



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**  
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## President Tshishekedi officiates over the launch of EAC Verification Mission to DRC

The President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, His Excellency Felix Tshishekedi, on 25th June, 2021 officiated over the launch of the East African Community Verification Mission to the vast Central African country.

EAC Secretary General Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki launched the mission in the presence of President Tshishekedi in the eastern DRC town of Goma. Hon. Dr. Mathuki presented the EAC flag to the DRC Head of State to mark the unveiling of the mission.

Speaking when he received the EAC delegation, President Tshishekedi hailed the progress made by the Community in its integration agenda, adding that DRC was committed to joining the EAC at the earliest opportunity.

The EAC Verification Mission that shall be in the country from 25th June to 4th July, 2021 is in the country to assess the suitability of the DRC for admission into the Community.

Addressing the media after his meeting with the President, Dr. Mathuki disclosed that the technical team in Kinshasa would engage their DRC counterparts to ensure that the verification was finalised and a report completed in time in readiness for presentation to the Council of Ministers who would in table it before the Summit of EAC Heads of State for consideration.

Dr. Mathuki said that the Heads of State would then make a decision on whether to admit DRC into the Community, adding that admission would make the DRC the 7th Partner State in the EAC.

“DRC neighbours five EAC Partner States, namely Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and South Sudan. DRC would be an important country if it joins the East African Community and her entry would strengthen historical relations with East Africa,” said the Secretary General, who added that the admission of DRC would boost the Community economically and geopolitically.

“The people of DRC would benefit because of the free movement of people from DRC other countries without a visa if they are fully in the EAC,” said the SG, adding that DRC would also nominate nine members the East African Legislative Assembly and judges to the East African Court of Justice, the judicial organ of the Community.

Dr. Mathuki said that the entry of DRC into the EAC would also ease the free movement of goods especially to the country’s eastern region, which relies on the Dar es Salaam and Mombasa ports for her imports and exports.

“The president has received the message from the EAC Heads of State with a lot of happiness and he is looking forward to the report to be out and hopefully, very soon, DRC will be a full member of the East African Community,” he said.

Accompanying Dr. Mathuki to the meeting with President Tshishekedi were Rwanda’s Minister of State for EAC Affairs, Prof. Nshuti Manasseh, the Judge President of the East African Court of Justice, Justice Nestor Kayobera, and Kenya’s Principal Secretary for EAC, Dr. Kevit Desai.

The EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of the Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, is leading the Verification team in Kinshasa, the DRC’s capital city, on behalf of the Secretary General.

DRC’s geographical area is far much larger than all the six EAC Partner States put together. DRC has a geographical area of 2.4 million km<sup>2</sup> while EAC is approximately 1.8 million km<sup>2</sup>. However, East Africa’s has a population of approximately 170 million, twice that of its Central African neighbour with 86 million people.

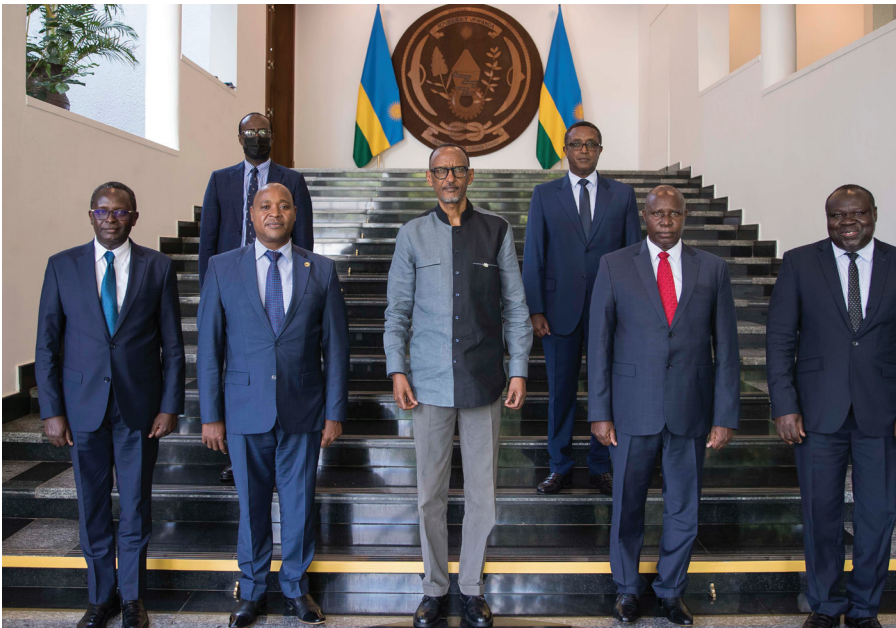
The verification team comprises three experts from each Partner State funded by the EAC Secretariat and an additional maximum of two experts to be funded by the nominating Partner State to carry out the Verification Mission from 25th June to 4th July, 2021.

The Summit of EAC Heads of State at its 21st Ordinary Meeting held on 27th February, 2021 considered the application by DRC to join the Community and directed the Council to expeditiously undertake a verification mission in accordance with the EAC procedure for admission of new members into the EAC and report to the 22nd Summit.

The verification team will, among other things, review the current status of the DRC in international law and establish the country’s level of conformity with the criteria for admission of foreign countries as provided in the Treaty.

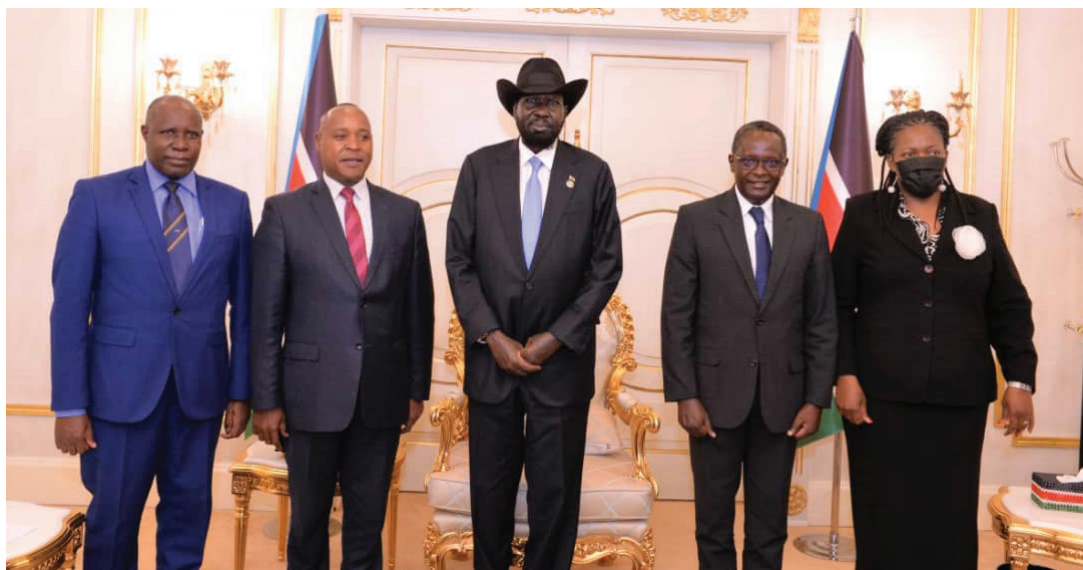
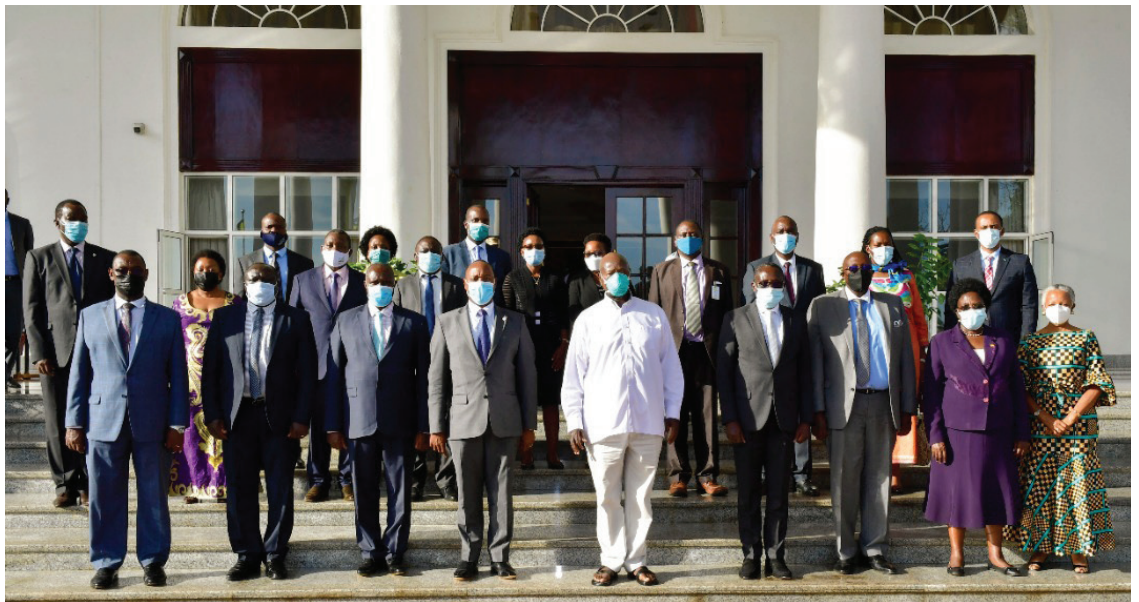
Under the Treaty, the Criteria for the admission of new countries into the Community include: acceptance of the Community as set out in the Treaty; adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice; potential contribution to the strengthening of integration within the East African region, and; geographical proximity to and inter-dependence between it (the foreign country) and the EAC Partner States.

The other criteria for admission of a new member are: establishment and maintenance of a market-driven economy; and; social and economic policies being compatible with those of the Community.



*President Paul Kagame urges EAC Organs and Institutions to work in harmony in order to achieve the objectives of the community as enshrined in the Treaty, advises the Secretary General to urgently put the operations of the Secretariat in order and address all pending matters towards implementation of the various Summit decisions on regional integration projects and programmes.*

*H.E Yoweri Museveni advises the Secretary General to urgently re-arrange the focus of the Community in strategic sectors to create jobs and wealth for the people of East Africa, notes Agri-business; Industries; ICT and Service as critical sectors, which can change the lives of East Africans.*



*H.E Salva Kiir Mayardit reaffirms his commitment to the EAC integration and urges the Secretary General to devise strategies that will further enhance the integration of South Sudan into the Community.*



*President Évariste Ndayishimiye calls for enhanced regional connectivity through infrastructure development, such as roads, railways, and communications to boost the movement of people across the region.*



*President Samia Suluhu Hassan stresses the need for a comprehensive review of the Treaty and other legal instruments of the Community to reflect the current times.*



*President Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi urges the EAC Secretariat to continue working closely with Partner States to address Non-tariff Barriers (NTBs) that were impeding intra-regional trade and singles out the tiff between national standards bodies that certify goods for export across the region.*



## **EAC tables USD 91.7 Million Budget estimates before EALA for the 2021/2022 Financial Year**

The East African Community, on 28th June, 2021 tabled before the East African Legislative Assembly the budget estimates for the 2021/2022 Financial Year totalling US\$91,784,296.

The Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Kenya's Minister for EAC, Hon. Adan Mohamed, in the Budget Speech read on his behalf by Chief Administrative Secretary, Hon. Ken Obura, said that the 2021/2022 budget was coming at a time the COVID-19 pandemic had ravaged economies through lockdowns and economic shutdowns that had affected economic performance in the entire region negatively.

The 2021/2022 Budget is themed Economic Recovery through Industrialization and Inclusive Growth.



On priorities for the 2021/2022 FY, Hon. Mohamed said that the EAC would focus on 10 priority areas, namely: Private Sector Development; Peace and Security; Health/COVID-19 Response; Trade Development; Infrastructure Development; EAC Digitalization Agenda; Agriculture, Nutrition, Biodiversity, Environment and Circular Economy; Expansion of membership to EAC and strengthening relationships with the African Union and other regional organisations (RECS); Institutional transformation including Skills Development, and; Promotion of awareness creation and dissemination of information on the Community.

The 2021/2022 Budget is allocated to the EAC Organs and Institutions as follows: EAC Secretariat – US\$43,858,070; East African Legislative Assembly – US\$15,465,345; East African Court of Justice – US\$3,791,723; Lake Victoria Basin Commission – US\$8,167,585; East African Science & Technology Commission – US\$1,555,088; East Africa Kiswahili Commission – US\$1,284,219; East Africa Health Research Commission – US\$1,860,181; East African Competition Authority – US\$1,011,136; Inter University Council for East Africa – USD 11,161,510, and; Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization – US\$3,629,439.

This year's budget is a step down from the amount of US\$97,667,707 approved by the August House for the 2020/2021 Financial Year.

The Minister further gave a scorecard on the performance of the regional economy light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which he noted might not go away soon.

“The reality is that COVID-19 will be with us for a much longer time than earlier anticipated. The impact of the pandemic on EAC Partner States’ economies has been devastating, to say the least. Manufacturing and agriculture sectors have been affected due to disruption in global supply chains and a fall in global demand for key export goods such as horticulture produce,” said Hon. Mohamed adding that during the year 2020, exports of goods shrank in all EAC Partner States.

“For example, exports from Kenya and Uganda, contracted by 7.6 percent and 1.7 percent respectively, between March to June 2020 while during the same period, imports of intermediate goods contracted by 25 percent, 11.3 percent and 22.9 percent in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania respectively,” he said.

“Similarly, the industrial sector in Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda shrunk by 3.5 percent, 0.5 percent and 6.3 percent respectively. In addition, Covid-19 has led to deteriorating external positions in all EAC Partner States on account of its adverse consequences on tourism and aviation sectors, workers’ remittances, foreign direct investment and loan disbursements,” added the Chair.

The Chairperson informed the Honourable Members that economic growth in the EAC region averaged 2.3 percent in 2020 compared to an average of 5.4 in 2019.

“The weak regional economic growth in 2020 was mainly due to disruption of businesses and economic activities in the region following the outbreak of the



COVID-19 pandemic for which the first case was reported in the EAC region in mid-March 2020. Containment measures put in place to limit its spread, including travel restrictions and lockdowns, led to a contraction of GDP in all the EAC Partner States," said Hon. Mohamed.

"The most affected sectors were services and affiliated sectors, and those that are dependent on global supply chains. Growth in the EAC region is expected to recover in 2021, reflecting a resumption of global economic activity with the easing of containment measures and sustained implementation of growth-supporting measures."

On the EAC Single Customs Territory, the Cabinet Secretary said that during the next financial year, Customs would focus on some key areas, among them: Finalization of the review and development of Customs Union Instruments including the comprehensive review of the EAC Common External Tariff (CET), EAC Customs Management Act 2004, and

the EAC Regional Customs bond and the regulatory framework for the Assembly Sector.

Customs would also focus on the: Consolidation of the gains of the Single Customs Territory for the full attainment of a fully-fledged Customs Union; Enhancement of Interconnectivity of systems in key sectors to facilitate information exchange; Development of suitable infrastructure to facilitate cross border women traders, and; Strengthening of mechanisms to resolve Customs related Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) that hamper intra EAC trade.

On the Monetary Union, the CS informed the House that in February 2021, the 40th meeting of the Council of Ministers decided that the Act for the Establishment of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI) comes into force on 1st July, 2021.

"The notice for the commencement of EAMI Act was subsequently gazetted in March 2021. Official communication notifying Partner States to express

interest to host the EAMI was forwarded to the Partner States in May 2021," said the Council Chair, adding that once established, the EAMI would be expected to carry out much of the preparatory work for the creation of the East African Monetary Union.

On infrastructure development, in the FY 2021/2022, the Chair said that the Secretariat would continue implementing successor multinational road projects linking Partner States and the Phase II OSBP programme including the design, construction and operationalization of 12 new prioritized OSBPs within the EAC region.

"The Secretariat has further secured funding amounting to USD 1,748,565 from the AfDB for undertaking design of the multinational Burundi/Tanzania Road: Mpanda (Vikonge)-Uvinza and Uvinza-Kanyani/Gisuru-Rusengo and Makebuko-Bugarama sections," he said.

On civil aviation, the Hon. Mohamed said that EAC Partner States had committed to fully implement the Yamoussoukro Decision as part of the Common Market Protocol and in line with the ongoing efforts by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) to establish and operationalize the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

"Mr. Speaker, in the FY 2021/22, the Civil Aviation and Airports Sub-Sector priorities will focus on implementation of the EAC Upper Airspace Seamless Operations project (2017/18 to 2021/22), and on implementing strategies to reduce the current high cost of intra-EAC Air tickets and air operations including the harmonization of charges and taxes," said the Chairperson.

On legislation, the Chairperson informed the Assembly of the passing the East African Community Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2020; the East African Community Appropriation Bill, 2020; The Lake Victoria Basin Commission Bill, 2020; and the East African Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

"The Assembly also adopted a number of resolutions in order to further its legislative work, the notable one being, the resolution to establish an emergency

fund to facilitate the response of the Community to Pandemics and Disease outbreaks to the Council," said the CS.

"The Assembly's representative role was undertaken through the respective EALA Chapters in the Partner States. The Chapters undertook sensitization of the people of EAC on the regional integration process, on the theme, "EAC beyond 22 years: EAC Integration Agenda: Accessing the gains of Integration," said Hon. Mohamed.

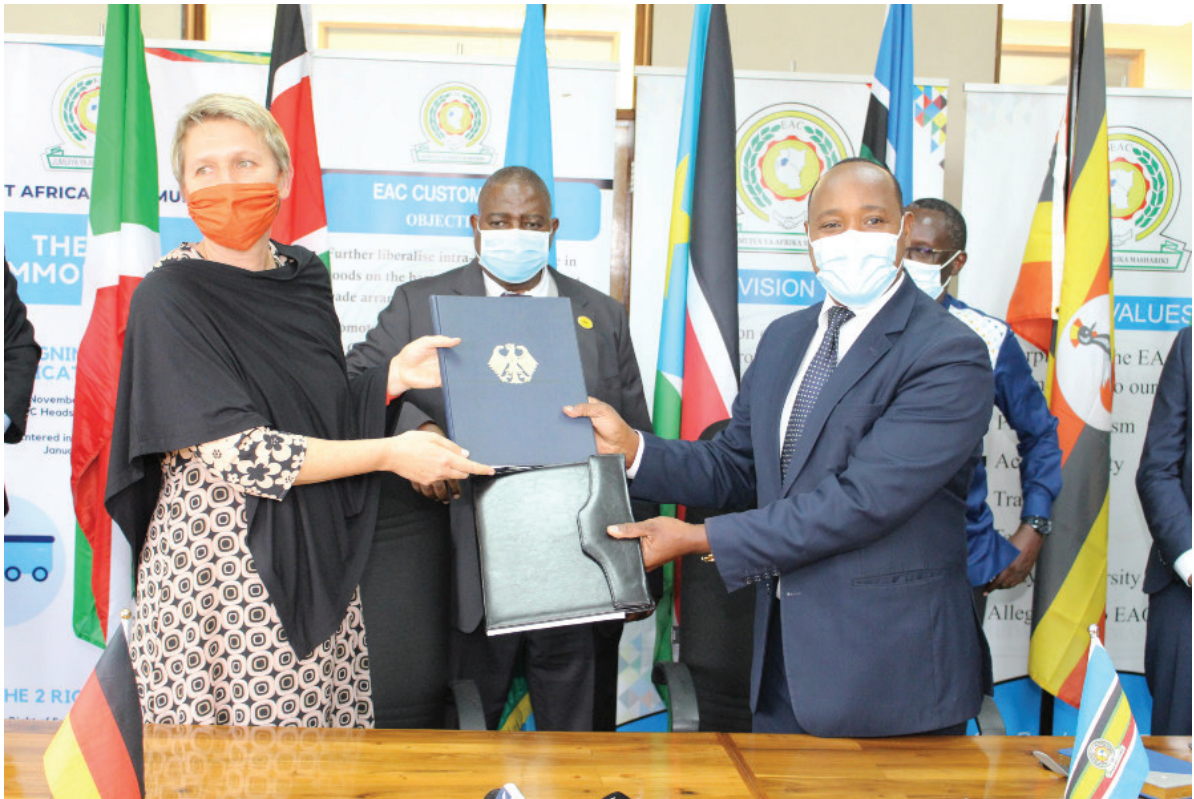
The Chairperson added that in the next Financial Year, the Assembly would prioritize the enactment of the Bills which are under consideration by its Standing Committees (the EAC Integrity and Anti-Corruption Bill, 2020, the East African Community Pharmaceuticals Bill, 2020; the EAC Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Bill, 2021 and the EAC Livestock Bill, 2021), oversight of the implementation of EAC COVID-19 Recovery Plan and continued sensitization of the people to support the integration process.

On the East African Court of Justice, the Chairperson informed the Assembly that the number of new cases filed before the Court increased rapidly during the last Financial Year despite the Covid-19 pandemic from 60 in the FY 2019/2020 to 78 in the current financial year.

"During the current 2020/2021 FY in which business was largely disrupted by COVID-19, the Court concluded 18 more cases than in the previous financial year due to the deployment of technology whereby all cases were being conducted online with litigants, Judges and staff scattered all over the region," said the Chairperson.

The Chairperson disclosed that the Court's priority interventions in the FY 2021/2022 would be to: increase the number of cases concluded at the earliest possible time; enhance the skills of judges and staff for delivery of justice; conduct sensitization and awareness programmes in the Partner States; and enhance collaborations with other regional and international Courts.

## EAC Secretary General and German Ambassador sign Financing Agreements worth US\$65 Million



New momentum for cooperation between the East African Community and the Federal Republic of Germany following the signing of two Government Agreements thus paving the way for the implementation of projects of a total volume of US\$65 million in the areas of health, digital skills and water resources management.

The agreements were signed by EAC Secretary General, Hon (Dr.) Peter Mathuki and H.E. Regine Hess, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Republic of Tanzania and the EAC.

Amb. Hess who paid a courtesy call on the Secretary General at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha today, congratulated the Dr. Mathuki on his assumption of office as new Secretary General at the end of April.

On the occasion of their first meeting, Amb. Hess and Dr. Mathuki signed two government agreements on development cooperation. The Agreements are the legal basis for the implementation of projects in the areas of health, water resource management and digital skills, worth 65 million US Dollars (EUR 53.8 million).

In the health sector, the continued cooperation with the Regional Centre of Excellence for Vaccines, Immunization & Health Supply Chain Management, located at the University of Rwanda in Kigali (17 million Dollars), will allow the centre to expand its expertise and reputation, especially in the areas of digitalization in health supply chain management, cold-chain management and quality control / drug safety. Also under the health sector is the release

of additional funds (30 Million Dollars) for the EAC's immunization programme with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance that will contribute to reducing child morbidity and mortality in the region. The funds will finance the procurement of at least four different types of vaccines (Pentavalent, Rotavirus, Pneumococcal and Measles second dose), to be made available for routine immunization and immunization campaigns for children in all six Partner States of the East African Community

The Integrated Water Resource Management Programme, which was successfully launched in mid-February 2020 and is implemented by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), an EAC institution, will be stocked up (by 12 million Dollars) to finance additional measures to improve water quality and availability through strategic and sustainable management of the Lake Victoria Basin.

In order to strengthen digital skills and innovation in East Africa, the Secretariat and Germany further agreed on the implementation of the project "Digital Skills for an Innovative East African Industry" (dSkills@EA) that builds on the results of the project "Centre of Excellence for ICT in East Africa" (CENIT@EA). The new phase (USD 6 million) strengthens digital skills of especially young women and men from all six EAC Partner States to strengthen their employability and innovation capacities. Based on a strong industry-academia partnership and regional collaboration, dSkills@EA together with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) will promote innovative digital solutions for the region's economic development through the Master programme "Embedded and Mobile Systems", trainings and innovation transfer and entrepreneurship.

Ambassador Hess underscored Germany's commitment to remain one of the leading partners to the region.

"We can look back to over 20 years of successful cooperation with the EAC Secretariat. We are committed to continue this cooperation in key areas such as health, trade and economic infrastructure; and technical and vocational education and training under your new leadership of the EAC Secretariat, Hon. Secretary General Mathuki," said Amb. Hess.

She expressed her appreciation, that the cooperation particularly supports the youth in the region, adding that the younger generation in East Africa would benefit from the programmes.

With a view to the current Covid-19 pandemic, that also hit hard Eastern Africa, Ambassador Hess promised that Germany will commit additional funds of up to US\$6.6 million for pandemic preparedness and response in 2021, to be implemented through existing EAC-German programmes on pandemic preparedness, economic integration and digital skills.

On his part, Dr. Mathuki thanked Germany for her continued support to the EAC integration process stretching back to 1999 when the Community was established.

"The EAC and the Federal Republic of Germany have enjoyed a long-standing partnership since the EAC inception. Over the last 22 years, commitments from the German government amounting to over 516.88 million Euros to programmes and projects aimed at advancing EAC integration, specifically focusing on economic and social integration," said Dr. Mathuki.

"The signing today of the two government agreements on development cooperation amounting to 65 million US Dollars (EUR 53.8 million) demonstrates the commitment of the Federal Republic of Germany to support the EAC Integration. It is my intention to continue strengthening this partnership," he added.

Dr. Mathuki informed the German envoy that the Covid-19 pandemic had devastated economies in East Africa over the past one year and thanked Germany for her support combating the deadly virus.

The Secretary General said that the EAC was well on course with the implementation of the Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and the Political Federation.

"In establishing the Monetary Union, we will borrow a lot from the EU especially on how it set up the Eurozone and its experience with a single currency. We intend to benchmark with the best as far as the Monetary Union is concerned," said Dr. Mathuki.

The Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC), Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki has appealed to the European Union (EU) member states to lift sanctions against the Republic of Burundi, noting that the country had opened a new page and was ready to move forward.

Dr. Mathuki said that the EU sanctions on the East African were hurting not only Burundians but the people of the entire region.

“I appeal to the EU that we work together and open a new page for the betterment of the people of the Republic of Burundi,” said Dr. Mathuki.

The Secretary General was speaking during a high level discussion with the EU Delegation to Tanzania on how to enhance EU support to the integration process in East Africa.

Dr. Mathuki underscored the importance of EU to work with the region as a bloc, thereby enabling the Community attain its objectives in the integration process.

The European Union (EU) imposed sanctions against Republic of Burundi in 2015 at the height of internal crisis in the country following the late President Pierre Nkurunziza’s extension of tenure.

At the same occasion, the EAC Secretary General and his team had an opportunity to share different areas of integration priorities seeking support from the EU programming 2021-2027.

The priorities include Increasing space for the Private Sector in the EAC integration; Enhancing EAC regional governance institutional capabilities in peace building taking into account the inclusive, accountable and democratic governance of the region; as well as strengthening regional coordination, preparedness and response to epidemics, pandemics including



## EAC Secretary General urges EU to lift sanctions on Burundi

COVID-19, and public health emergencies in the EAC region among others.

In addition, the EAC has requested the EU to support capacity building programmes that will focus on EAC’s institutional strengthening and transformation; project management and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E); strengthening of Procurement, Audit and Risk Management, Planning, Budgeting and Accounting, and Financial Management procedures; as well as integrated information management system for East African Community

The Head of EU Delegation to Tanzania, Amb. Manfredo Fanti assured the Secretary General of EU’s commitment to work closely with EAC and commended the Secretariat for the good work that has led to the attainment of several achievements.

Amb Fanti expressed his appreciation for the outstanding work the Secretary General has exhibited since taking over the leadership of the Community on 26th April this year.



## EAC Secretary General meets US Ambassador in Dar es Salaam

The EAC Secretary General, Hon. (Dr.) Peter Mathuki, on 9th June, 2021 held discussions with US Ambassador to the United Republic of Tanzania and the EAC, Amb. Donald J. Wright in Dar es Salaam.

The two officials discussed potential areas of collaboration between the EAC and USA, namely trade and investment, and democracy and good governance.

Dr. Mathuki thanked the United States for her continued support to the Community in the implementation of its various integration projects and programmes.

"At the EAC, we have enormous unexploited investment opportunities, specifically in the tourism industry and the energy sector," said Dr. Mathuki.

"I urge the American private sector through you your Excellency to take advantage of these opportunities," said Dr. Mathuki.

Dr. Mathuki briefed the US envoy on the current EAC state of play on various integration matters including progress on consolidation of the Customs Union, implementation of the Common Market and Monetary Union Protocols, as well as progress towards attainment of the EAC Political Confederation.

On his part, Amb. Wright told the Secretary General that the US was committed to supporting the integration process in East Africa, adding that integration was key to promoting economic growth and political stability in the region.

Also present at the occasion was the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote.

# EAC Sectoral Council of Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment calls for Harmonisation of COVID-19 Protocols in the region

The East African Community Sectoral Council on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (SCTIFI) has urged the EAC Regional Coordination Committee to review and harmonise the Covid-19 testing charges, in addition to the validity and mutual recognition of the certificates with a view to ensuring the safe and smooth movement of goods and persons in the region.

The SCTIFI noted with concern the non-recognition of Covid-19 certificates by Partner States, the unharmonised charges for Covid-19 testing and the validity of Covid-19 certificates amongst Partner States.

The SCTIFI further observed that notification procedures were not being followed, a situation that essentially constitutes yet another Non-Tariff Barrier (NTB) to trade within the region.

The Sectoral Council, which met under the chairmanship of Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development, Ms. Betty Maina also directed the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda to operationalise the Nimule/Elegu One Stop Border Post (OSBP) by deploying all relevant officials to the OSBP.

The Sectoral Council had been informed that the Nimule OSBP was completed and handed over to the South Sudan and was pending full operationalisation by having all relevant officials from border agencies including from Uganda operating from the OSBP.

The SCTIFI further directed Partner States to use regional mechanisms or structures such as the EAC Standards Committee and SCTIFI itself to resolve disputes among themselves as opposed to taking unilateral interventions.

The Sectoral Council directed Partner States to comply with the transparency principles of WTO TBT/SPS Agreements, the EAC Customs Union Protocol and EAC SQMT Act 2006 on notification of any measure with the potential to disrupt trade in the region.

The Council noted that Partner States had been taking actions that have restricted trade within their respective markets and guided that all EAC Partner States comply with the notification obligations in EAC legal instruments.

The meeting directed the South Sudan, Uganda and the Kenya to expedite the removal of visa fees amongst themselves.

The Ministers further directed the South Sudan to communicate the administrative note for waiver of the visa fees for the Burundi and Rwanda by 30th June, 2021.

The SCTIFI had noted that Tanzania and South Sudan had waived fees on reciprocal basis as the Common Market Protocol but Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan still charge visa fees to their citizens. Rwanda and Burundi had also waived visa fees for South Sudanese nationals but were yet to receive confirmation from South Sudan on the waiver of visa charges for their citizens.

The Council directed Kenya to expedite the rollout of the Integrated Customs Management System (iCMS) to facilitate trade between the Partner States by 30th October, 2021.

The Ministers, who deliberated at length on the elimination of NTBs, further directed the EAC Partner States to remove all discriminative fees, levies and charges of equivalent effect.



On the Customs de minimis value, the Ministers adopted US\$50 as the de minimis value where customs duties shall not be collected on good imported into the Community.

The SCTIFI also endorsed the decision by the Ministers/Cabinet Secretary for Finance to amend Section 124 of the EAC Customs Management Act, 2004 to provide for the US\$50 as de minimis value based on the value of goods instead of computed duties.

On the implementation of the Summit decision on the EAC-EU Economic Partner Agreement (EAC-EU-EPA), the SCTIFI directed Partner States who were ready to implement the agreement to submit their implementation plans by 30th October, 2021 in line with the Summit decision of 27th February, 2021.

The 21st Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State acknowledged that not all Partner States were in a position to sign, ratify and implement the EAC-EU-EPA agreement.

The Summit concluded that Partner States who wish to do so should be able to commence engagements with the EU with a view to starting the EAC-EU EPA implementation under the principle of variable geometry as provided for in the EAC Treaty.

On the implementation of the standards for used clothing, the SCTIFI rescinded its previous decision of 2017 to pack in the weight of 23 to 30kg bags, all used textile imports from the US to the Community.

The SCTIFI had at its meeting held on 17th November, 2017, directed that standard requirements like packaging, marking, segregation, labelling (to pack in weights of 23 to 30 kgs) as the Export Processing Zones firms pack when exporting textiles to the US market should be adhered to when exporting used clothes to EAC.

Partner States had informed the Secretariat that the main challenge with the requirement to pack in weights of 23 to 30 kgs was that imported used clothes were still being packed in 50 kg at source, forcing traders to unpack and repack on arrival as the exporters could not pack at the specific weight at 23 to 30 kgs just for the EAC market.

The SCTIFI therefore directed the Secretariat to amend the requirement in the EAC Standard "EAC 356: 2019, Textiles – Requirements for inspection and acceptance of used textile products," to pack in a maximum weight of 50 kg.

On investment matters, the SCTIFI adopted the EAC Investment Guide and the online EAC Investment Guide (i-Guide) and urged Partner States to periodically submit any new relevant investment information for purposes of decision making by investors to the Secretariat.



## Second Phase of the EAC Network of Public Health Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases Project launched in Arusha

*Funded by the Federal Government of Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW), the three year second phase of the project is set to further strengthen the capacities of the EAC Partner States to respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases, including bacterial diseases and cross-border epidemics.*

The second phase of the EAC Regional Network of Public Health Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases Project was launched on Friday at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

The three-year second phase of the project funded by the Federal Government of Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW), is set to further strengthen the capacities of the EAC Partner States to respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases, including bacterial diseases and cross-border epidemics.

Speaking during the launch, the Chair of the EAC Council of Ministers and Kenya's EAC Affairs and Regional Development Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Adan Mohamed said the EAC Regional Network of Public Health Reference Laboratories was a key pillar in strengthening the region's capacity to diagnose infectious diseases and to respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases, including bacterial diseases and cross-border epidemics.

CS Mohamed told the participants at the launch that the main interventions under Phase II of the project will include: Procurement of six (6) container-based mobile laboratory units and equipment for bacterial culture and mobile field sequencing/bioinformatics for rapid pathogen identification and AMR testing; consumables, test kits and high clearance all-terrain vehicles for transporting the container-based laboratory and training of the EAC Partner States public health laboratory personnel to the required level of competency to operate the container-based mobile laboratories for Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) surveillance among others.

"Let me assure you that the EAC Partner States will continue to implement the existing EAC protocols to ensure that the region is cushioned from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other Communicable Diseases," said Mr. Mohamed.

In his remarks, the EAC Secretary General, Dr Peter Mathuki, said the contribution of the Regional Network of Public Health Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases could not be underestimated, adding that the EAC had already taken steps to ensure that there are proper documents and wide dissemination of the contribution of mobile laboratories to the pandemic response in East Africa.

"I take this opportunity to appreciate the support from our committed friends, the German Government and the German people for this timely support and for the continued and strong collaboration with our region," said Dr. Mathuki.

The Secretary General commended the EAC Partner States for a strong and fairly well coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the experts, who have committed themselves to fighting the pandemic.

"I urge the experts in the region to continue focusing on initiatives that will make our region safe," said the SG.

Dr. Mathuki urged Partner States to continue investing in strengthening structures to support implementation of the project to benefit the region and ensure that the mobile laboratory project acquired under Phases I and II of this project get mainstreamed under the national laboratory services for sustainability.

On her part, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Tanzania and EAC, Ms. Regine Hess, urged the Partner States to use mobile laboratories to conduct high quality research that will contribute to the pool of knowledge available on various health issues, including AMR, epidemic outbreaks, malaria resistance, among others, which should influence policy in the long run.

## Sectoral Council directs Secretariat to develop roadmap on implementation of Kiswahili and French as official languages of the Community



The 16th Meeting of the Sectoral Council on Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Sports (SCESTCS) came to a close in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 4th June, 2021.

The Ministerial Session of the SCESTCS was chaired by Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Education, Prof. George Magoha,

On Education and Training, the Sectoral Council directed that the EAC TVET Harmonization Strategy be finalized by end of June 2021; criteria for administration of EAC Essay Writing Competition be reviewed and that a Regional Forum on Education be held by November 2021 in Rwanda to, among other things, look into the impacts of the COVID 19-Pandemic on the education systems of EAC Partner States.



On Sports and Culture, the 16th SCESTCS approved that the Republic of Burundi will host the 5th Edition of JAMAFEST and should commence preparations to hold the event within COVID 19 regulations. Rwanda was further urged to commence preparations for the 2nd Edition of EAC Games in adherence to COVID-19 pandemic protocols.

Following the Summit declaration of Kiswahili and French as official languages of the Community, the Sectoral Council directed the Secretariat to develop roadmaps and mobilize resources to implement this directive. It further directed the East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC) to fast-track the amendment of the Treaty and EAKC Protocols in view of the new developments. The EAKC was also directed to fast-track the translation of the EAC Treaty into Kiswahili and finalize the Kiswahili programs for the Partner States.

The Sectoral Council further directed the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) to develop a road map for implementation of the EAC Common Education Area; facilitate visa-free entry for students from EAC

Partner States going to undertake studies within the Community and to enhance students and staff mobility within the Community. The IUCEA was further directed to conclude and implement the Common Fees Structure Model.

The Ministers further directed the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) to conclude the Regional Policy for Intellectual Property, Regional Bioeconomy Strategy, Regional Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation and proposed amendments to EASTECO Protocol.

Partner States that have not submitted their inputs for the completion of these processes were urged to do so to hasten the process. The EASTECO concept paper for the establishment of the East African Research and Technological Fund was approved.

The SCESTCS also directed the Secretariat and the Partner States to implement the several pending decisions. They emphasized the critical role that education, science and technology, culture and sports play in fostering development, societal transformation and regional integration.

The Ministers observed that no region in the world has ever developed nor fully integrated without deliberately investing and putting emphasis on sectors such as education, science and technology, culture and sports.

The Chairperson, Prof. George Magoha, urged the Secretariat to convene regular meetings of SCESTCS to facilitate monitoring and implementation of decisions.

The Ministers appreciated the EAC Secretariat for convening the meeting amid the challenging COVID 19 situation and expressed their relentless support and commitment to the sector.

# EAC calls for increased regional coordination in ecosystem conservation and management



The EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo has called on Partner States to increase regional coordination in response to the increasing problems of the Ecosystems.

“We are all aware of the challenges the region is facing including those related to the management of natural resources and the environment”

He disclosed that in response to the increasing challenges to the management of ecosystems, Article 114 of the Treaty for the establishment

of the East African Community, the EAC Partner States have amongst other things, agreed to adopt common policies and exchange of information on the development, conservation and management of natural resources.

Hon. Bazivamo said ecosystems support the livelihoods of a majority of people and the regional economy in general. Ecosystems provide goods and services, which include food, water, medicine, biological diversity as well as raw materials to industries, and are indeed vital to socio-economic development, added EAC Official.



The Deputy Secretary General was speaking at the EAC Regional Environmental Week (EACREW) workshop-themed “Ecosystem restoration” as part of the World Environmental Day commemorated on the 5th of June worldwide.

The EAC Official informed the participants that the region is facing numerous environmental challenges that undermine efforts to improve the quality of life of citizens and attain sustainable development objectives. These challenges include pollution, desertification, deterioration of aquatic and fresh water ecosystems, climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, pests and diseases, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.

He reiterated the commitment of the EAC to promote investment in the removal of hazard risks to humans and the environment including reduction of emerging environmental and health hazards risk in the region

On her part, Assistant Director of Pollution Control at the office of the Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ms. Kemilembe Mutasa commended the EAC Secretariat for the good work done and a well-articulated Regional Agenda that ensures environmental conservation issues are factored in

the development agenda of the Region, particularly on transboundary ecosystem.

Ms. Mutasa called for the EAC Secretariat as the regional coordinator to support Partner States’ strategies particularly those that are transboundary in nature.

The four-day event will also include school competitions, tree planting as well as sports and traditional events organised by the local communities as part of the activities of the EAC Regional Environment Week.

The objective of the EACREW is to increase public awareness of the need to sustainably manage and conserve the environment and natural resources in the region.

The EACREW will also include school competitions, sports and traditional events organised by the local communities.

The EACREW will be facilitated by the support from USAID/KEA Office through Collaborative Conservation and Management of Natural Capital Programme in the EAC.

# 14th Sectoral Council on Agriculture and Food Security ends in Arusha



The 14th Meeting of the Sectoral Council on Agriculture and Food Security (SCAFS) came to a close in Arusha, Tanzania on 25th June, 2021.

Chairing the Ministerial Session, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives, Republic of Kenya, Mr. Lawrence Angolo Omuhaka, noted the urgent need for the region to implement harmonized policies and to operationalize regional instruments in order to guarantee sustainable agricultural production, trade in commodities and to attain sustainable regional food and nutrition security.

On the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) - Africa's policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic

growth and prosperity for all - Mr. Omuhaka noted that AU Member States were required to demonstrate their commitment to the ideals and principles of CAADP, by following relevant CAADP processes.

"This will ensure that there are appropriate actions to achieve accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods for the population on the continent, by 2025," said Mr. Omuhaka.

The Chief Administrative Secretary further noted with concern that the Second CAADP Biennial Report submitted to the AU General Assembly in February, 2020 showed that the Eastern Africa region, with the exception of the Republic Rwanda, was not on track on most targets. He added that the report

portrays the absolute and relative performance of countries and indicates that there was a lot to be done in order to transform the agricultural sector in Africa.

“As a region we should applaud the Republic of Rwanda for emerging the best performing country on the continent for the second time, scoring 7.24 which was above the minimum score of 6.66 required to be on-track”, he added.

Speaking on behalf of the EAC Secretariat, Director of Productive Sectors, Mr. Jean Baptiste Havugimana noted that more than 70% of the industries in EAC were agro-based, including production of agricultural inputs; while 75% of the traded goods are agricultural commodities and products.

“Linking agricultural trade and industry is therefore imperative in promoting agricultural production as industries provide the market for agricultural produce while trade delivers processed agricultural products to the market/ consumer,” noted Mr. Havugimana.

The Director highlighted the need to promote and enhance commercial agriculture, urging the region to draw lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on the need to promote local industries. He observed that the region had been importing many products from outside prior to the pandemic, yet it was possible to produce them locally.

“Textile industries need to be promoted instead of depending on import of used cloths. It is necessary to promote local consumption and procurement of locally produced goods as emphasized by the Heads of State,” he noted.

On regional food security the meeting noted there was commendable commitment and progress towards meeting global and continental nutrition targets, as efforts to reduce levels of malnutrition were evident across all the Partner States. However, the Sectoral Council noted that levels of stunting, underweight and anaemia are still high above the targets set under the CAADP/Malabo Declaration. The meeting therefore noted the need for the Partner States to direct more technical and financial resources in projects and programmes established to enhance food and nutrition security.

On Aflatoxin prevention and control, the Sectoral Council directed the Secretariat and urged Partner States to fast track implementation of the EAC Aflatoxin Prevention and Control Strategy. Aflatoxin contamination poses a serious threat to human and animal health, and to the economies of the EAC Partner States. The strategy contains recommendations on

interventions required to mitigate impacts and effects of aflatoxin along the food and feed value chains.

On pest management, the Sectoral Council adopted Standard Operating Procedures for operationalising Pest Risk Analysis (PRAs) for maize, beans and rice. In November, 2019, the Council of Ministers approved harmonised procedures for conducting Pest Risk Analysis (PRAs) for maize, beans and rice. Subsequently, development of harmonised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for inspection of grain (maize, beans and rice) were required to operationalise the PRAs.

In addition, the Sectoral Council adopted seven additional priority crops - banana, cassava, potato (ware and seed), sorghum, soybean, groundnuts and pineapple and directed the Secretariat to embark on development of Pest Risk Analysis (PRAs) for the selected crops.

On livestock development, the Sectoral Council directed the EAC Secretariat to develop programmes and dedicate resources to promote development of priority livestock value chains, given the sector’s importance in the economies of the Partner States.

The meeting also directed the Secretariat to finalise and widely disseminate the EAC Strategy for the Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonoses, 2020-2024, as well as development of guidelines and standard operating procedures for cross-border surveillance, preparedness and response to transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases

The strategy and guidelines are expected to spell out ways and means for the Partner States to collaborate in mitigating and managing outbreaks of major transboundary animal and zoonotic diseases such as Food and Mouth Disease (FMD), Rift Valley Fever (RVF), Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Anthrax, Rabies, Trypanosomosis, Newcastle Disease (ND), African Swine Fever (ASF) and Theileriosis among others.

The Ministers also observed the need for the EAC Secretariat to develop programmes and dedicate resources to promote development of fisheries and aquaculture in the EAC region.

The Ministers appreciated and took note of the different initiatives coordinated by the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) for the sustainable management and development of fisheries and aquaculture in the EAC.



# EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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