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EALA SWEARS IN NEW RWANDA MINISTER TO EAC



Rwanda's new Minister for East African Community Affairs, Hon Amb Valentine Rugwabiza was on 2 September 2014, sworn-in as an Ex-Officio Member of EALA. The Oath of Allegiance to the House was administered before the EALA Speaker Rt. Hon Margaret Nantongo Zziwa. The Member took the oath in accordance with Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. The Rules of Procedure say in part that: "No Member can sit or participate in the proceedings of the House until the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance to the Treaty is taken".

Rule 6(3) specifically states that "when a Member first attends to take his or her seat other than at the first sitting of a new House, he or she shall be brought to the table by two Members and presented by them to the Speaker who shall then administer the Oath or Affirmation of Allegiance". The Minister was ushered into the House by Hon Patricia Hjabakiga and Hon Abubakar Zein. EALA has 45 elected Members and seven Ex-Officio Members. The Ex-Officio Members are the Ministers of EAC in the Partner States, the EAC Secretary General and the Counsel to the Community.

Hon Amb. Rugwabiza, the new Minister for EAC Affairs was appointed on July 24, 2014 following a Cabinet reshuffle in the Republic of Rwanda. She replaces Hon Jacqueline Muhongayire who is also a former elected Member of EALA. Hon Amb. Rugwabiza is the former Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Development Board. She is also a former deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) since October 2005. Amb. Rugwabiza also served as Rwanda's envoy to the United Nations in Geneva. Amb. Rugwabiza had a long career in the private sector, where she occupied senior managerial positions in the private sector, in Rwanda and abroad.

EAC Secretary General Holds Talks With ITC Executive Director

~ Discuss boosting SME participation in trade and explored areas of collaboration and support



The Secretary General of the East African Community Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera on 17 September 2014, held talks with the Executive Director of International Trade Centre, Ms. Arancha Gonzalez on the sidelines of the World Export Development Forum at the Serena Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Secretary General briefed the ITC official on some of the current key priority focus areas for the Community under implementation namely; the Single Customs Territory; setting up the institutional framework to actualize the Monetary Union Protocol signed in November 2013; and infrastructure development with special focus on railways, ports and energy.


Ms. Arancha Gonzalez commended the EAC integration process and the Secretary General Amb. Sezibera for steering ably the regional initiatives. She noted that a lot was happening within the EAC and that the mindset had changed from “my market to EAC market”, from national to regional perspectives, adding that “It is no longer my country or my market but things are being seen from the re-

gional perspective including trade and business”.

In regard to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Ms. Gonzalez said SMEs serve as the backbone of the economies of developing countries and their role is even more important in least developed countries, where they account for 80% of jobs across all economic groups, including women and youth.

She said SME competitiveness was a key factor in determining the region's overall competitiveness and its ability to respond to international market demand.

The two officials explored possible areas for further collaboration and support that include support to the East African Women in Business Network and the East African Business Council; setting up a Trade/Market Intelligence and e-Registry Web Portals; and Tourism and IT.

EAC and ITC technocrats have been tasked to work out in details the project areas and submit to the Secretary General by end of October 2014. 

Kampala Hosts 3rd EAC Secretary Generals Forum



The 3rd annual EAC Secretary General's Forum for Private Sector, Civil Society and Other Interest Groups themed "EAC: My Home, My Business" opened by Uganda's Minister for General duties under the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Prof. Tarsis Kabwegyere, on behalf of the Minister of East African Community (EAC) Affairs Hon. Shem Bageine, concluded at the Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, in Entebbe, Uganda on 13 September, 2014.

Addressing the participants at the official opening on 12 September, 2014, Prof Kabwegyere said that "the Forum is indeed an important platform for promoting dialogue between the various implementing agencies to exchange and sharing of ideas on a sustained basis engenders a strong partnership for achieving a fully integrated East Africa.

He reiterated the EAC commitment, not only towards the implementation of necessary interventions but also in addressing the emerging challenges along the way, mentioning a number of initiatives that relate to the four sub-themes of this Forum, some of which exist within Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Food Security and the Common Market Protocol.

The 11-13 September 2014 3rd annual EAC Secretary General's Forum was attended by almost 200 delegates from the Partner States, PSOs, CSOs, professional bodies, Academia/Universities, Media and EAC Organs and Institutions, development partners and other interest groups. The first was held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, and second was last year in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of East African Community Affairs Uganda, Mrs Edith Mwanje urged participants to take note and appreciate the importance of the Forum which gives a chance to PSOs and CSOs to demand accountability which in the end ensures transparency and renewed commitment to take the EAC integration forward.

She commended the PSOs and CSOs for showing their active commitment through their participation in the various EAC programs and activities, urging that; "this commitment should continue since we are all aiming at ensuring that the EAC regional integration agenda benefits us and improves our quality of life.

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Amb. Sezibera applauds PSOs, CSOs and other interest groups in fostering the integration agenda.



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The EAC Secretary General Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera applauded the role and efforts of the PSOs, CSOs and other interest groups through the structured dialogue process in fostering the integration agenda. He also emphasized the theme of the event stating that it reflects on the ultimate aim of the EAC Pillars

On his part Mr John Bosco Rusagara, an East Africa Business Council (EABC) Board Member on behalf of the (EABC) Chairman appreciated the support of the EAC Partner States, EAC, GIZ and TMEA towards making the Forum a success.

He said that EAC should work towards wealth and job creation, accelerating economic growth, fighting poverty, promoting sustainable utilization of the current resources, protecting rights of citizens and promoting gender equality and equity in all aspects in order to promote sustainable socio-economic, cultural and political growth in the region.

He called for the EAC stakeholders to address challenges in order to accelerate the regional integration process.

The Forum's symbolic kick-off took place on Thursday 11th September 2014, where an active GIZ-EAC sensitization activity at the Nakiwogo Market, Entebbe was undertaken. In addition, delegates and members of the public engaged in a clean-up exercise of the market as well as voluntary HIV/AIDS counselling and testing courtesy of the Entebbe Municipal Health Department.

The Forum's overall objective was to provide a platform where private sector, civil society and other interest groups can dialogue/interact with the Secretary General on regional integration matters.

It's expected outputs are to increase participation of the PSOs, CSOs and other interest groups in the EAC policy formulation and decision-making processes; increase sense of ownership of EAC integration by the citizenry and increase awareness among citizens among citizens on the EAC integration.



Kigali Conference of Religious Leaders Forms EAC Inter-Religious Council for Dialogue and Peace



The five-day East African conference on inter-religious collaboration to strengthen peace and security concluded successfully in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda, on 20 September, 2014 with a resolution to create the first ever East African Community Inter-Religious Council (EAC IR Council) for sustainable dialogue and information sharing among and between religious leaders and communities in the Region.

The leaders of Inter-Religious Councils of Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda signed in full view of over 150 delegates a two-page dubbed "Kigali Declaration" to pursue justice, peace and security also facilitate dialogue and shared vision in the face of the distortion of religious values and principles in the Region, among others.

They also agreed on promoting education of the youth as well civic education and encouraging a focused attention on youth unemployment and advocacy in situations of discrimination, corruption, nepotism and maladministration.

"Accepting that religious leaders have a specific responsibility to model the behavior that contributes to peace and justice, we further commit to the values of inclusivity and respect for diversity, integrity, industriousness, fidelity to truth and equality," read in part the Declaration.

Closing the well-attended conference, Rwanda's Minister for Internal Security Hon. Sheikh Musa Fadhil Harelimana lauded the religious leaders for forming the regional inter-religious council, stressing that religious leaders have special position and role in strengthening peace and security in the Region.

"Spiritually they [religious leaders] are closer to people's mindset.

Physically they reach people of all kinds, every day and at all levels of society," he said, adding that this puts religious leaders in special position capable of influencing people's behavior and actions beyond imaginable degrees.

Rwanda's Minister also pointed out religious conflicts are result of the zeal of some religious leaders to win converts and lead believers according to their personal perception rather than the spiritual calling.

The formation of the first Inter-Religious Council, he said, would no doubt be key in enhancing a culture of tolerance, peaceful co-existence and good neighborliness, which are key tenets enshrined in the Treaty establishing EAC.

The EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Political Federation, Mr. Charles Njoroge, said that the recommendations of the just-ended conference would be shared with the Council of Ministers meeting in November and the Summit of the Heads of State.

"Through the EAC-IRC, the EAC Secretariat will engage the new body on matters relating to peace and security with a view to preventing the escalation of conflicts to violence and enhancing harmonious and peaceful co-existence in the EAC region," he told the attentive delegates which included Archbishops, Bishops, Sheikhs, Muftis and Heads of Religious communities in the region, among others.

Different religious leaders also blessed the "Kigali Declaration" with special prayers and to see that religious sanity and respect is restored in the Partner States for mutual progress and speedy economic transformation.



Catholic University of Eastern Africa Hosts 3rd EAC University Students' Debate



The 3rd EAC University Students' Debate on Regional Integration was hosted by the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya from 4-5 September 2014.

The debate was preceded by a social corporate responsible activity where the students visited and gave donations to St. Thomas Bernanos Children's Home along Lang'ata Road in Nairobi. The students also made blood donations to Kenya National Blood Transfusion Services.

Ready to oppose or propose the motion, six participants were selected from each of the EAC Partner States of Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The students were drawn from national universities, public, private and other institutions of higher learning.

The selection was limited to students who were in their second year for three year degree courses or third year for four year degree courses.

The Debate, aiming at promoting continuous dialogue among the youth and to interest them in advocating for regional integration initiatives, was graced by the Minister for EAC Affairs, Commerce and Tourism Republic of Kenya,

Hon. Phyllis Kandie; the Vice Chancellor of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Rev. Msgr. Dr Pius Rutechura, the Executive Secretary of the Inter-University Council of East Africa, Prof. Mayunga Nkunya and the Country Representative, Mr. Hendrik Linneweber the Country Director, GIZ - Kenya and a Key note address by the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Political Federation, Mr. Charles Njoroge.

The debate sessions were in three sets, each one hour whereby the affirmative team and the alternative strategy team debated. There was room for rebuttals, intervention by audience which each of the teams provided a reply.

Each debate session was concluded by a wrap up by the panellists or the interveners. The top two teams had a rebuttals session - in which the winning team emerged. The final decision was made by the judges after consultations with the interveners, the moderator and timekeepers.

A Gala dinner marked the end of the debate where the best debaters and the new EAC Youth ambassadors were awarded.



Implement Community Laws - EALA Urges Partner States



EALA has proposed the formation of a well-rounded directorate at the EAC Secretariat to continuously monitor and evaluate implementation of regional laws. In addition to this measure, EALA wants the free-will to move Bills related to functions of the Community but which may have an imposition upon funding.

At the same time, it is necessary for the Community to address challenges facing the implementation of the Community Laws – a main factor been conflict in laws of Partner States and that of the Community laws.

The recommendations arise from the EALA debate on 3 September 2014, following the tabling and adoption of the Report of the Committee on General Purpose on the Capacity Building Workshop for the Legislative process of Bills.

The report presented to the House by the Chairperson of the Committee on General Purpose, Hon Dr. Martin Nduwimana, followed the capacity building workshop held in Nairobi 6-9 August, 2014. The workshop was a joint effort between EALA and the European Parliamentarians Association with Africa (AWEPA).

The objective of the meeting was to enhance the capacity of Members to better execute their legislative function through the initiation and enactment of the requisite regional laws. At the said workshop, Members were enabled to review the modus operandi and processes through which bills progress from inception to the end.

According to the facilitator at the workshop Hon Dan Ogalo, an expert in legislative processes (and EALA Member Emeritus) there is some recorded success with regards to the implementation of the laws. They include the EAC Customs Management Act, 2004, the EAC Standardisation, Quality Assurance and Testing Act, 2007 and the EAC Competition Act 2006.

Challenges in the legislative process of Bills include the fact that the current Treaty is executive heavy. The Treaty was initially focused on setting up the Secretariat and only at a later stage did EALA and the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) come to be included. For this reason, fewer articles of the Treaty were dedicated to the two Organs.

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... Secretary General calls on Members to bring to fore proposals concerning amendment of EAC Treaty



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Currently, under Article 59 of the Treaty, EALA Members can introduce any Bill in the Assembly provided that it relates to the functions of the Community. However, such a Bill shall not among other things impose any charge upon the fund of the Community.

Other recommendations include widening the dissemination by transmitting the Bills not only to the Parliaments but to the Ministries of Justice, Courts of Judicature, High Institutions of learning and public libraries.

During debate today, Hon Nancy Abisai called for the support and further sensitization of the Private Members' Bills.

The Secretary General of the EAC Amb Richard Sezibera called on Members to bring to fore, any proposals concerning the amendment of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC..


Hon Abubakar Zein noted that there was need to beef up the EALA Secretariat in terms of human resources to ensure quality of research and support in legislative processes. "We need to be able to

access all the necessary materials online as well", Hon Zein said.

The acting Chair of the Council of EAC Ministers Hon Dr. Abdullah Sadaala said the Treaty would need to be amended to enable Members have the free-will to bring Bills that may have an imposition of funds to the House among other areas.

Hon Maryam Yahya Ussi noted that it was important for follow-up to ensure the Partner States enforce the implementation of the laws. "We need to work closely with the Ministers of EAC to help with modalities of enforcement", Hon Ussi noted.

Hon Dr. James Ndahiro told the Council of Ministers to assist with the monitoring of the implementation of laws noting that the Community Laws supercede those of the Partner States within the purview of the Community.

Hon Jeremie Ngendakumana termed the report timely and added that it enable the legislators to be better informed. 

We Are Ready to Play Our Part in Popularizing Integration ~ Civil Society tells EALA



The regional civil society is calling for closing of ranks and further collaboration with the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) in a bid to strengthen integration.

Consequently, the stakeholders are keen to establish formal linkages with the Assembly, a move that shall further popularize integration, East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum (EACSOF) Executive Director, Dr. Martin Mwendha has said.

The EACSOF Chief Executive yesterday led representatives of key regional organizations in paying a courtesy call on the EALA Speaker, Rt. Hon Dr Margaret Nantongo Zziwa at the Speaker's Chambers.

EALA Speaker, Rt Hon Zziwa reiterated EALA's approach on people centredness as a precursor to integration and said the Assembly would take its sensitization activities a notch higher.

"Our new Strategic Plan (2013-2018) is anchored on a people centred approach and we as an Assembly are keen to scale up sensitization and to get the support of all the citizens in the Partner States", she remarked.

The meeting was attended by East African Business Council (EABC) Executive Director, Andrew Luzze Kaggwa, Acting Executive Director of the Eastern Africa National Networks of AIDS Services Organisations (EANNASO), Julius Sabuni, Brenda Dosio, Programme Officer, East Africa Law Society (EALS) and Moshi Patrick, Communications Officer, EACSOF.

Speaking at the meeting, the EABC Executive Director remarked that consultation was vital when enacting legislation and challenged EALA to cast its net wider.

"Integration at all times shall be people centred and private sector driven. I appeal to EALA to engage us more. As the business community, we feel the Assembly could have engaged us further before enacting key Bills such as the East African Community Polythene Materials Control Bill, 2012 and even the East African Community One Stop Border Post (OSBP), Bill, 2012", Luzze remarked.

At the same time, the civil society would like the preservation of Article 59 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC which affords EALA an opportunity to move Private Members Bills'

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... collaboration between EAC and non-state actors would popularize integration



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terming it, an avenue that strengthens democratic space and avails inclusivity in the legislation making process.

On his part, the EANNASO boss urged the parties to constantly share information saying the collaboration between EAC and non-state actors would popularise integration.

Brenda Dosio, Programme Officer at EALS termed partnership vital to the integration dispensation.

"As EALS, we are supportive of the key pieces of legislation the Assembly has passed. We are particularly keen on the EAC Cross-Border Legal Practice Bill, 2014, which the Assembly introduced in January this year", Ms Dosio added.

The Bill seeks to operationalise Article 76 of the Treaty providing for free movement of labour, goods, services capital and the rights to establishment. It also takes into cognizance the mutual recognition of the academic and professional qualifications of the legal fraternity.

Article 5 of the Treaty envisages a People-Centred integration. In this regard, EALA and other stakeholders need to enhance involvement of the people in deciding on the matters of the Community.

Analysts also deem it important for the Assembly to be in tandem with the needs of the people through structured interface. ●

Regional Scribes Encourages to Report on Positive Aspects of EAC Integration

The East African Community (EAC) Secretary General Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera has encouraged journalists from East Africa to promote positively the regional integration process.

"Be pro-EAC integration by reporting objectively about the EAC integration, on its huge benefits and enormous opportunities that exist for the people of the region and for our common good," Dr. Sezibera told about 15 senior journalists and editors on 18 September 2014 who were attending a week-long advance training on reporting inter-religious conflicts in the EAC Region, in Kigali, Republic of Rwanda.

The training ran parallel to the EAC conference on inter-religious collaboration to strengthen peace and security in East Africa. The EAC chief said that the role of the media in EAC integration should be to change the mindsets of people so as to easily and happily embrace the regional integration process. "But to do this, you yourselves need to develop a pro-East African mindset because with it, you will be able to see and write positively from the regional perspective" affirmed Amb. Sezibera.

Media houses and editors, he added, have unique opportunity to swing the pendulum of integration by telling accurately and in balanced way the so many positive work carried out in the Partner States. "It is extremely important that EA journalists assisted in the EAC's goals," he stressed.

The Secretary General later responded to myriad of questions from the journalists on the EAC integration process. The Secretary General was accompanied by the EAC Deputy Secretary General (in charge of Political Federation), Mr Charles Njoroge. Also present at the occasion was Miriam Heidtmann, GIZ's Manager responsible for Peace and Security. The GIZ has facilitated both the inter-religious conference and the training of the journalists.

The scribes Thursday afternoon toured Nyamata Genocide Memorial site; a church where around 2,500 people were killed and it has become emblematic of the barbaric treatment of women during the 1994 genocide.

In the church, the scribes viewed the graphic and audio-visual displays focused particularly on the mass rape, brutalization of women and the use of HIV as a deliberate weapon of genocide. Earlier on, on 16 September, addressing the opening of the journo's training, the Head of EAC Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, Mr Owora Richard Othieno, said that religious issues were sensitive and must be handled with a lot of care and understanding for the unity of the East Africans.

"Your journalistic skills, experience, patience and mutual respect are absolutely necessary to report fairly on religious-related issues and events," he counselled. ●

Court Awards US\$ 9,024 to Former EAC Employee for Loss of Earnings



The First Instance Division on 26 September 2014, delivered a judgment in a Claim by former employee of the East African Community Ms. Angela Amudo against the Secretary General claiming she was employed as a Professional Staff Accountant and was entitled to a five (5) year contract renewable once under the EAC Staff Rules and Regulations 2006, but rather not a Project Staff.

Ms. Amudo also claimed that the Secretary General illegally and in contravention of the Council of Ministers decision EAC/CM 16/ Decision 41, which appointed her to the position of a Project Account as a Professional Staff and that the Respondent caused her to sign a contract for twenty two (22) months instead of the five (5) years. That Secretary General also gave her short periodical renewals of the contract which was contrary to the Staff Rules and Regulations. She further claimed for special damages for loss of earnings for the remaining period of seventy eight (78) months totaling the sum of USD 47,984.

In its judgment the Court found that the letter of appointment of Ms. Amudo as Project Accountant under Regional Integration Support Agreement (RISP) was not in conformity with the Council's decision and Court awarded the Claimant the sum of USD 9,024.00 as loss incurred by her following the misrepresentation of the Council of Ministers decision by the Respondent.

The Court also held that the Position of the Project Accountant that the Claimant held entitled her to a five (5) year contract

with a possibility of renewal but the renewal was subject to satisfactory performance according to Regulation 22 (1) the subject which the Court declined to address extension of contract because it would be speculative.

The Court again in its decision ordered that the appointment of Ms. Amudo for an initial period of twenty (20) months and subsequent periodical extensions of the appointment up to 30th April 2012 were ultra vires (beyond) the powers of the Secretary General and his Deputies and inconsistent with the EAC Staff Rules and Regulations.

The Court further said that as a Project Accountant under RISP funding, the Claimant was paid a consolidated package of USD 6,128.00 only per month and for the service rendered to the Community, the Claimant has been paid an amount of USD 257,376.00 only. According to the salary of a P2 Professional Staff as per the EAC Staff Rules and Regulations, the claimant would have been paid a total sum of USD 266,400 at USD 4,440.00 per month.

The Court therefore held that from the following computation, it was obvious that the loss incurred by the Claimant as per misrepresentation of the Council decision by the Secretary General is the balance between amounts USD 266,400.00 – USD 257,376.00 which is USD 9,025.00. ●

Court Allows Withdrawal of Application in Case Seeking to Impede Granting South Sudan Membership to EAC Bloc



The East African Court of Justice First Instance Division on 4 September 2014, allowed withdrawal of two Applications against the Attorney Generals of the EAC Partner States, the Republics of Uganda (1st Respondent), Kenya (2nd Respondent), United Republic of Tanzania (3rd Respondent), Republic of Rwanda (4th Respondent), Republic of Burundi (5th Respondent) and the Secretary General of the East African Community (6th Respondent).

The subject of the Applications was to seek the Court's orders to temporarily stop the admission of South Sudan as a State Party into the EAC, pending the hearing and determination of the main case.

The Applicants made an oral request to the Court, withdrawing the Applications on the basis that the urgency of the Applications has been diminished by the fact that the main case is scheduled for tomorrow (5th September 2014 for scheduling conference).

The Applicants were thus inclined to withdraw the Applications and focus on the main case. With the consent of the parties, the Court granted the withdrawal with no orders for cost.

The Applicants were represented by Mr Deo Mukwaya while representing the Respondents were Denis Bireje (Commissioner for Civil Litigation), Geoffrey Attoine (Senior State Attorney) and Geoffrey Madete (State Attorney) for the 1st Respondent; Lawrence Ngugi (Senior Principal Litigation Counsel) and Timothy Kihara (Litigation Counsel) for the 2nd Respondent; Ms Alesiaa Mbuya (Principal State Attorney), Abubakar Mrisha (State Attorney) and Haruni Matagane (State Attorney) for the 3rd Respondent; Mr Aimable Malala for the 4th Respondent; the 5th Respondent was not represented and the 6th Respondent was represented by Hon. Wilbert Kaahwa. (Counsel to the Community).

All appeared before a full bench of the First Instance Division.

Rule 51(1) An applicant or claimant may discontinue its reference or claim against all or any of the respondents or may withdraw any part of the reference or claim; and the respondent may in similar manner discontinue or withdraw its counterclaim.

(b) With leave of the Court or with written consent of all parties after a date for opening oral proceedings had been fixed.



House Passes Key Resolution on PWDs

EALA has passed a key Resolution urging the United Nations system to include disability issues in the post 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Resolution moved by Hon Dr. James Ndahiro urges UN agencies, Governments and civil society to ensure that the key issues of PWDs as identified by advocates/experts/researchers in the EAC on disability issues be adopted as one of the key development goals in the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals.

According to the mover of the Resolution, PWDs have challenges. There is a correlation between poverty and disabilities. Post 2015 targets are important to include PWDs. Currently the MDGs are not explicit on matters to do with disabilities", the legislator noted.

The Assembly thus urges the UN to establish a permanent agency within the UN Framework to deal with issues of persons with disabilities. It further calls upon the Secretary General of the EAC and the Council of Ministers to urgently bring this matter to the attention of the Summit of the EAC Heads of State.

The United Nations agencies and stakeholders agreed on and adopted the Millennium Development Goals through establishment of a unifying set of eight key developmental objectives for the global community.

The objective of these key development issues was to foster collaborative action to reduce poverty, improve health and address educational and environmental concerns around the World's most pressing problems, but specifically to address the needs of the World's poorest citizens and the world's most marginalized populations;

Despite this initiative, there is a striking gap in the current MDGs to the effect that an estimated 1 billion people worldwide who live with one or more physical, sensory (blindness/deafness), intellectual or mental health impairment are not mentioned in any of the 8 Goals, the attendant 21 targets, the 60 indicators nor in the Millennium Declaration.

During debate, Members stated there was need to ensure access to resources to enable PWDs to live a meaningful life and to contribute to development of the economies.



Hon Abubakar Zein urged for a specific MDG on PWDs. "We are neither begging, nor pleading, we are demanding this be done since it is a human rights issue", Hon Zein said.

"We must mainstream the rights upfront in the same way we have done with the rights of women and all others," the legislator added.

Hon Zein further remarked that it was necessary as a first for the EALA to revise its Rules of Procedure to ensure the Assembly is disability compliant.

Hon Shyrose Bhanji decried the harassment of albinos and said they were been denied the basic rights including education.

"We must support the fight against such harassment and I want to laud the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for taking up the matter at the forefront" she added.

It was noted that a network of EAC Parliamentarians with disabilities had been established at the EAC PWD Conference in Nairobi and that the linkages may be used to advocate for their case further.

Hon Frederic Ngenzebuhoro supported the move to ensure PWDs get fair treatment in line with article 120 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC.

Hon Nancy Abisai called for equal opportunities for all. "We must provide opportunities including education, to ensure citizens of the region are empowered", Hon Abisai said.



Mara Forever: Over 300,000 Turn up for Mara Day Celebrations

Over 300,000 people thronged the Maasai Mara University, Narok County, Republic of Kenya to collectively celebrate Mara Ecosystem and its impacts on their livelihoods.

The celebrations on 15 September 2014, were attended by dignitaries from the two Partner States of East Africa: Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, representatives from the County Governments of Narok and Bomet, Mara region, Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), Schools, Private Sector and members of the Civil Society.

LVBC Executive Secretary, Dr. Canisius Kanangire, said: "15th September was declared 'Mara Day' by the Lake Victoria Basin 10th Sectoral Council of Ministers on 4th May 2012 in Kigali, Rwanda."

He said the Sectoral Council directive reaffirmed "high level policy response to the sustainable management of Mara River and ecosystems in the Lake Victoria Basin." Dr. Kanangire lauded the two countries and County Governments of Narok and Bomet, to have fully owned up the preparatory processes leading to the celebration.

Dr Kanangire expressed appreciation for the support from the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania, Development Partners such as the USAID East Africa, TeTratech, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP) and the Private Sector towards sustaining Mara River Ecosystem.

The United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Kenya have a shared resolve to sustainably manage Mara River Basin as a critical ecosystem in Lake Victoria Basin contributing to sustainable socio-economic development, biodiversity conservation and vibrancy of the economies of the States.

LVBC considers these collaborative efforts by Partner States and non-state actors as a critical step towards sustainable transboundary natural resource management and contribution to the EAC integration agenda.

The Executive Secretary urged Private Sector and Community Based Civil Society Organizations to play an active role in not only making 15 September 2014 memorable but galvanize efforts geared towards sustainable management of Mara as the lifeline of millions of people and biodiversity in the world famous Serengeti National Park and Maasai-Mara National Game Reserve.

The Mara Day celebrations guided by the theme: Mara Forever, Mara Milele coincides with the great Wildebeest migration of an estimated 2 million animals from Serengeti National Park in the United Republic of Tanzania to Maasai-Mara Game Reserve in the Republic of Kenya from July through October annually. Maasai-Mara and Serengeti National park constitute the 7 New World Wonders.

The 3rd Mara Day Celebrations in Narok were preceded by tree planting, fun and sports among other activities. These build-up events were geared towards celebrating Mara River as a regional shared resource for sustainable economic development of Lake Victoria Basin and increasing the level of awareness among stakeholders on the critical challenges and importance of Mara River Basin Ecosystems for posterity.

"Mara Day Celebration leads to visibility of the region, its natural resources and the impact Mara ecosystem has on the livelihoods and economies of the sister countries of the East African Community," said Benedict Ole Kuyan, the Regional Administrative Secretary for the Mara Region, the United Republic of Tanzania said in Tarime District.



Nairobi Hosts First Edition of East Afripack Exhibition



The first edition of East Afripack exhibition organized by the world renowned exhibition planner in the packaging and processing industry, in partnership with East African Community Secretariat, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Kenya Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development concluded 12 September, 2014 at Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

The four-day East Afripack exhibition attended by more than 1000 show goers hosted different parallel meetings on Food Processing and Packaging Innovation for a sustainable development, an occasion which featured hotly debated topics such as: Innovation trends in the agro food chains; Sustainable packaging; Challenges and solutions; Normative and Education pre-requisite for a sustainable development in agro food chains.

Addressing the 135 exhibitors from 18 countries at the official opening ceremony held at Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) 9th September 2014, Cabinet Secretary Mr. Adan Mohammed said packaging and converting industry can play a key role in reducing the waste thereby fostering progress and development in Africa.

He added that, packaging is the ambassador of country's product because it will be seen before the product and the country.

Mr. Adan Mohamed reiterated that the East African Region has continued to undertake reforms on the Ease of Doing Business and significant progress has been made towards improving the business environment.

The Cabinet Secretary stated that East Afripack demonstrates the gains and synergies to be created through public private partnership collaborations. He pledged the support of the East African Community to all future East Afripack activities.

The EAC Secretariat showcased the projects and programmes of the regional integration process and the achievements registered to date by the various Organs and Institutions of the Community. The EAC pavilion received visitors, businessmen and women, academicians, professionals and students who were all enthusiastic to know more about the integration process.

The first edition of East Afripack exhibition was attended by among others representative from the most important companies, ranging from multinationals to leading local enterprises from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Ethiopia. In addition, 80 select delegates from the private industry and EAC institutions were invited as part of  ers program headed by the exhibition's steering committee.

Court Delivers a Judgment on Matter Concerning Elections of Tanzania Representatives to EALA

The First Instance Division on 26 September, 2014 delivered a judgment on a matter concerning the election of Tanzania representatives to the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).

The case was filed by Anthony Calist Komu, a member of the political party Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) against the Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania. The Applicant who unsuccessfully contested for EALA membership was challenging the process of the said elections on grounds that it violated Article 50(1) of the EAC Treaty.

The Applicant prayed for declarations that, (a) the election for members of the East African Legislative Assembly conducted by the Parliament of Tanzania on 17/4/2012 was in flagrant violation of Articles 50 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (b) a declaration that in obtaining the representatives from Opposition Political Parties and Tanzania Mainland Article 50 of the same Treaty envisages, inter alia, the observance and compliance of the principal of proportional representation (c) order prohibiting the Parliament of Tanzania from further violation of Article 50 of the Treaty by not complying with the principal of proportional representation and allowing candidates from political parties which are not represented in the national assembly.

The Court in delivering the judgment declared that to the extent that the election for members of the EALA conducted by the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania on 17/4/2012 was premised on only political parties as the sole grouping as opposed to all other groups envisaged in Article 50 (1) of the Treaty, then the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania violated the said Article.

Secondly, the Court made a declaration that by allowing a political party without representation in the National Assembly (Tanzania Democratic Alliance -TADEA) to field a candidate in the election of 17/4/2012 for representatives to the EALA, then the National Assembly of Tanzania was in violation of Article 50(1) of the Treaty. Finally the Court ordered the Applicant be granted a quarter costs of the case for having partly succeeded in his case. ●

Article 50 (1) of the Treaty provides that: The National Assembly of each Partner State shall elect, not from among its members, nine members of the Assembly, who shall represent as much as it is feasible, the various political parties represented in the National Assembly, shades of opinion, gender and other special interest groups in that Partner State, in accordance with such procedure as the National Assembly of each Partner State may determine.

EAC Showcases at 9th Mwanza East Africa Trade Fair



The EAC Secretariat show-cased progress and benefits of the regional integration process at the 9th Mwanza East Africa Trade Fair organized by Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture at Nyamagana Grounds in Mwanza, Tanzania.

The 29th August – 7th September Trade Fair attracted a big number of companies, traders and visitors from all the five East African Partner States and also from Hongkong, India and China.

The fair is popular for exhibiting all kind of consumer and Industrial products, services, machinery and technology and has provided opportunity to network, exchange experiences, find partnership and joint venture with the business people from the entire regional bloc. The Chinese Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania, Amb. Dr. Lu Youqing is officially opened the trade fair on 4 September 2014.

The EAC Secretariat show-cased projects and programmes of the regional integration process and the achievements registered to date by the various Organs and Institutions of the Community.

The EAC pavilion received visitors, businessmen and women, academicians, professionals and students who were all eager to know more about the integration process.

Several integration milestones have been recorded for example the successful implementation of the Single Customs Territory along the Northern Corridor which has resulted into speedy delivery of cargo from Mombasa to Kigali, a development likely to reduce cost of doing business and traders could save \$45 million annually.

The cost of transporting a container to Kigali from Mombasa has reduced by 32% from \$4,990 before implementation of the Single Customs Territory to \$3,387, which translates into a saving of \$1,603.

The Central Corridor from Dar es Salaam to Kigali and Bujumbura has also started implementing the single customs territory which makes trading across borders easier. ●

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