

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY RT HON MARTIN NGOGA, SPEAKER – ELECT, AT
THE INAUGURATION OF THE 4th EALA, AT ITS CHAMBERS
ON DECEMBER 19th 2017**

- **Excellency Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate of Rwanda**
- **Rt. Hon Anthony Makana, Speaker of Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan**
- **The Chair, and Members of the EAC Council of Ministers present;**
- **The in-coming Members of the 4th Assembly**
- **The Secretary General of the EAC**
- **Members of Parliament and Senators from the Partner States;**
- **The President of the Democratic Party (DP), Uganda - Hon. Norbert Mao;**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good Afternoon!

To the leaders of high institutions of our Partner States and distinguished citizens of our Community, thank you for honoring us with your presence today. We shall continue to reach out to you for advice and guidance. Since I am privileged to be standing in this position, I thank on my own behalf and on behalf of Hon Members, our spouses, parents, friends and all family members who travelled all the way to be here today to witness this historical event in our lives. To all the distinguished visitors in the gallery, thank you. Hon. Members, I am sure that I share the emotions and the excitement with you, as I extend our profound gratitude to our families and friends who have supported us in every step of the way.

I congratulate you Hon Members for your deserved election to the 4th EALA and to welcome you to your new home in Arusha. We are fully cognizant of the fact that elections being what they are, can be rather rigorous, interesting, and intense even for seasoned politicians. Elections by their nature leave their own traces. As we conclude that today, let us seal all the traces, it may have left and move forward as one focused, determined and united region.

Few minutes ago, we finalized the race for the Speakership and I thank Mr. Kenneth Madete, the Clerk and Presiding Officer for conducting it in a way that was credible, open and transparent.

Hon Members, Distinguished guests

I am deeply humbled by the fact that this *August* House has elected me as the 5th Speaker of EALA and in that accord, bestowed upon me, the honour of "*first amongst equals*". Please accept my profound appreciation to you all for conferring unto me such honor. I salute my worthy competitors in the race (my good friends, Hon Adam Kimbisa and Hon Leontine Nzeyimana) and ask that we work together for the benefit of EALA and the region. I wish to extend my arm of collaboration and co-operation.

I accept this responsibility with magnanimity. I promise to uphold the dignity of the House at all times, by fully submitting self to the will of the House, the supremacy of the Rules of the House and laying claim to the privileges of the Assembly and the Members. In performing my duties, I will give the majority their way but respect and protect the rights of minorities at all times.

Hon. Members, the delay to constitute and inaugurate the 4th Assembly had considerable repercussions to us individually and collectively. Nevertheless, as a team with unity of purpose, we own and appreciate the circumstances that caused the delay, and together, we shall make our contribution to prevent possible recurrence of a similar situation in future. Hon Members, I am not under any illusion of being elevated above any seat in this chamber. I remain a colleague whom you have trusted with the responsibility. That trust humbles me and challenges me never to deviate from the path you have defined for me to walk in.

Hon Members, Distinguished guests;

This cannot be a speech to define what the 4th EALA will do. That task will be performed together with you from now as we start our tour of duty. I can only assure you Hon Members that I will provide the leadership you deserve in order to perform our statutory functions with which we are tasked to take our integration process to another level.

I will spare no efforts to provide the leadership you need to maintain high moral standing for us to confidently exercise oversight to other Institutions of the Community.

To all Organs of the Community, you have found a credible partner in the 4th EALA. Our roles are complimentary and not in conflict with each other. EALA will play its rightful role in this spirit and we are looking forward to the support of all Community Organs and Institutions.

To the staff, thank you for all you have done for EALA. The Hon Members hold in high esteem the role you play to facilitate their mission. We will continue to work together as a team and family.

Hon Members, Distinguished guests;

I will work with you to avail the legal framework and infrastructure necessary for effective implementation of areas of integration that our Partner States have negotiated and agreed upon. We shall reach out to the people of East Africa to preach the gospel of integration in every corner of the East African Community, in all Partner States.

Hon Members, there has been decisions made by the relevant Organs to grant the Assembly its autonomy of finance and administration and which decisions have not been fully implemented. The Assembly will work with the Council of Ministers and the EAC Secretariat to operationalize these decisions, as ono four immediate priorities.

Hon Members, our Community is premised on eventual creation of a critical mass of East Africans. It is people-centred and was crafted as such by the founders who, in taking that choice were informed by the lessons and context our region had gone through. The primacy of people in the architect of the Community requires that we, the people's representatives, ensure that we engage with the population on regular and sustainable basis. In this vein we shall enhance our outreach and sensitization programmes in our planning and priorities. In order to enhance efficiency and reduce costs of our operations, the Assembly will priorities use of technology.

Hon Members, Distinguished guests;

Today we have started our tour of duty. It is a regional duty given the fact that we are a regional Assembly. This comes with a challenge for us to demonstrate our abilities, willingness and readiness to rise above our partisan interests and to promote a regional agenda. This should not be a difficult task, because the regional agenda is not in conflict with sovereign priorities of our Partner States. We should be capable of differentiating between operational challenges we may face at a regional level and sovereign policies and priorities. In this, we shall be guided by the Treaty and other legal instruments in place but remain focused on what is in the best interest of all East Africans. Let us resolve to collectively own our challenges as a region and as a Regional Assembly instead of accepting to be swayed by situations and retreat into deviated interests. That is the spirit of integration and that is what we are here to promote.

Integration process entails challenges as expected in every enlarged family. With clarity of purpose we should always strive to resolve these challenges without losing focus of our common direction. As a regional Assembly, we have a big role to play.

Hon. Members, on your behalf and on my own behalf, I thank all the members who served in the previous Assembly for steering it to the impressive level we have found it.

Before I conclude, I wish to recognize the presence of the Rt. Hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Rwandan Senate and the Rt. Hon. Anthony Lino Makana, Speaker for the transitional National Legislative Assembly of the Republic of South Sudan. Many dignitaries were with us yesterday and have since left for other engagements. For purposes of record, I wish to acknowledge them as follows - ***(SEPARATE LIST)***.

As I conclude, I wish you all a successful tour of duty and I reiterate my resolve to provide the leadership you deserve to the best of my ability. I thank you for your kind attention.

Thank you very much.