2. Common Market

- a) Tracking the implementation of commitments under the EAC Common Market Protocol

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2024/2025, the Community continued to monitor progress of Partner States in revising national laws to comply with the EAC Common Market Protocol. I am pleased to report that the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Uganda waived work/residence permit fees for all EAC Citizens, a significant step towards labour mobility.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/26, the Community will continue to undertake regulatory reforms in compliance with Common Market Protocol commitments.

b) Infrastructure Development

Railways

Mr Speaker, the railways sub-sector experienced growth at the national and regional levels during the FY 2024/2025. The 460km Dar es Salaam-Dodoma Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) line is now operational, carrying up to 1,000 passengers, while construction progressed on the Dodoma-Isaka, Isaka-Kigali, Tabora-Kigoma, and Uvinza-Musongati segments to enhance rail connectivity between Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. Tanzania and Burundi secured USD 650 million from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to construct the multinational Uvinza-Musongati-Gitega SGR section (367kms).

Parallel developments in the Northern Corridor included enhancements and planned extensions to the Naivasha-Kisumu SGR line. Across the Community, 1,120kms of SGR are operational in Kenya and Tanzania; 1,100km are under construction in Tanzania; and 275kms Malaba-Kampala section was launched in Uganda. The technical standards for inter-operability of the EAC Railway Network have been revised reflecting the Community's commitment to efficient and integrated rail transport.

Roads

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, under the roads sub-sector, to strengthen and expand the East African Road Network, construction continued in sections of 3 multinational road projects, totalling to 1,013 kilometres, comprising of the Malindi - Mombasa - Lunga -Tanga - Bagamoyo Road (400kms) in Kenya/ Tanzania; the Masaka - Mutukula (90km) / Mutukula - Kyaka & Bugene - Kasulo - Kumunazi roads (218 kms), in Uganda/ Tanzania; and the Nyakanazi - Kasulu - Manyovu Road (305kms) in Tanzania/ Burundi.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Community will continue with efforts to mobilise resources for the development of new multinational road projects in the Partner States. In the railways sub-sector, priority will be given to extending the SGR along both the Northern and Central Corridors to enhance regional connectivity.

Civil Aviation and Airports

Mr Speaker, the Community continued with the harmonisation of policies and

regulations to promote the development of safe, reliable, efficient and economically viable civil aviation.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Civil Aviation and Airports Sector will focus on the following key priorities:

1. 1. Implementation of the African Single Air Transport Market (SAATM) in the EAC Region;
2. Implementation of the EAC Upper Airspace Seamless Operation Project Phase II;
3. Operationalisation of the Regional Aircraft Accident Investigation, Search and Rescue; and
4. Implementation of EAC Satellite-Based Augmentation System.

Meteorology

Mr Speaker, the Community continued to support meteorological infrastructure to enhance Early Warning Systems for severe weather incidents such as thunderstorms, floods and strong winds.

In FY 2025/2026, the Community will focus on developing strategies aimed at transforming meteorological services, producing more accurate and timely weather forecasts to support socio-economic sectors, and monitoring climate change.

Communications

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the Republic of Burundi commenced implementation of the One Network Area (ONA) Roaming Framework, hence joining the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of

South Sudan, the Republic of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Community will develop the EAC Roaming Regulations and Cross-border Interconnection Regulations to facilitate EAC citizens. The Community will also focus on the development of policies for ICT Authorisation, e-Waste Management, Universal Access, and e-Commerce.

c) Productive Sectors

Agriculture and Food Security

Mr Speaker, Article 108(c) of the Treaty and Article 38(1c) of the Customs Union Protocol provide for harmonisation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures to facilitate trade within the Community and with other trading partners. In line with the above Articles, the Community adopted the EAC Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Strategy (2024 - 2034).

Mr Speaker, as part of measures to address the Transboundary Animal Diseases and zoonoses, the Community adopted the EAC Strategy for Prevention and Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses (2024 - 2034). The overall objective of the strategy is to safeguard human and animal health, as well as the livelihoods of farming communities, from the threat of Transboundary Animal Diseases and zoonoses.

Mr Speaker, to harmonise the registration of veterinary products, the Community adopted the EAC Harmonized Guidelines for Testing and Registration of Veterinary Ectoparasiticides.

Mr Speaker, under Article 14 of the EAC SPS Protocol, Partner States committed to cooperate on plant health, including pest management, surveillance, risk analysis, and reporting. In line with this, the Community adopted the EAC Pathway-initiated Pest Risk Analyses (PRAs) for banana, cassava, potato, and sorghum. The aim is to reduce phytosanitary trade barriers and prevent the spread of pests in the region.

Mr Speaker, for FY 2025/2026, the agriculture sector will focus on:

1. Enhancing coordination and implementation of harmonised regional policies to boost sustainable agricultural production, productivity, and intra-regional trade; and
2. Strengthening regional and national systems to manage transboundary crop and animal pests and diseases.

Industrialisation and Small and Medium Enterprises Development

Mr Speaker, the region continues to undertake monitoring, evaluation and corrective actions towards implementation of the leather sector strategies and action plans.

Mr Speaker, during FY 2025/2026, under the industry sector, the Community will focus on the following areas:

1. Development of a Local Content Policy for all industrial sectors; and
2. Operationalisation of industry platforms, including those for Cotton, Textiles and Apparels, Leather and Leather Products, and the Automotive Industry.

Energy Sector

Mr Speaker, a Tripartite MoU for the Nsongezi Hydropower Project was signed by the Republic of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Uganda in February, 2025.

Feasibility studies for the Republic of Uganda's power interconnectors with the Republic of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania were completed.

Mr Speaker, the 11th East African Petroleum Conference and Exhibition was held in Dar es Salaam in March 2025, attracting over 1,400 delegates. The conference called on Partner States to adopt modern technologies in Oil and Gas Sector to facilitate transition to clean energy. The 12th East African Petroleum Conference and Exhibition will be hosted in the Republic of Rwanda in March 2027.

Mr Speaker, in FY 2025/26, the Community will continue implementing priority energy projects, finalise development of the regional Energy Efficiency Policy and Compliance Framework, and develop a green hydrogen energy policy.

Environment and Natural Resources

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2024/2025, the Community continued to take concerted measures to foster co-operation in the joint and efficient management and sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

In the FY 2025/2026, the priorities for the Environment and Natural Resources Management Sector will be to:

1. Review of the EAC Climate Change Policy and Strategy;
2. Develop the Regional Carbon Credit Trading Framework; and
3. Develop the EAC Regional Framework for Implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions.

Tourism and Wildlife Development

Mr Speaker, the Community continued to implement the EAC Tourism Marketing Strategy during the period under review. Notably, the new EAC Tourism Destination Brand, 'Visit East Africa – Feel the Vibe', was launched for the global market at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany in March 2025.

The Community continued to implement the free online EAC Tourism Capacity Development Programme, offering courses in tourism marketing, sustainable tourism, hospitality management, and tour guiding. Approximately 1,000 participants have been trained and certified, enhancing service quality and professionalism in support of joint tourism promotion efforts.

Mr Speaker, for the FY 2025/2026, the sector's priorities will be to:

1. implement the EAC Classification Criteria for Tourism Accommodation Establishments;
2. promote the EAC Tourism Destination Brand at regional and international tourism fairs; and
3. establish 3 trans-boundary wildlife conservation areas networks.

d) Social Sectors

Labour and Immigration

Mr Speaker, the Community has continued to accelerate efforts to facilitate labour migration across the region. In this regard, the Community adopted the EAC Labour Migration Policy and its Implementation Plan. The primary objective of this policy is to support Partner States in harmonising national frameworks on migration governance and social protection and portability of social security benefits.

Mr Speaker, the Community adopted the EAC Regional Consultative Process Five-Year Action Plan on Migration. The plan focuses on aligning and further integrating Partner States on matters related to migration.

In the FY 2025/2026 the sector will focus on the development of policy instruments and programmes to facilitate the free movement of labour and persons.

Gender and Community Development

Mr Speaker, during the period under review, the Community successfully developed the guidelines for Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework, the EAC Social Protection Policy and its Action Plan, and the Regional Strategy on Women in Business for Socio-economic Development.

In the FY 2025/2026, the key priorities will be:

1. Implementation of the Youth Policy;
2. Implementation of the EAC Social Protection Policy and its Action Plan;

3. Development of a Regional Strategy on Women in Business for Socio-economic Development; and
4. Training of staff on mainstreaming gender in the implementation of EAC Programmes and Projects.

Culture and Sports

Mr Speaker, to further promote socio-cultural integration, the Community will continue to prioritise the organisation of the 6th Edition of the EAC Culture Festival (JAMAFEST), convene the 2nd Edition of the EAC Games, and develop a regional strategy for participation in the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), which will be hosted in our region for the first time.

Health

Mr Speaker, to ensure sustainable regulation of medicines within the Community, the Community adopted the EAC Medicines Regulatory Harmonisation Sustainability Plan.

As one of the key priorities for the FY 2025/2026, the implementation of the Sustainability Plan will focus on strengthening quality drug registration procedures; pharmaceutical production standards, good medicines procurement practices, and ensuring that medical products in the EAC market conform to regionally agreed scientific evidence-based standards.

Mr Speaker, the Community continues to strengthen and prioritise its capacity to combat communicable and non-communicable diseases in the region. Accordingly, in December 2024, the

Community launched Phase III of the EAC Regional Network of Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases Project.

The project will focus on strengthening laboratory capacities on pandemic prevention and response in line with the One Health Approach. It will support the operationalisation of an EAC Regional Centre of Excellence for Virology at the Uganda Virus Research Institute, Entebbe, Uganda; and facilitate the integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia into the established EAC Mobile Laboratory Network.

Education, Science and Technology

Mr Speaker, the Summit has continued its tradition of recognising and awarding prizes to Secondary School winners of the annual EAC Essay Writing Competition. The competition forms part of the broader EAC outreach programme, designed to engage students in Community activities and foster a strong East African identity. During the 24th Ordinary Summit held on 30th November, 2024, the winners of the 2023 edition received their awards.

Mr Speaker, to facilitate young learners to acquire basic knowledge in statistics in Primary Schools and to harmonise teaching curriculum across the region, the Community adopted the EAC Statistics Curriculum for Integration into the Harmonised EAC Primary School Education Mathematics Curriculum. The Curriculum includes instruction materials tailored for teachers working with learners who have special educational needs, including visual, hearing, and

physical impairments, as well as learning disabilities.

In the 2025/2026 Financial Year, the sector will roll out and train teachers on the EAC Statistics Curriculum and will review the existing Mutual Recognition Agreements for Engineers, Accountants, Architects and Veterinarians to conform to Annex VII to the EAC Common Market Protocol.

3.1.3. Monetary Union

a) Cooperation in Statistics Harmonisation and Development

Mr Speaker, to support informed policy formulation and decision-making in the region, regional socio-economic statistics for the Community were compiled and disseminated on the EAC Statistics Portal.

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2025/2026, the focus will be to:

1. Support infrastructure development for regional statistics training centres through procurement of ICT equipment and construction of a multi-purpose hall at the Eastern African Statistics Training Centre (EASTC);
2. Compile and disseminate harmonised socio-economic statistics on the EAC statistics portal; and
3. Support the Partner States to adopt modern tools for data dissemination and sharing.

b) Implementation of the Roadmap for the East African Monetary Union (EAMU)

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2024/2025, the Community continued to implement the revised Roadmap for the realisation of

the East African Monetary Union, and the following achievements were recorded:

1. The Community adopted a comprehensive framework for coordinating monetary and fiscal policies to support the establishment of the Monetary Union.
2. To modernise and integrate payment systems across the region, the Community adopted the EAC Cross-Border Payment System Master Plan, which outlines key strategic initiatives for modernising and integrating payment systems in the EAC region.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Community will prioritise fast-tracking of the operationalisation of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI). The EAMI is a cornerstone institution envisioned to play a central role in steering the region towards the establishment of the East African Monetary Union (EAMU).

c) Implementation of Payment and Settlement Systems in the region

Mr Speaker, the EAC Secretariat has continued to support the Partner States' Central Banks in implementing secure, efficient and reliable payment and settlement systems to ensure the efficient flow of transactions within the EAC region through the EAC Payment and Settlement System Integration Project (EAC-PSSIP).

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the EAC-PSSIP will:

1. Provide connectivity to the East African Payment System (EAPS) for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia

by implementing interfaces/messaging platform required to link their respective Real-Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) to EAPS;

2. Support the harmonisation of payment and settlement system regulatory frameworks; and
3. Review Partner States' National Payment Systems (NPS) laws.

3.1.4. Political Federation

a) Political Affairs

Mr Speaker, the Community upholds electoral democracy as the corner stone of regional political transition and stability. In July 2024, the Community successfully deployed the EAC Electoral Observation Mission to the Republic of Rwanda during the general elections, which were conducted peacefully and successfully.

In the FY 2025/2026, the Community will deploy Election Observation Missions to the general elections in the United Republic of Tanzania in October 2025 and the Republic of Uganda and Republic of South Sudan in 2026.

b) Peace and Security

Mr Speaker, Peace and Security remain prerequisites to socio-economic development and are vital for the attainment of the objectives of the Community. In October 2024, the Community enhanced cross-border cooperation and peaceful co-existence among border communities affected by unresolved border disputes through the Peace Caravan initiative at the Tri-Junction of the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of South Sudan.

In the next FY, the Community plans to extend the Peace Caravan initiative to other border areas and communities with unresolved border issues.

Mr Speaker, the Community played a pivotal role in restoring peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo through high-level Summits and the joint AU/EAC/SADC Coordination Mechanism, thereby laying a strong foundation for the ongoing peace process.

In the FY 2025/2026, the Community will focus on enhancing coordination with sister Regional Economic Communities and continental and international partners to facilitate the peace process, contributing to sustainable peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire region.

c) International Relations

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform you that following the Federal Republic of Somalia's accession as a full member of the Community, the Community adopted a roadmap to guide its integration into the EAC.

The priorities for FY 2025/2026 will include finalising the roadmap for integrating the Democratic Republic of the Congo into the EAC, developing the EAC Diaspora Policy, as well as a Regional Framework on Return and Reintegration of Stranded Migrants Originating from EAC Partner States.

d) Defence Sector

Mr Speaker, the Defence sector contributed towards the peace process in

eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo through key engagements of EAC Chiefs of Defence Forces, Joint EAC-SADC Chiefs of Defence Forces and Joint EAC-SADC Ministers.

The top priority for the FY 2025/2026 for the Defence Sector will be to enhance regional peace and security as the cornerstone for establishing the EAC Political Confederation.

3.1.5. Cross-Cutting Sectors

a) Information and Communication Technology

Mr Speaker, the Community commenced the implementation of the Eastern Africa Regional Digital Integration Project aimed at advancing digital market integration in the region. The project aims to increase affordable access to regional broadband connectivity and strengthen the enabling environment for cross-border digital services.

In the FY 2025/2026, the priorities will be to: integrate EAC ICT Systems; harmonise and develop Regional Cybersecurity and Data Protection frameworks, and strengthen the enabling environment to support digital integration in the region.

b) Planning

Mr Speaker, during the period under review, the Community undertook a Mid-Term Review of the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22–2025/26). The Review assessed progress across strategic priorities, highlighted key achievements, and identified implementation challenges. It also provides actionable recommendations to enhance

performance and guide targeted interventions for the remainder of the Strategy period.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the Community adopted the Second EAC Research Agenda (2024/25–2025/26) to guide research efforts in addressing regional priority needs. The agenda aims to strengthen evidence-based decision-making and consensus-building to accelerate the implementation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy and the EAC Vision 2050.

Mr Speaker, the Community is in the process of formulating the 7th EAC Development Strategy, which will succeed the current Strategy ending in June 2026 and cover the period 2026/27–2030/31. Additionally, a mid-term review of the EAC Vision 2050 will be undertaken to assess progress on strategic priorities.

c) Visibility and Sensitisation Programmes

Mr Speaker, the Community continued with the empowerment of media practitioners from all the Partner States with the knowledge and skills required for accurate and informed news reporting on the integration. In this regard, in November 2024, the Community trained 40 journalists from the Partner States.

Mr Speaker, the Community celebrated its Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years since its establishment, with the highlight being the 24th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State on 30th November, 2024 in Arusha, Tanzania. Commemorative events took place at both national and regional levels, led by respective Ministries responsible for EAC Affairs in each Partner State. Throughout the celebrations, the

Community used this milestone as an opportunity to raise awareness among EAC Citizens about the progress and achievements made on the journey of regional integration.

Mr Speaker, the Community's social media presence has witnessed remarkable growth, with 10,000 new X (Twitter) followers this year, expanding our audience and digital footprint. The EAC Facebook page experienced substantial engagement, with 5,000 new likes, over 5,000 shares, and an uptick in comments, reflecting growing public interest in EAC content. This growth is a testament to the Community's effective digital engagement strategy and the increased visibility of integration initiatives.

In the FY 2025/2026, the priorities will be to: implement the EAC Communication Policy and develop the EAC Communication Strategy 2026/2027 – 2030/2031.

d) Cooperation in Legal and Judicial Affairs

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the Community adopted:

1. Amendments to Article 137 of the Treaty to provide for French and Kiswahili as the official languages of the Organs and Institutions of the Community, in addition to English; and
2. Amendments to Article 132 of the Treaty to provide for the budget of the Community to be funded by the Partner States, based on the financing formula adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State.

These amendments were approved by the 24th Ordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State in November 2024 and are awaiting ratification by the Partner States.

Mr Speaker, the Summit also adopted Annex VII to the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market on the Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications which provides a framework for Partner States to mutually recognise the academic and professional qualifications obtained in other Partner States and will facilitate free movement of labour in the Common Market.

Mr Speaker, to enable customs administrations operate more efficiently, the Heads of State assented to the EAC Customs Management (Amendment) Act, 2022. The amendments also included increase in the amount of allowable personal effects or baggage for travellers from USD 500 to 2,000.

Mr Speaker, the Community adopted the EAC Assembling and Manufacturing of Products Regulations which will facilitate development of assembling and manufacturing of products and similar specific provisions relating to motor vehicles and motor cycles in the Community.

The Community also adopted the EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill which was introduced in the Assembly for debate and enactment. The Bill which is anchored on Article 106 of the Treaty, seeks to provide for seed certification, testing and marketing to facilitate and create an enabling environment for private sector seed multiplication and distribution.

Mr Speaker, with regard to Competition Law and Policy, the Summit finalised the Assent to the EAC Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 which has now been published in the EAC Gazette as an Act of the Community. Additionally, the Community adopted comprehensive Rules to promote consistency and enhance transparency in the handling of anti-competitive complaints, investigations and other competition-related matters by the EAC Competition Authority. The Partner States also agreed on Regulations to facilitate the sharing of fees between the EAC Competition Authority and the competition authorities of the Partner States arising from mergers and acquisitions notified to the Authority.

The Community also approved the Principles for Harmonisation/Approximation of Partner States Laws relating to Investment. The principles will be applied by Partner States to reform and harmonise their laws on investment in accordance with the EAC Common Market Protocol.

Mr Speaker, the priorities for the FY 2025/2026 will include:

1. Finalising the Framework on Investigation of Breaches of the Treaty, Amendment to the Rules of Procedure of the Policy Organs and the Schedule of Sanctions;
2. Finalising amendments to the Protocols relating the Establishment of the East African Kiswahili Commission and the Inter-University Council for East Africa; and
3. Developing legal instruments on cross-border data transfers and harmonisation of cybersecurity legal frameworks of the Partner States.

e) Resource Mobilisation

Mr Speaker, the Community mobilised support from Development Partners to complement the Partner States' contributions for the FY 2025/2026 and beyond by securing funding to the tune of USD 75.4 million. This comprised USD 41.4 million as direct support, USD 32.2 million as indirect grants and USD 1.8 million as Technical Assistance, all of which were signed between July 2024 and June 2025.

Mr Speaker, despite this support, it is important to note that global trends are showing shifting priorities in budgetary allocation for overseas development assistance by all development partners currently working with the EAC.

Mr Speaker, in view of this shifting landscape, the Community is exploring innovative financing models that will focus on sustainable domestic mobilisation of resources.

In the FY 2025/2026, the Community will focus on the development of a new Resource Mobilisation and Partnership Strategy that will re-invigorate meaningful and robust engagements with Development Partners.

3.2. The East African Legislative Assembly

Mr Speaker, the Council appreciates the contribution of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) in furthering the objectives and ideals of our integration process. In line with the legislative, oversight and representative functions, EALA registered the following achievements in the FY 2024/2025:

1. The Assembly held one physical plenary meeting, one special sitting and one virtual special sitting.
2. The Assembly granted leave to introduce three (3) Private Members' Bills, namely: the East African Community Prevention and Control of Transboundary Animal and Zoonotic Disease Bill, 2024; the East African Community Medical Products Bill, 2024; and the East African Community Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation Bill, 2025;
3. Under its oversight function, the Assembly adopted a number of recommendations aimed at improving the overall performance of the Community in the implementation of the integration agenda.
4. The Assembly also approved the EAC Budget for FY2024/2025 within the required time frame.

Mr Speaker, the Assembly was honoured to receive one (1) Member of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State during its rotational sitting in the Republic of Uganda. His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni called for political integration as a means to strengthen the bloc, emphasizing principles of patriotism, socio-economic transformation, and democracy.

With the aim of building stronger ties between Members of EALA and EAC National Parliaments, EALA convened the 14th Inter-parliamentary Games in December, 2024. The games were officiated by H.E. William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Assembly has prioritised the enactment of legislation geared towards furthering and deepening the EAC integration process and three (3) Bills, returned to the Assembly, that are a prerequisite for the establishment of the East African Monetary Union.

The Assembly will also embark on other activities including: development of the EALA Strategic Plan (2027-2032); and convening the 16th Edition of the EAC Inter-Parliamentary Games.

3.3. The East African Court of Justice

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2024/2025, 79 matters were filed before the East African Court of Justice. The Court has continued to witness goodwill by the Partner States in implementing the Court's decisions, which builds confidence among East Africans with regard to respect for the rule of law and justice delivery in the region.

The Court has also seen a considerable increase in its case backlog. The case backlog increased from 265 matters in FY 2022/2023, to 328 matters in FY 2024/2025.

The Court has continued to successfully hold its Annual Rotational Court Sessions and its Annual Judicial Conferences in the Partner States, with the aim of bringing the Court closer to the people and stimulating high-level conversations and discussions on emerging jurisprudence, issues affecting Courts and Court users. The Court successfully held its Annual Rotational Court Session and its 3rd Annual Judicial Conference in Kigali.

Mr Speaker, during the period under review, to enhance its collaboration with various key stakeholders, the Court concluded Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with:

1. Sudreau Global Justice Institute of Pepperdine University to advance the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms within the East African Court of Justice; and
2. African Legal Information Institute, Faculty of Law at the University of Cape Town, to advance the digitisation and dissemination of EACJ jurisprudence.

The Court together with the East African Law Society (EALS) launched the inaugural EACJ Bar-Bench Forum in March 2025. The Inaugural EACJ Bar-Bench Forum established a foundation for ongoing reforms and deeper collaboration between the Bar and Bench, and to strengthen the rule of law and regional integration across the East African Community.

Mr Speaker, the Court's priority interventions in the FY 2025/2026 are to: reduce the case backlog; enhance the skills of Judges and staff for efficient delivery of justice; and enhance collaboration with other regional and international Courts.

3.4. Lake Victoria Basin Commission

Mr Speaker, the construction of the regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Mwanza, is 88per cent complete. The Centre will provide reliable search and rescue services on Lake Victoria.

Mr Speaker, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) spearheaded the 13th Mara Day celebrations in September 2024 in Sekenani, Narok County, Kenya, where environmental experts from Kenya and Tanzania jointly committed to a strategy to protect the Mara River basin.

Mr Speaker, the construction of the second phase of the LVBC Headquarters stands at 85per cent and is expected to be completed by September 2025.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Commission will focus on:

1. Implementing integrated water resources management investments, including water supply and sanitation;
2. Enhancing the maritime communication network coverage on Lake Victoria to improve search and rescue services and trade; and
3. Strengthening the institutional framework for cooperative management in the transboundary water and shared ecosystems.

3.5. Inter-University Council Of East Africa

Mr Speaker, the construction of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) Headquarters stands at 87per cent, with completion expected in the FY 2025/2026.

IUCEA continued to facilitate academic mobility among higher education institutions. During the period under review, 32 academic staff members were successfully supported to undertake physical mobility assignments across Partner States.

Mr Speaker, to expand the scope of the scholarship programme with Kyungdong Global University (KDU), IUCEA concluded an amendment to the existing MoU to include beneficiaries from the Federal Republic of Somalia and increase the total number of scholarship slots to 40 for the EAC region. The programme will now incorporate a 4th academic course in Artificial Intelligence.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, IUCEA will focus on:

1. Implementation of the Common Higher Education Area;
2. Completion of IUCEA Headquarters by August 2025;
3. Launching of the AI technologies in teaching, learning and research in all EAC Partner States together with IUCEA member universities;
4. sensitisation activities on integration of new member states into IUCEA programmes, especially in the new partner states of the DRC and the Federal Republic of Somalia;
5. Rolling-out the 2nd cohort of the East African Community - Student Mobility Scheme (EAC-SMS) scholarship programme; and
6. Developing a successor Strategic Plan (2026-2031).

3.6. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025 the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation (LVFO) registered the following key achievements:

1. Advanced the promotion of solar light technologies and developed a policy guidance on solar lights and net panelling in order to ensure efficient harvesting of Dagaa on Lake Victoria;

2. Developed an EAS 826 standard as a benchmark for placement of high-quality Mukene/Omena/Dagaa on the market to enhance its human consumption at regional level;
3. Coordinated enforcement operations on Lake Victoria addressing fisheries illegalities, improving compliance and ensuring sustainable fishing practices; and
4. Undertook skills development for private sector in fish farming, fish processing technologies and innovations for cherished fishery products.
6. Regional training for women and youth in handling, value addition and safety of fish and fishery products.

3.7. Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency

Mr Speaker, the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) registered the following achievements in the FY 2024/2025:

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026 LVFO will focus on:

1. Enhancing the usage of solar technologies for increased quality and safety of small fish;
2. Developing a regional fish maw trade protocol to streamline fish maw trade and enhance benefit sharing;
3. Undertaking collaborative programmes for community-based pilot fish protection in critical fish habitats, targeting increased adoption and sustainability of critical fish species;
4. Piloting innovative Vessel Monitoring Systems in Lake Victoria to inform sustainable management of fisheries resources;
5. Engaging stakeholders on the use of aquaculture platforms for data collection, basic skills and linkages; and
1. Updated and submitted to Partner States for Promulgation of Model EAC aviation safety and security regulations and technical guidance materials in accordance with the latest Amendments to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annexes;
2. Rolled out critical oversight platforms such as Safety Oversight and Flight Information Application (SOFIA) version 3 and the Regional Common Examination System (PEX03) across Partner States towards strengthening regional harmonisation and digital transformation; and
3. Inaugurated Africa's first regional Centre for Aviation Medicine in Nairobi, Kenya, to enhance aeromedical certification, human performance and aviation safety across the EAC Partner States.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, CASSOA will focus on the following priorities:

1. Undertaking a comprehensive gap analysis study for the elevation of CASSOA to a Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) Level II;

2. Amending Model EAC Aviation Safety and Security regulations and technical guidance materials in accordance with the latest Amendments to ICAO Annexes;
3. Coordinating Regional Capacity Building to enhance Aviation Personnel Competencies in Partner States; and
4. Coordinating the automation of Aviation safety oversight processes in Partner States Civil Aviation Authorities.

3.8. The East African Kiswahili Commission

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC) registered the following achievements:

1. The EAKC spearheads the celebrations of the World Kiswahili Language Day on 7th July annually in the Partner States. The 3rd World Kiswahili Language Day celebrations in the EAC were held in Mombasa, Kenya. The celebrations provided a platform for more than 300 stakeholders to exchange knowledge, share experiences and enhance awareness on the importance of Kiswahili language in promoting peace and unity in diversity;
2. Published and launched a book Kiswahili na Wingi-Lugha: Ufanisi kwa Pamoja “Kiswahili and Multilingualism: Achieving More Together” to disseminate and inform policy on the coexistence of Kiswahili with other languages;
3. Facilitated capacity building, knowledge exchange, and awareness creation for 33 experts and stakeholders from Partner States under the EAKC

Mobility Program. These efforts address capacity challenges in the development and promotion of Kiswahili.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026 EAKC will focus on:

1. Celebrating the 4th World Kiswahili Language Day that will be held in Kigali, Rwanda on 6th - 7th July, 2025;
2. Facilitating exchange of Kiswahili stakeholders for awareness creation, dissemination and capacity building;
3. Finalisation of the EAC Kiswahili Language Policy; and
4. facilitation of the youth to develop digital content and resources for Kiswahili training and awareness creation.

3.9. The East African Science and Technology Commission

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025 the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) registered the following achievements:

1. Trained 306 scientists from universities and research institutions in Partner States on technical scientific writing and development of grant proposals to enhance dissemination of research and innovation outputs, and for increased resource for research and innovation; and
2. Published three (3) Ordinary Issues and one (1) Special Issue of the East African Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, EASTECO's priorities will be to:

1. Promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through exchange programme for women in science to advance their careers, foster innovation, and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive scientific community;
2. Develop the EAC Intellectual Property strategy to enhance protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights;
3. Develop an Artificial Intelligence Strategy for knowledge and skills development to drive business value and enhance operational efficiency;
4. Support centres of excellence for the 4th Industrial Revolution to stimulate the development of emerging technologies; and
5. Support the Regional Research and Development Working Group to implement science communication, research granting, and resource mobilisation and planning services for enhanced STI in the region.

3.10. The East African Health Research Commission

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) registered the following achievements:

1. Recruited the second cohort of the Young East African Research Scientists (YEARS') Programme and coordination of the regional and national training workshops on research ecosystem skills; and
2. Published regional research findings through the East African Health Research Journal (EAHRJ) Vol. 8 No.3.

Mr Speaker, during the FY 2025/2026, EAHRC will focus on the following key priorities:

1. Publication of the regional research findings and development of policy briefs through the EAHRC journals; and
2. Building the capacity of the 2nd cohort of Young East African Research Scientists (YEARS) in mentorship and research ecosystem skills.

3.11. The East African Community Competition Authority

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2024/2025, the East African Competition Authority (EACCA) continues to raise awareness aimed at promoting its visibility and enhancing compliance with EAC Competition Act.

Mr Speaker, in the FY 2025/2026, the Authority will focus on the following priorities:

1. Development of requisite toolkits to strengthen the Authority's competition enforcement function including the control of anti-competitive mergers;
2. Investigating and assessing anti-competitive practices and agreements; and
3. Strengthening cooperation with national, regional and global jurisdictions for efficient competition regulation.

IV. Audit For The Financial Year 2023/2024

Mr Speaker, the Community continues to enhance internal controls and accountability across the Organs and Institutions. For

the period under review, the EAC Audit Commission issued an unqualified (clean) audit opinion to all Organs and Institutions of the Community, as well as projects and programmes implemented for the financial year ended 30th June, 2024. The statutory audit reports are due for tabling before this Assembly pursuant to Article 134 of the EAC Treaty.

V. EAC Budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026

Mr Speaker, the budget estimates for the FY 2025/2026 have been prepared in line with the 6th EAC Development Strategy, global and sector-specific priority areas as adopted by the Council of Ministers, and various Decisions and Directives of the Summit.

a) Priority Interventions for the FY 2025/2026 Budget

During the FY 2025/2026, the Community will focus on the following global priority areas:

1. Enhancing regional peace, security, political processes, and emergency response mechanisms to improve the political environment in the Community;
2. Advancing the EAC Customs Union to increase regional trade and optimise supply chains across Partner States;
3. Strengthening the implementation of regional commitments in accordance with the EAC Common Market Protocol and other relevant frameworks to ensure sustainable development and

improve the socioeconomic welfare of East Africans;

4. Expediting the harmonisation of fiscal and monetary policies and operationalisation of requisite institutions towards realising the East African Monetary Union;
5. Enhancing multi-modal strategic, climate-resilient infrastructure, and digitalisation to promote trade and regional integration; and
6. Strengthening the capabilities of all EAC Organs and Institutions to fulfil their mandates and promote the visibility of the Community and stakeholder engagement in the EAC integration process.

b) Expected Outcomes during the Financial Year 2025/2026

Mr Speaker, it is expected that the implementation of the above global priority areas will result into the following outcomes:

1. Enhanced stability and security across the Community, leading to a more conducive political environment for regional integration and development.
2. Improved EAC trade environment that boosts intra-EAC trade, optimizes supply chains, and enhances market access for businesses across Partner States.
3. Increased compliance with regional commitments, leading to improved economic integration among Partner States and increased living standards within the Community.

4. Harmonised monetary and fiscal framework in the EAC region and operationalisation of EAMU institutions, paving the way for the establishment of a single currency and stronger regional economic integration.
5. A robust, climate-resilient, and digitally connected infrastructure network that facilitates seamless trade and mobility, reduces transportation costs and improves accessibility.
6. Enhanced institutional capacity to facilitate the effective implementation of regional policies and frameworks, leading to increased broad-based support and participation of all stakeholders, and increased visibility and awareness of the EAC's role and contributions.

c) Budget Proposal and Allocation to Organs and Institutions for FY 2025/2026

Mr Speaker, the Council submits a budget amounting to USD109,338,151 for the next FY 2025/2026. Out of this amount, USD 67,755,378 (62 per cent) will be contributed by Partner States or raised as other internal revenues, while USD 41,582,773 (38 per cent) will be sourced from Development Partners.

The Budget is allocated to the EAC Organs and Institutions as follows:

1. EAC Secretariat: USD 55,209,392;
2. East African Court of Justice: USD 5,056,413;
3. East African Legislative Assembly: USD 20,495,264;
4. Lake Victoria Basin Commission: USD 7,606,052;
5. The Inter University Council for East Africa: USD 10,802,434;
6. Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation: USD 2,436,924;
7. East African Science and Technology Commission: USD 2,210,511;
8. East African Kiswahili Commission: USD 1,641,445;
9. East African Health Research Commission: USD 2,354,504; and
10. East African Competition Authority (EACA): USD 1,525,212.

d) Budget Assumptions

Mr Speaker, the budget for the FY 2025/2026 has been developed taking into consideration the following key assumptions:

1. Political stability, peace, security and good governance in the region;
2. A conducive macro-economic and business environment in the region;
3. Continued resilience of the Partner States' economies in view of global shocks; and
4. Timely disbursement of financial resources by Partner States and Development Partners in line with the EAC Financial Rules and Regulations, and signed financing agreements to facilitate the implementation of the projects and programmes.

Mr Speaker, please join me in recognising and appreciating the continued cooperation and support from both Partner States and the following key Development Partners:

1. The Federal Republic of Germany;
2. Japan;
3. The Peoples' Republic of China;
4. United Kingdom
5. African Development Bank;

6. The African Union;
7. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;
8. European Union;
9. Food and Agriculture Organization
10. International Fund for Agricultural Development
11. International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
12. International Organisation for Migration;
13. St. Andrew's University;
14. The University of Heidelberg;
15. Trade-Mark Africa; and
16. World Bank Group.

The EAC looks forward to strengthening and expanding cooperation and collaboration with all Development Partners.

Mr Speaker, the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 embodies a strategic approach aimed at supporting Partner States interventions in fostering economic transformation through domestic resource mobilisation and resilient investment for job creation and improved livelihoods.

Resources have been allocated with this objective in mind and I therefore urge all Heads of EAC Organs and Institutions to ensure that these resources are utilised to achieve the desired objective.

I call upon all East Africans to continue to tap into the opportunities presented with a bigger and expanded East African market.

Mr Speaker Sir, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Thank you, Chairperson of the Council of Ministers. You need a glass of water.

Honourable Members, Rule 16(2) of our Rules of Procedure states -

The Speaker shall in determining the Order of Business give priority to Council business.

I therefore refer the Budget for the FY 2025/2026 to the Committee on General Purpose. I urge you member of the Executive and Secretariat to avail yourselves before the Committee on GP whenever you are called upon so that we can conclude the consideration of the budget within the time that we have extended for the budget period. The Committee on General Purpose will continue with the consideration of the budget until Friday, 27th June 2025. The Committee will table before the Assembly its report on Saturday, 28th June 2025.

Honourable Members, with that, I now adjourn this House until Saturday, 28th June 2024 at 2.30 p.m.

(The House rose at 2.03 p.m. and adjourned until Saturday, 28th June 2025 at 2.30 p.m.)