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**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

 **EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY RT. Hon. NTAKIRUTIMANA** Joseph

**ARUSHA, 20TH DECEMBER, 2022.**

**Observe the Protocol (The list is attached)**

**Good afternoon!**

* Few minutes ago, we finalized the election of Speaker. It is with gratitude to God, a deep sense of honour, great humility, and an unswerving resolve to honour your trust that I take the Chair as Speaker of the 5th East African Legislative Assembly. I accept this noble duty in the spirit of unity, brotherhood and sisterhood of the people of the East African Community.
* Allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to my colleagues, Honourable Members of this House, for the confidence you have placed in me, and for this huge responsibility that has been entrusted to me.
* I am deeply grateful to my colleagues from the Republic of South Sudan for their amical gesture to withdraw their nominations for Speakership of the Assembly.
I will work together with you and each member for the common good of the people of East Africa.
* I wish to assure you, Hon. Members, that I will perform my statutory functions and execute the duties as Speaker in a dignified manner, always abiding by the letter and spirit of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, the Rules of the Assembly and other laws of Community. I will spare no efforts to build consensus amongst ourselves, to strengthen collaboration and teamwork with other Organs, especially the EAC Summit of Heads of State, the EAC Council of Ministers, the Secretariat and Institutions of the EAC and the National Assemblies of the Partner States, while also engaging broadly with other stakeholders in the private sector, civil society organizations, other interest groups and the people of East Africa at large.
* We must ensure that, in discharging our legislative, oversight and representation functions, the interest of the people of East Africa is given top priority so as to meet their legitimate expectations to uplift their standard of living.
* Hon. Members, in this House, we come from different Partner States, we have been elected by our respective National Assemblies, from different political parties and shades of opinion, but we have to serve **One People (the people of East Africa)** to lead them to **One Destiny: One People, One Destiny**. That is the right way to honour the memory and to live up to the dreams and aspirations of the founding fathers of the EAC.
* I wish to use this opportunity to congratulate all members on your election, both those who like me, will be serving this House for the first term and those who have been re-elected. Each of us brings to the House his/her personal experience, but also shared values and interest in consolidating and furthering our integration process. I will capitalize on it as I provide exemplary leadership to move our regional integration to another level. You have bestowed upon me the honour of “***first amongst equals***”, I will exercise my duties without fear or favour.
* Honourable Members, as you all noted yesterday at our swearing- in ceremony, the East African Legislative Assembly is held in high esteem by our top leaders across the region. I commend all the five (5) former Speakers of EALA (and of course the former EALA Members), who, one after the other, has worked very hard for the Assembly to earn such recognition.
* This is not the time for detailing the priority activities that we are going to undertake in the next days, months and years of our term. We will plan together for a legislative programme of action and implement it together. Every voice will be listened to, heard, valued and taken into consideration.
* Allow me to acknowledge our family members (mine and yours) for their great support, those who travelled all the way to be here today, those who could not make it but have been following the inauguration virtually since yesterday, our spouses, parents, and friends; we are profoundly grateful.
* I must commend the Clerk and the entire staff team of the Assembly for successfully organizing the inauguration of the 5th Assembly and conducting the election of the Speaker in a transparent, open and credible manner.
* Before I conclude, I wish to recognize the presence of: (use a separate list)

**…….**

**…….**

**…….**

* To the media, we are most grateful for your broad coverage of the inauguration of the 5th Assembly. You have really contributed to the visibility of the Assembly and linked us well with the people whom we represent. We are very grateful for your support.
* Honourable Members, EAC has already started Christmas and End-of-Year break. We shall have a little time to rest, knowing that there is much work that lies ahead of us, as we embark on our tour of duty. The Office of the Clerk will communicate in due course when we are going to resume our work.

**Thank you for your kind attention, Merci beaucoup de votre attention, Ahsanteni sana.**