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## PLANS TO PUT IN PLACE EAST AFRICAN SINGLE CURRENCY BY 2024 WELL UNDERWAY



East African Community Partner States are in the process of harmonizing critical policies and putting in place the requisite institutions to attain a single currency for the region by 2024 as outlined in the EAC Monetary Union Protocol.

EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko said that the Bill for the establishment of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI) had already been assented to by the Summit of Heads of State, adding that the EAMI would later be transformed into the East African Central Bank that would issue the single currency.

"The establishment of this institute will help to provide impetus towards the formation of the East African Monetary Union, which is the third pillar of our integration," said Amb. Mfumukeko.

Amb. Mfumukeko disclosed that the Council of Ministers had approved the EAC Domestic Tax Harmonization Policy, adding that proper implementation of the policy would reduce tax competition thereby enhancing cross-border trade and investment in the region.

On the Financial Sector, the SG said that the Community had developed requisite legal instruments (Bills) for the insurance and microfinance sub-sector and strategies for implementation of financial education and insurance certification.

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## ... EAC Statistics Development and Harmonization Regional Project to support production of quality and harmonized statistics in the region



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"Further, we implemented the financial market infrastructure for payment and settlement systems as well as finalized regional regulations for portability of pension benefits and consumer protection," he added.

Amb. Mfumukeko was giving his New Year's Address to the Staff of EAC Organs and Institutions spread across East Africa from the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, on 27th January, 2020.

He said that Community would have in place an EAC Investment Helpdesk and a Buyer-Seller Online Platform by June 2020.

"Both facilities will increase intra-EAC trade by creating awareness and markets for products manufactured within the EAC region."

The Community, with US\$20 million support spread over five years from the World Bank, had also operationalised an EAC Statistics Development and Harmonization Regional Project.

"The project will support production of quality and harmonized statistics in the region through capacity building in the National Statistical Offices of the Partner States and the EAC Secretariat as well as support the establishment of the EAC Bureau of Statistics," said Amb. Mfumukeko.

On the East African Court of Justice, the SG disclosed that sub-registries opened in the Partner States' capital cities had


elevated the visibility of the Court and reduced the costs of litigation and access to justice to the citizens of the Community.

"The residents can now easily take advantage of the Court and have their disputes resolved. In addition, the finalization of the review of the EACJ Rules of Procedure in 2019 will now provide seamless procedures to the benefit of the litigants," said Amb. Mfumukeko.

On fisheries, the SG revealed that the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) updated the status of fish stocks on the lake registering a 21% increase in total biomass to 2.68 million metric tonnes between 2018 and 2019.

"The Nile Perch population increased by 48%, from 0.55 million to 0.82 million metric tonnes over the same period. LVFO also revised Co-Management Guidelines for Lake Victoria, which provide for enhanced participation of stakeholders in fisheries management as well as capacity of fish traders and inspectors to promote market access, improved revenue collection and enhanced fish quality and safety assurance."

LVFO received funds from the EU for a Start-up Phase of ECOFISH Project to enable consultations with key stakeholders to facilitate development of the detailed programme for enhancing regional policies and institutional frameworks.

The SG urged all EAC Staff to rededicate themselves to serving the region, a task he described as a privilege, adding that they had been recruited competitively based on their unique skills and expertise. 

## EAC Constitutional Experts hold consultations with President Pierre Nkurunziza



Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza on 15 January, 2020 held private consultations with the team of EAC Constitutional Experts at the Presidential Palace in Ngozi, Burundi. The closed-door meeting marked the start of the National Stakeholders' Consultations for drafting the EAC Political Confederation Constitution in the Republic of Burundi.

The objective of the Consultations, both public and private, which were held in Ngozi, Gitega, Makamba and Bujumbura, was to obtain stakeholders' views on their interests and other key issues that will better inform the drafting of a model Political Confederation and subsequently a Confederal Constitution in line with the principle of a people-centred Community.

The National Stakeholders' Consultations also enhanced awareness on the ongoing Constitution making process for transforming the EAC into a Political Confederation, as well as prepared the public in general to give their inputs into the draft Constitution once it is drafted.

At a press briefing held after the consultations with the Burundian Head of State, EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko said that the National Stakeholders' Consultations would ensure participation of EAC citizens in the integration process and particularly the Political Federation pillar.

In 2017, the EAC Heads of States adopted the Political Confederation as a transitional model toward the East African Political Federation. The Confederation model was adopted as


a changeover model as it is a less demanding political union and its membership is voluntary, while the membership of a federation is mandatory for all Partner States.

"A Political Federation is imperative in this global environment," said Amb. Mfumukeko, adding that for a federation to survive, there must be an environment that enables people to participate in an accelerated economic development process.

The Secretary General said that a Political Federation was the best route for accelerating economic development for all, enabling the region to move away from a Least Developed Region to a Developed Region, in the shortest possible time.

Speaking at the event, the Chairperson of the Team of Constitutional Experts, Hon. Justice (retired) Dr. Benjamin Odoki, called upon the people to actively participate and inform the EAC Political Confederation Constitution making process.

Hon. Justice Odoki added that the team has established various channels for the public to submit their proposals or petitions.

"These include public hearings; online, such as the EAC website; as well as various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter," said Justice (Rtd) Odoki. 

# EAC Secretariat asks Partner States to step up surveillance on a novel Corona Virus (2019-nCoV) following outbreak in China

The EAC Secretariat issues an alert to all Partner States after an infectious disease outbreak caused by a novel Corona virus in the city of Wuhan, Republic of China. By 26 January 2020 the number of reported confirmed cases had increased to more than 2,000 people and 56 had died according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

Most of the cases occurred in China and sporadic ones have been reported from Australia, France, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the US and Vietnam. Nearly all of them have links to Wuhan. For the time being WHO decided against declaring the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) but is closely monitoring the development.

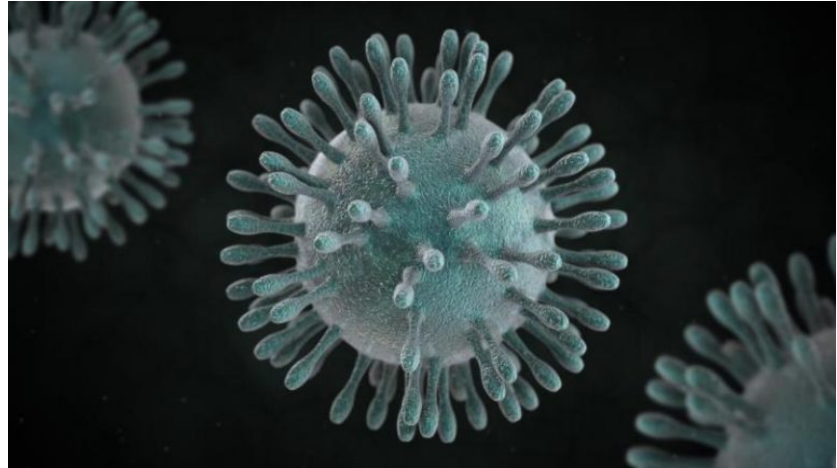
As the EAC Partner States maintain close trade relations where many East Africans regularly travel to and from China, and vice versa, the EAC Secretariat strongly recommends that EAC Partner States step up disease surveillance and control measures at the international airports and other points of entry to avoid the outbreak from spreading to the region. These measures should be kept up until the outbreak is contained.

The National Health Commission of China informed WHO about the outbreak on 31 December 2019 and made the genetic sequence of the virus public by mid of January 2020, thereby facilitating the development of test kits and reference material.

The outbreak in China might have had its source in snake meat sold at a sea food market in Wuhan, but this still needs to be confirmed. Viruses of the corona family occur naturally in animals and can be transmitted to humans. They usually only cause mild respiratory diseases, such as the common cold. However, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) are also caused by viruses that belong to the corona family. Symptoms caused by the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) include fever, cough and difficulty in breathing in its mild form. Severe cases may present with very high fever, severe difficulty in breathing or even kidney failure.

The Acting Head of the EAC Secretariat's Health Department, Dr Michael Katende urges Partner States to undertake the following:

1. Screen passengers at international airports arriving from South East Asia and especially on direct flights from Wuhan for flu-like symptoms (that resemble the Middle East respiratory syndrome);
2. Collect detailed personal, clinical and contact information of ALL travelers especially those from South East Asia;



3. Watch out for any person with a positive history of travel in the last 14 days to South East Asian countries for screening and further management in case the need arises;
4. Enhance hand-washing practices at airports and land crossing points as personal hygiene is the best means of infection prevention;
5. Prepare to collect specimen from patients suspected of novel corona virus infection;
6. Alert health facilities to prepare for the treatment of infected people;
7. Inform the public about the need to seek early medical care and informing healthcare providers on any recent travel and anyone who develops symptoms of severe respiratory illness;
8. Washing hands regularly, covering the mouth when sneezing and thoroughly heating food of animal source are important means of infection prevention.

In addition, the EAC Secretariat urges the Partner States' Ministries responsible for Health to advise health staff in the country to complete the WHO online course on "Emerging respiratory viruses, including nCoV: methods for detection, prevention, response and control". This course offers basic information and is now available on Open WHO under the following link: <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>

The EAC Secretariat is currently stepping up outbreak prevention in the region by preparing the mobile laboratories of the Partner States for 2019-nCoV sample testing. For the time being, the laboratories have the capacity to detect various corona viruses and re working with WHO to acquire specific primers to test for the novel strain.



# EAC Compilation Guidelines on Government Finance Statistics and Public Sector Debt Statistics Launched



The East African Community has launched guidelines for the compilation of government finance statistics and public sector debt statistics as it moves to adopt a single currency by 2024.

The EAC Compilation Guidelines on Government Finance Statistics (GFS) And Public Sector Debt Statistics (PSDS) domesticate the latest international best practices and methodology in the compilation of fiscal and public debt to the EAC Partner States.

The guidelines further seek to ensure comparability regionally and internationally of GFS and PSDS compiled by the Partner States.

The East African Monetary Union Protocol provides for the establishment of a Monetary Union buttressed by strong fiscal coordination. The EAMU protocol therefore requires that Partner States macro-economic environments converge based on agreed convergence criteria.

On the fiscal side, the criteria requires that: the fiscal deficit including grants be maintained at below 3% of GDP; tax revenues be maintained at not less than 25% of GDP, and; that public debt (in net present value terms) be maintained at below 50% of GDP.

Speaking during the launch of the guidelines in Arusha, Tanzania, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote, said that to maintain a sound Monetary Union, it is prudent that the aforementioned indicators are compiled using a common methodology in addition to similar compilation practices.

"The guidelines we are launching today were developed with this cardinal objective in mind. They aim at providing government officials who are responsible for the compilation and dissemination of fiscal statistics in the EAC with the minimum

standards necessary to compile good quality and comparable financial statistics," said Eng. Mlote.

The DSG noted that there had been tremendous improvement in the quality of fiscal data among the EAC Partner States especially on expanding coverage from the national government to other levels of government, in addition to the state owned corporations.

"It is expected that that with the full implementation of these guidelines, the EAC stands ready to compile EAC-wide fiscal and debt data to support the monitoring of the EAC convergence criteria in line with the EAMU process," he said.

"As you are aware, the EU also developed related guidelines in the quest for European Monetary Union specifically GFS guide for the Euro system and European system of national and regional accounts (ESA) which is for national accounts. Therefore, the EAC is not unique in taking steps in this direction as progress is made to realising EAMU," he added.

In his remarks, Dr. Adolf Ndunguru, Tanzania's Deputy Permanent Secretary in charge of Economic Management in the Ministry of Finance, said that the guidelines had in-built mechanisms to prevent the East African Monetary Union from descending into a crisis similar to that which afflicted the Eurozone, which was occasioned partly by some member countries borrowing too much by way of public debt.

Also present at the launch were Mr. Rainer Koehler – GFS Division Chief – International Monetary Fund Headquarters, Herve Jolie, Centre Director – IMF AFRITAC East Africa Office, Dar es Salaam and Ms. Amina Rwakunda, Chief Economist at Rwanda's Ministry of Finance.



# ECOFISH Programme set to contribute to sustainable fisheries for the blue economy of the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean regions

The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) is one of the Institutions of the East African Community (EAC) as provided for under Article 9(3) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

LVFO is a regional inter-governmental organization established by a Convention that was signed in Kisumu, Kenya on 30th June 1994. The Convention has open membership to all of the EAC Partner States and has competence on fisheries and aquaculture resources of the East African Community water bodies.

Currently, LVFO is constituted by four member states, namely the Republics of Kenya, Uganda and Burundi, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The organization is implementing the ECOFISH programme in the EAC region in Lake Victoria, whose overall objective is to enhance equitable economic growth by promoting sustainable fisheries in the East African-South African-Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) region.

The specific objective of the project is “to support sustainable management and development of fisheries in order to contribute to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security while addressing climate change resilience and enhancing marine biodiversity”.

The ECOFISH programme is also implemented in four other Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely SADC, COMESA, IOC and IGAD, with the support of the European Union.

The First ECOFISH Regional Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meeting for the LVFO, which is a high-level policy guidance for efficient implementation of the project, was held on the 24th January 2020 at Imperial Express Hotel in Kisumu, Kenya.

The PSC endorsed the Programme Estimate No.1 with both operational and closure periods from 25th February 2020 to 13th September, 2024 and from 14th September, 2024 to 12 May, 2025 respectively. The cost of the programme is Euro 2,000,000 funded by the European Union under European Development Fund No. 11. 9.



The following activities will be implemented by the project :

- a) Enhancing the institutional, structural and legal frameworks of LVFO against the backdrop of expanded scope and mandate;
- b) Reviewing the performance of Lake Victoria Fisheries Management Plan-III (2016-2020) and drafting the Lake Victoria Fisheries Management Plan-IV (2021-2025);
- c) Regional harmonization of the annual licensing of fisheries, fishing boats, and fishers;
- d) Expansion and updating of the existing fisheries database;
- e) Marking and protection of biodiversity hotspots and breeding/nursery areas in selected areas;
- f) Conducting lake-wide Frame Survey on Lake Victoria;
- g) Establishing and implementing a regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system that encompasses among others;
- h) The development of regional guidelines or framework on fisheries licensing, the establishment of user rights-based management systems (control of open access)
- i) Regional harmonization, Planning the implementation and conducting of MCS operations on Lake Victoria;
- j) Training in enforcement, compliance and prosecution procedures in enforcement, compliance and prosecution procedures;
- k) Facilitation of national high-level policy dialogue on IUU fishing and sensitize fisher communities and lower-level leadership on the importance of their roles in combating IUU, and
- l) Provision of Communication and Visibility actions in line with the ECOFISH Communication and Visibility Strategy.





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