



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**WELCOMING SPEECH BY RT. HON. DANIEL KIDEGA, SPEAKER OF
EALA AT THE ADDRESS OF H.E. PIERRE NKURUNZIZA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI,**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the
United Republic of Tanzania**

Hon. Phyllis J. Kandie, the Chairperson, EAC Council of Ministers

Rt. Hon. Anna Makinda, Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania

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,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellency, it is with profound humility that I stand before this *August* House to warmly welcome you to deliver your Address to EALA during its 1st Meeting of the 3rd Session of the 3rd Assembly.

I thank you for positively responding to our invitation which is your first official engagement with the Assembly this year. Similarly, the 3rd Assembly is for the very first time also holding its session in Dar es Salaam away from its home and headquarter in Arusha. We are indeed grateful to you and your Government for the continuous support to the EAC in general and the EALA in particular.

During this Plenary Session, we shall be receiving Bills, and analyzing several oversight reports of various Committees of EALA. We shall also put important questions to the Council of Ministers, and debate specific Motions and pass key Resolutions.

On behalf of my colleagues, I wish to underscore the confidence we have in you and in your capacity as the EAC Heads of State of Summit to positively advance the East African integration agenda, now and in the future.

It is clear that, the unity of purpose and political will to forge ahead, is today greater than it was at any other moment in the history of the Community.

On our part, we are committed, as we have always been, to support your efforts and the policy direction given towards deepening and widening integration for the prosperous future of our people.

I wish to congratulate you and the Summit for the support and direction that ensured the successful negotiations of the Monetary Union Protocol which was signed on 30th November, 2013. I wish to congratulate the United Republic of Tanzania for you have already ratified the Monetary Union and dispatched the same to the Secretary General of the East African Community. Congratulations Your Excellency!

The Monetary Union is the logical culmination of the integration efforts, as it seeks to harmonise the fiscal and monetary policies leading to a single currency. The Protocol which provides for a wide scope of co-operation in the monetary and financial sectors among the Partner States is anticipated to eliminate the attendant costs to currency conversions, reduce transaction costs and minimize inflation in the region.

As EALA, we are fully in support of the pillar and shall work closely with the Council of Ministers on the roadmap toward realising the Monetary Union. In this regard, we are aware and shall await to consider the fundamental Council Bills for the operationalization of the Protocol. Such Bills include the ones establishing the East African Monetary Institute, East African Financial Services Commission and the East African Surveillance, Compliance and Enforcement Commission among others.

Looking closely at the implementation of the Common Market Protocol; although it has registered some progress in some areas in the last four years, there are still surmountable challenges.

These include bureaucratic processes, administrative restrictions and misuse of the rules of origin principle among others.

However, allow me your Excellency to congratulate you on the operationalization of the Single Customs Territory which is taking toot. On Friday last week, we visited the Tanzania Ports Authority. In addition to appreciating the efficiencies registered in cargo handling, we witnessed the presence of Revenue Offices of the Republics of Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the DRC and we await for the Republic of Kenya to send its officials. This now means that goods destined for those countries in the interior shall be handled by the Revenue Officials from those countries. This shall avoid duplication of documentation and lead to steady clearance of goods and reduction in time taken for the same.

The Acting Commissioner General of TRA informed us of the streamlining of operations within the Single Customs Territory. A transaction which hitherto necessitated the filling of 30 documents for one transit cargo item has now been streamlined and in effect, a single form is filled. This is a milestone. We congratulate you for implementation of the single-window procedure which has eased doing business and facilitated trade. We salute the TRA for the tremendous improvements registered over the past three years. For instance, the time taken for the ship turn around has reduced

from 5 days to 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ days or less. This is due to better skill and the innovation of Private Sector engagement through the aegis of the Tanzania International Container Terminal Services (TICTS) which in effect, creates competition. The improvement at the port shall make the Central Corridor more attractive in terms of facilitation of Trade especially with the enhancement of other major infrastructure like Railways are in place.

One of the biggest challenges realised over time - concerns the slow pace with which Partner States are "opening up". Although EALA and several stakeholders have intensified sensitisation campaigns of East Africans on the Common Market Protocol, citizens continue to bear the brunt of restrictions with Partner States taking 'cover under the pretext' that their respective national laws are still being amended.

Non-Tariff Barriers also still manifest themselves and in so doing, hamper the EAC business community from doing business. The NTBs include weighbridges, police roadblocks, non-recognition of the EAC certificates of origin, lack of mutual recognition of quality marks, re-testing of products, delays by statutory boards in releasing the results of analysis of samples and delays in issuance of import licenses among others. A recent study of the Partner States' adherence to the tenets of the Common Market Protocol released by the World Bank in February, 2014 alludes to the same fact.

Indeed, we have talked about them for far too long. It is time the NTB Monitoring Committee is given more 'teeth to act'. As EALA, we are ready to support and to champion the campaign through relevant legislation. We

await the EAC NTBs Elimination Bill, 2014 and I appeal to the Council of Ministers to aptly facilitate this and any other Bills for our consideration.

I wish to salute you and the Summit for focusing on cross-border infrastructure development in railways, energy, ports and harbours, roads and ICT. In the Northern Corridor, there is substantial progress with regards to construction of the Arusha-Holili/Taveta-Voi road project and the Malindi-Mombasa-Lunga Lunga and Tanga-Bagamoyo road among others.

Progress is also notable along the Central Corridor connecting the port of Dar es Salaam to the Great Lakes region and DRC at Kigoma. Development has been realized at the Lusahunga-Rusumo and Kayonza-Kigali road as well as the Nyakanazi-Kasulu-Manyovu and Rumonge-Bujumbura road.

On the rail network, the commencement of the development of the standard gauge railway in the region is commendable.

I am happy that the region is considering the issues at hand. All the ongoing initiatives shall go a long way in facilitating trade and other interactions among our people.

Generally, Your Excellency, the current East African integration endeavours have come a long way. As our integration is deepened and widened in its scope, the issues which EALA is called to address are also becoming complex. The last few months have been challenging for EALA but nevertheless rewarding in terms of refining us to carry on with the work

ahead. Indeed, EALA shall continue to be more proactive in fulfilling its legislative functions.

Since January, the Assembly has passed two Bills namely;-

- a) The East African Community Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2014;
and
- b) The East African Community Appropriation Bill, 2014.

The Council has also introduced;-

- a) The East African Community Trade Negotiations (Repeal) Bill, 2014;
and which is before the Committee of the CTI.

We have four Private Members Bills which are:

- b) The East African Community Electronic Transactions Bill, 2014.
- c) The East African Co-operatives Societies Bill, 2014
- d) The Education (Integration) Bill 2014 that is undergoing public hearing and
- e) The EAC Cross Border Legal Practice Bill.

We continue to undertake our oversight and representative functions with due diligence.

Another key area which needs to be upscaled is the area of sensitization to increase the citizens' level of awareness on the benefits and opportunities of the EAC integration.

We thank the Summit and the Council of Ministers that this Financial Years Budget (2014-15) an initial provision of USD 255,000 has been made to the Assembly to kick its sensitization program.

We are first and foremost targeting to reach out to key stakeholders in the integration process namely the Members of Parliament, Heads of Government departments and institutions, local Government leaders, the business community including the Chambers of Commerce and the Private Sector foundations, Academia, Students, Youth, Women, Civil Society and opinion leaders. We call on Partner States to also compliment on this effort.

In this way, we shall have created a spiral effect in the dissemination of information of EAC to the citizenry.

Your Excellency, following closely on Article 119 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC and also on our outreach mandate, we visited the Bagamoyo College of Arts (Taasisi ya Sanaa na Utamaduni Bagamoyo – TaSUBa) this past Saturday and we appreciated that it has been accorded the status of EAC Centre of Excellence in Arts and Culture. We salute the efforts put in by the Centre given the fact that arts and culture are key to sensitization. However, we call on the EAC to find a mechanism to integrate such Centres into the funding and resource resource mechanism of EAC to make them attract students from the entire region.

In the same breath, the issue of EAC language and culture is continuously being aired in various forums as a means to support the unity of the people of the EAC. We call upon the Council to expedite the realization of the Kiswahili Commission to again promote EastAfricanness. We note that the Council of Ministers has indicated that it will soon bring the Bill. As EALA, we look forward to the operationalization of the Commission since East Africans are waiting for the Kiswahili curriculum to be in place.

We are also pleased that the Council of Ministers is considering the amendment of the Treaty to strengthen the incremental approach towards deeper integration. I am aware that a High Level task Force is currently looking into the matter. A number of areas with regards to the Treaty should be refined, or re-defined given the progress made in the region so far. In doing this, there is need to promote a culture of *East-Africanness*, driven by our Community's fundamental principles, as provided for under Chapter 6 of the Treaty.

Your Excellency, May I take this opportunity to congratulate you for steering the United Republic of Tanzania to greater heights. We note that development is on-going in the country, and the United Republic of Tanzania continues to be an attractive investment destination. Further to this, your government's desire to invest in people and particularly in education deserves accolades as does the renewed spirit to fight corruption. Under your leadership, Tanzania's contribution to development

was recognized by none other than the Millennium Development Corporation.

I wish to congratulate you and the people of this great Republic, following the recent jubilee celebrations of the Union. The Union's existence 50 years after it was signed, tells a good story of a bold decision by the parties concerned. It further adduces evidence that it is possible to have the East African Federation, and perhaps in future the United States of Africa.

Today, the Constituency Assembly is sitting to chart the roadmap to the new constitutional dispensation and this is worth noting. I take this opportunity to wish you well in the rigorous process.

Your Excellency, let me also take the opportunity to congratulate you for a number of accolades under your belt. Earlier in April this year, you received an Award as the most impactful leader of the Year by the African Leadership Magazine in Washington, United States of America. Indeed, you merited the honour for good governance for ordinary citizens.

Again in July this year, you were decorated with the Africa top Democracy Award Winner for 2014. As you prepare for the award session which takes place later next month in Van der Valk, Almere in Netherlands, it is clear that your contribution to overseeing genuine democracy, peace and tranquility in a continent facing a myriad of challenges is laudable. You continue to be an exemplary leader Your Excellency and I congratulate you

for the feat. I urge you to continue to steer the United Republic of Tanzania and the EAC region to greater heights. I wish you good health and prosperity as you do so.

Before I invite you to address this Assembly, may I briefly introduce to you some of the dignitaries present;

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, Wednesday the 27th of August 2014.

I thank you for your kind attention.