



**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**REMARKS BY RT. HON DANIEL FRED KIDEGA, SPEAKER OF EALA AT THE  
EAC AGRICULTURE BUDGET SUMMIT 2016 AT AICC ON SATURDAY, JUNE  
4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

**Honourable Members of EALA Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and  
Natural Resources;**

**Honourable Chairpersons of the Agriculture Parliamentary Committees  
from National Parliaments;**

**Chairman of Small Scale farmers in Kenya, Mr. Alphayo Kuruna;**

**Staff of EAC/EALA Secretariat;**

**CAADP Focal persons in Member States;**

**Farmer leaders from EAC and SADC Countries;**

**Cross border traders present;**

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Good Morning**

On behalf of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), and indeed on my own behalf, I thank you for inviting us to the EAC Agriculture Budget Summit 2016 hosted by the Eastern and Southern African Farmers' Forum (ESAFF).

I congratulate ESAFF for organizing this workshop themed: **“Investment in Agriculture towards Ending Hunger and Poverty by 2025 in the EAC”** which brings us together to discuss and deliberate on important issues for the betterment of our Community. The presence of legislators at Regional and National Levels as well as that of the Comprehensive African Agriculture (CAADP) Focal Persons, Civil Society Organizations and smallholder farmers from EAC Partner States is clear testimony that small scale farmers are an important stakeholder group.

Agriculture is a key component in our daily life enabling us feed our people, create jobs for our youth and pay for education. Agriculture is one of the East African region’s most important sectors, with about 80% of the population of the EAC Partner States living in rural areas and depending on agriculture for their livelihood.

The sector accounts for about 35% of the Gross Domestic Product in Burundi, 27% in Kenya, 30% in Rwanda, 25% in the United Republic of Tanzania, 25% in Uganda, 15% in South Sudan (2015 figures), although its contribution to these economies continues to decline.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me also recognize that this Summit is occurring when the region is experiencing the El-nino Phenomena, occasioning floods in some areas while in the neighbouring SADC region, five countries have declared drought national disasters. This gathering is thus critical for us to take stock.

The EAC is keen to implement the policies, strategies and instruments; at global level through MDG Goal 2, and through the Malabo Declaration and CAADP at the continental level. I am a firm believer that political will is key to hold one another accountable in order to make hunger, malnutrition and poverty a thing of the past in our region. I say so based on the premise that the region is well endowed with skills in terms of human resources, natural resources and vast land.

Our colleagues in the SADC region domesticated the Maputo Declaration of 2003 at a high level Ministerial workshop known as the Dar es Salaam Food and Rural Development Declaration in May 2014.

I am aware that ESAFF at its last meeting with EALA in February 2016, called on the region to emulate SADC by effecting strong protocols and binding instruments that make the Malabo Declaration deliver on its expectations.

### **Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I commend ESAFF for the good job in empowering small scale farmers. I acknowledge that this is not the first time that ESAFF has engaged with EALA. I was a Committee Member when the EALA Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources met with ESAFF back in April 2012 in Nairobi and deliberated on a number of issues, many that are still relevant today. There are three salient issues I wish to bring back to fore.

First, I recall you urged EAC Partner States to increase agricultural budgets to 10% or more and to strive for annual agricultural growth of 6%. By then, it was under

the Maputo Declaration of 2003. The same is still captured today, under the Malabo Declaration of June 2014.

Except for Rwanda that has pegged agricultural growth at 8%, the agricultural growth rates in the rest of the Partner States still remain far below the CAADP target rate of 6% and stand as follows; Burundi (4.4%), Kenya (3.8%), Tanzania (4.3%) and Uganda (1.8%). In terms of budget allocations, Rwanda and Burundi stand at 11% and 10.9% respectively, while the rest stand at below 6% with Tanzania pegged at 5.3%, Uganda (3.8%), Kenya (5%). Let me at this juncture plead with the Partner States to rise up to the CAADP requirements for the region to become more competitive in the global trading market.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Indeed, we must pull up our socks to invest in agriculture which according to IFAD, is eleven times more effective in eliminating poverty than oil and gas or mining. Let us advocate for investing money from proceeds of oil and gas (when exploited) into agriculture to trigger massive poverty eradication and development.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Second**, the need for the EAC Secretariat to ensure the Regional CAADP COMPACT being developed adopts a bottom-up approach. I am informed the current CAADP is at its final stage and that ESAFF, CSOs and other farmers' organisations at national and regional levels are involved. I commend the EAC Secretariat and in particular the directorate of Agriculture for ensuring that. Similarly, I want to advocate for formation of an EAC Regional Agricultural Advisory Council (EAC-RAAC) within the EAC Secretariat in order to speed-up harmonization of agriculture development policies in the EAC region.

As EALA, one thing is clear – and that is the increasing need for institutionalizing a platform between us and the smallholder farmers to enable regular exchange of information as well as regular input and feedback on various issues pertaining to agriculture, the rights to food and security/sovereignty as well as rural development in the region. Let me also add that as EALA, we are ready to work with you to review and introduce new legal and policy frameworks and to strengthen oversight role within the region to ensure the CAADP is implemented. In this regard, we will ensure an open-door policy when it comes to working with small scale farmers.

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am pleased to inform you that through the ATNR Committee, EALA has contributed to some significant developments in the agricultural sector in the region. Such include:

1. formulation of key recommendations strengthen the agricultural sector, in line with Maputo and Malabo Declarations especially in food security in Partner States;
2. bringing to fore the issue of Land Rush which is a hindrance to agriculture development in the Region and in Africa in general;
3. participating in workshops “Promoting Sustainable Investments in Agriculture: Legal and Policy Options”;
4. advocating for adequate budget allocation for the Agriculture sector at regional level so that it can finalize its policies, strategies and action plan and give guidance to EAC Partner States;

5. Overseen development of a regional legal framework on sustainable investments in agriculture. Let me mention that Mining is also in the pipeline and is at an advanced stage.

**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

In conclusion, I thank you once again for attending this Summit and wish you fruitful deliberations. I assure you that your discussions definitely form part of the Committee recommendations that shall find its way into the Whole House for further deliberations including working out modalities of churning out the same to the EAC Summit of Heads of State.

It is now my singular pleasure to declare this East Africa Budget Summit 2016 officially open!

**Thank you all for your attention!**