



EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**REMARKS BY EALA SPEAKER, RT HON. NGOGA KAROLI MARTIN,
AT THE 138TH IPU ASSEMBLY- GENEVA, MARCH 22nd – 28th, 2018**

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. I thank the Government and the people of Switzerland for the warm hospitality accorded to my delegation, since our arrival here in the beautiful City of Geneva. This being my first attendance at the IPU in my capacity as the new Speaker of EALA, permit me to present the Assembly (and EAC's) compliments to this distinguished gathering.
2. EALA is the regional Assembly of the EAC (whose Partner States are the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania).
3. I cannot emphasize further the centrality of the theme on the table if the Community of Nations we represent is to make any meaningful progress in tackling our contemporary challenges. I represent the economic bloc conceived and built on the foundation and principles of equality, peace, security and access to opportunities. These are foundations of our integration process and they constitute our priority ambitions.

4. We consider peace as a vehicle and fulcrum for sustainable development. Under the EAC framework, there is a Protocol on Peace and Security and a Sectoral Committee on Interstate Security. There are also advanced plans to fully operationalize the EAC Standby Force. I am also from the region that is both the source and destination of refugees for many years now. As a region, we have made remarkable progress in establishing internal mechanisms to address causal factors and resultant challenges of refugism. The challenges ahead remain enormous therefore the collective approach to them is a more viable option.

5. **Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;** I was born to a refugee family and grew up as such until I was 27 years old. I believe many have gone through a similar if not worse experience. Policy makers are not short of evidence and justification to attend to these problems with the attention it deserves. While, we must work together to address how to manage challenges of refugism', we need to work even harder to address the causes. Providing protection to people fleeing conflicts and in search of refuge is one of humanity's long-standing traditions. We can indeed be better planners for tomorrow. It is our responsibility to unite and to push for common solutions. The globe should strive for better governance and creation and spread of equal opportunities to reach those who are still disadvantaged and excluded. Our values of humanity should be reflected in how we remain ready and alert to prevent causes of refugism and when we

fail, we should not fail a second time in providing protection to those who suffer the predicament of our collective failures.

6. We must realise now, that the most viable and sustainable solutions to the challenge of refugism and migration are those that will address causes in the countries of origin. This however, shall require collective approaches that involve even those who consider the problems to be too remote for them. The interdependence of the world order is such that political and economic failures have widespread effects beyond borders. Economic and political integration such as the bloc I represent is one such step in the right direction.
7. Refugism and migration come along with not only legal obligations in terms of how we respond but also the moral imperative, the reminder that when the situations occur, we are confronted with evidence of mischief in our Governance and Political as well as economic order.

In this regard, some workable approaches must be deployed:

- a) Parliaments should enact relevant legislations that protect society, enhance peace and security and address inequalities.
- b) Parliaments should appropriate more resources in national budgets to hold Executive accountable and to check on rising excesses that give rise to refugism and migrations.

It is imperative for Parliaments to ensure the Member States and regional blocs re-affirm commitments to the observance of Peace and Security, and redress inequalities and parity to resource allocation. Before I conclude, **Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen**, you recall the African Continent last week realized the historic signing of the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) in Kigali, Rwanda. I appeal to the national and regional Parliaments especially from the signatory countries to do all that it takes to ensure speedy domestic legislative re-alignments to facilitate operationalization of the agreement. Parliaments must rise to the occasion to play their role in support of this historic opportunity for our continent.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you successful deliberations.