EAC Holds 8th Sectoral Council Meeting

The 8th meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers responsible for East African Community Affairs was held from 2 - 3 February 2009 in Arusha, Tanzania. The Sectoral Council, which was chaired by the Chairperson and Minister of EAC Affairs of the Republic of Rwanda, Hon. Monique Mukaluriza, was attended by the newly appointed Minister for EAC Affairs, Burundi, Hon. Hafsa Mossi; Hon. Amason J. Kingi, EGH, Minister of EAC, Kenya; Rt. Hon. Eriya Kategaya, 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of EAC, Uganda; and Hon. Dr. Diodorus Kamala, Minister for East African Cooperation, United Republic of Tanzania. Other senior officials from the Partner States and the EAC Secretariat were also in attendance.

EAC Secretary General, Amb. Juma Mwapachu who was also in attendance welcomed the new Ministers and said the sectoral council meeting came just before the historic Retreat of EAC Organs and Institution scheduled for 9-10 February 2009 in Kigali, Rwanda.

He said the role of the ministers and their respective ministries in coordinating the regional integration process cannot be underestimated especially at this time when the integration process is deepening and widening and that the Ministers and their Senior Officials will be heavily relied upon to provide rational strategies, pragmatic recommendations and guidance on the integration that will assist in further advancing the cause of regional integration and development.

The newly appointed Minister for EAC Affairs, Burundi, Hon. Hafsa Mossi commended the EAC Partner States for building a strong Community and...
She said Burundi will always contribute towards the achievement of EAC objectives despite its weak and fragile status as a result of the prolonged internal crisis that has now come to an end.

The 8th meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers responsible for East African Community Affairs considered several issues, among them were: EAC Calendar of activities for the period January – June 2009; progress reports on EPA and Common Market negotiations; COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite agreements; Inter Regional Coordinating Committee (IRCC); construction of Arusha- Namanga-Athi River Road; 4th East African Petroleum Conference; Namanga Cross Border Electrification Project; Construction of the EAC Headquarters; etc.

The Report of the 8th meeting of the Sectoral Council will be presented to the full session of the EAC Council of Ministers for further action.

The Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Republic of Tanzania, Ambassador Tim Clarke paid a working visit to the Headquarters of the East African Community in Arusha, Tanzania on 4 February 2009 and held discussions with the Secretary General, Amb. Juma Mwapachu. Ambassador Tim Clarke was accompanied by the First Secretary (Natural Resources), Ms Anne-Claire Leon. Also in attendance was the Principal Resource Mobilization Officer (PRMO), Dr. James Njagu, the Principal Environment and Natural Resources Officer, Ms Wivine Ntamubano, and the Senior Public Relations Officer, Mr. Owora Richard Othieno.

The Secretary General and his guest held discussions on a wide range of issues, including: the current global financial crunch and its possible impact on the EAC Partner States, climate change, and progress in the ongoing EPA and Common Market negotiations. Both sides concurred that migration issues lie at the heart of the current negotiations of the EAC Common Market Protocol, hence must be handled carefully. The two discussed the current status of agro forestry, land use, agriculture and natural resources in the region, as well as the role of the Civil Society in the regional integration process.

The meeting also discussed the forthcoming political dialogue with Ambassadors of member countries of EU with the EAC scheduled for 5 March 2008 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The dialogue is expected to address regional integration issues such as
the proposed amendments of the EAC Treaty, good governance, Common Market and EPA negotiations, Aid for Trade, peace and security, the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite engagements, the proposed African continental government, as well as the status of EALA and EACJ programmes.

Amb. Clarke informed the Secretary General that 2009 is the European Year of Creativity and Innovations and invited the EAC to join the EU in the celebrations, which will be held in Dar es Salaam with a series of activities to involve the private sector, university students and other stakeholders.

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8th Round of EAC CM negotiations end in Kisumu, Kenya

The eighth round of the EAC Common Market negotiations ended on 6 February 2009 in Kisumu, Kenya with the members of the High Level Task Force (HLTF) concurring that as the Community progresses from a Customs Union to a Common Market, there will be a need to undertake institutional review for effective functioning of the Common Market. The meeting, which was attended by over 145 members of the High Level Task Force from the Partner States, was officially opened by the Minister of East African Community of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Amason Jeffah Kingi on 29 January 2009 at the Imperial Hotel, Kisumu, Kenya.

Hon. Kingi noted that as the regional economic community moves further towards deeper integration, it is necessary that Partner States relinquish some of their sovereignty to other Organs in the Community. He said “it is imperative that as the Community moves into deeper integration of the Common Market, the EAC institutions need to be reviewed if we are to achieve an effective Common Market. National interest would conflict with the regional interest and Partner States would hurt the cause of deeper integration by hanging on too jealously to sovereignty. Partner States should avoid being more concerned about delivering locally over the short-term in order to win election but should focus on a larger picture of a prosperous, competitive, peaceful East African Community.”

Hon Kingi observed that to the reformation of the EAC institutions, it will be necessary that adequate finances be mobilized to be able to fund the EAC institutions. He said the current mode of financing of EAC through equal sharing of the budget of the EAC has proven unsustainable and therefore this calls for serious consideration of an innovative way of financing the Community. “We could learn best practice from the European Union that has successfully been able to run its institutions from some funds from the Partner States whereby a certain percentage of the revenues are channeled directly to EU”, said the Minister.

Amb. Julius Onen, the Deputy Secretary General (Projects and Programmes) noted with appreciation significant progress made so far in negotiating the EAC Common Market Protocol.

The opening ceremony was also attended by the Minister of Immigration and Registration of Persons, Kenya, Hon Gerald Otieno Kajwang’, the Assistant Minister of Finance, Kenya, Hon. Oburu Odinga, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of East African Community, Kenya, Mr. David S. Nalo, the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Province, Mr. Paul Olando, and the Mayor of Kisumu, His Worship Sam Okello.

The ninth round of negotiations will be held from 23 February to 4 March 2009 in Bujumbura, Burundi.
EAC Secretary General bids farewell to outgoing DLOs

The Secretary General of the East African Community, Amb. Juma Mwapachu has highly commended the outgoing Defence Liaison Officers (DLOs) from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda for setting high standard and performance within the Defence Liaison Offices at the EAC Secretariat, in Arusha, Tanzania. Amb. Juma Mwapachu, who was officiating at the farewell party for the outgoing DLOs; Brigadier General Daniel Matiku (Tanzania), Col. Hilary Kioko (Kenya), and Brigadier General Fred Tolit (Uganda) on 30 January 2009 at the Kibo Palace Hotel in Arusha, said the three DLOs had raised the bar and set heights in performance and a challenge to the incoming DLOs.

The Secretary General lauded the DLOs for their excellent work in areas of agreed cooperation in the Defence sector among the Partner States namely; joint military training and field operations, technical assistance, visits and exchange of information, etc. Amb. Mwapachu also credited the outgoing DLOs for the ongoing work on the establishment of the Directorate of Peace and Security, and the upgrading of the current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in Defence into a full Protocol.

The three DLOs have been replaced by the following officers: Col. Michael Gayo Luwongo (Tanzania), Col. Christopher Imanene (Kenya) and Col. Kasura Kyomukama (Uganda). Other DLOs at the EAC Secretariat are Brigadier General Nbert Kalimba/Dean (Rwanda) and Brigadier General Salvator Nahimana (Burundi).
The Secretary General of the East African Community, Amb. Juma Mwapachu has hailed the formation and role of the East African Energy Regulators Association (EAERA), saying “its establishment and role in harmonizing policies, rules and regulations and sharing of information in the energy sector will definitely lead to bigger regional market for energy and a robust energy infrastructure that will underpin the region’s economic development and attract serious investors in the sector”.

The Secretary General who was meeting a delegation from the EAC Energy Regulators Association on 5 February 2009 in his office, lead by the Chairman, Eng. Dr. F.B. Sebbowa, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA)/Uganda, said the visit by the officials of the Association came at a time when the EAC was in the process of finalizing the East African Power Master Plan (EAPMP).

Other members of the delegation included; Mr. Johnson S.D. Kwesigabo, the Secretary/General Counsel of ERA, and Mrs. Muna Miriam Mahanyu, Director Legal Services, who represented Mr. Haruna Masebu, the Director General of Tanzania’s Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority. The EAC Senior Energy Officer, Mr. Peter Kinuthia was also in attendance.

The delegation briefed the Secretary General on the formation of the East African Energy Regulators Association in 2008, its roles and functions, its envisaged contribution towards the achievement of the East African Power Master Plan. The Association aims at harmonizing policies, rules and regulations and share information as well as capacity building in the energy sector in the region. The Association requested for guidance from the EAC Secretariat on how best it could play its role in the regional integration process. The Secretary General guided the Association on how it could be taken on board within the EAC framework. The Secretary General said with the ongoing interconnection works between Kenya and Tanzania, Uganda and Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda, coupled with the implementation of the EAPMP, the relevance of the Regulators are critical and therefore the need to structure the Association into the EAC framework.

The Secretary General pledged the Secretariat’s full support to the Association in its quest to become an institution of the EAC, while drawing best practices from the establishment of CASSOA, one of the regional institutions of the Community.
The Secretary General of the East African Community on 5 February 2009 in Arusha, Tanzania signed the forward of the first comprehensive “Kamusi kamili ya Kiswahili” Kiswahili Dictionary to be published by the Longhorn Publishers based in Nairobi, Kenya. Present at the signing ceremony was Mr. Gilbert Awino, Editor Kiswahili of Longhorn Publishers, the EAC Principal Education Officer, Mr. Aloysius Chebet and the Principal Community Development Officer, Mrs. Perpetue Miganda.

The Kiswahili Dictionary, which is expected to be on the shelves by June 2009, was compiled by Professors: John Gongwe Kiango (Tanzanian), James Salehe Mdee (Tanzanian), and Kimani Njogu (Kenyan) and Mr. Adam Shafi (Tanzanian). The Dictionary, which took about 5 years to compile, will contain between 600 and 620 pages with an initial print run of 10,000 copies. It will also have technical explanations on entomology, pictures, clouds etc.

Kiswahili language is the lingua franca of the EAC Community and the forthcoming Kiswahili Dictionary is expected to popularize the language further within and beyond the region.
EALA to Hold 4th Meeting of the Second Session

The 4th meeting of the second session of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) will be held from 16 – 28 February 2009 at the East African Legislative Assembly Chambers located in Arusha.

According to the programme issued by the office of the Clerk, Members are expected to debate several Bills among them: the EAC Elections Bill, the Acts of the Community (amendment) Bill 2009, the EAC Tourism and Wildlife Management Bill, Lake Victoria Basin Commission Bill, and the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight (CASSOA) Bill.

The 4th meeting of the second session will also receive Progress Reports from the various Committees including the Legal, Rules and Privileges and Conflict Resolution Committees that is expected to meet the EAC Secretary General, Amb. Juma Mwapachu on 20 February 2009 to discuss governance issues in the region.

The East African Legislative Assembly is the legislative organ of the East African Community. Its membership consists of a total of 52, of whom 45 are elected members (9 from each Partner State) and seven ex-officio members (the Ministers responsible for EAC Affairs from the Partner States, the Secretary General of the Community and the Counsel to the Community). The Assembly has legislative functions as well as oversight of all East African Community matters. The enactment of legislation of the Community is effected by means of Bills passed by the Assembly and assented to by the Heads of State, and every Bill that has been duly passed and assented to shall be styled an Act of the Community.