



### In this Issue

- EALA swears in Uganda's new EAC Minister as Ex-Officio Member
- EAC Secretariat builds Partner States' capacities for diagnosis of the novel Corona Virus
- Personal Representative of the German Chancellor for Africa visits EAC
- UN pledges support to Burundi in attaining peaceful, credible and democratic elections
- EAC Secretary General Signs Memorandum of Understanding with UN Under Secretary-General for Political and Peace Building Affairs
- International Women's Day 2020 marked at EAC HQs
- EAC hosts 30th NEPAD-IPPF Oversight Committee in Arusha
- New Indian envoy accredited to the EAC
- New German Ambassador presents credentials to EAC Secretary General
- Mombasa hosts EAC Coffee Business Forum
- EAC Partner States directed to enforce laws banning plastic carrier bags
- EAC I Deserve Campaign launched in Kigali

## EALA SWEARS IN UGANDA'S NEW EAC MINISTER AS EX-OFFICIO MEMBER



Uganda's Minister for East African Community, Hon. Major General (Rtd) Kahinda Otafiire, on 24 February, 2020 took Oath of Allegiance as an Ex-Officio Member of the Assembly.

Hon Otafiire was sworn in by the Clerk to the Assembly at a brief ceremony witnessed by the Speaker and Members of EALA in line with the Rule 5 of the Rules and Procedures of the Assembly. The Rule says 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 5(5) 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".

Hon Maj Gen (Rtd) Otafiire was ushered in to the House by EALA Members, Hon George Odongo and Hon Simon Mbugua. Hon Kasamba Mathias, Hon Susan Nakawuki, Hon Dr Abdulla Makame, Hon Thomas Dut, Hon Fancy Nkuhi and Hon Rose Akol were also in tow.

Hon Leontine Nzeyimana, who was elected to preside over the House in absence of the substantive EALA Speaker, Rt Hon Ngoga Karoli Martin, congratulated Hon Otafiire upon his

*(Continued on page 2)*

## ... Hon Maj. Gen (Rtd) Otafiire pledges support for the integration process



*(Continued from page 1)*

swearing in – as he assumes his ex-officio role in the regional August House.


Hon Gen Otafiire was appointed to the Ministry by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in December 2019, replacing 2nd Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon Dr Ali Kirunda Kivenjija who moved to Office of the President. The newly appointed Minister has held several government portfolios including the ministerial docket at the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Ministry. Maj Gen (Rtd) Otafiire who is a former Member of Parliament for Ruhinda County, is deputized in the EAC ministry by Hon Wandera Julius Maganda.

In 2001, he was appointed Minister of State for Regional Co-operation, a position he held until 2003. In that year, he was appointed Minister of Land, Water and the Environment where he served in the capacity for 3 years. Hon Otafiire has also served as Minister for Local Government, prior to becoming Minister of Trade and Industry in February 2009. He served in that capacity until he was appointed Uganda's Justice Minister in May 2011.

Prior to that, the EAC Minister served as a Minister of State for Internal Affairs (1986-88). He also served as the Director General of the External Security Organization (1992-1994), before becoming a delegate to the Constituent Assembly, that drafted the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

Hon Gen Otafiire, who is a retired military officer (Major General) and politician, holds a Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Makerere University and a certificate in French language.

In his maiden statement on the floor, Hon Otafiire assured the House of his commitment to ensure integration is realized. "I promise to work hard to strengthen EAC integration to ensure the dreams of our forefathers become a reality", Hon Maj Gen Otafiire stated.

Chairperson of the EALA Chapter, Republic of Uganda, Hon George Odongo, hailed Hon Otafiire as an experienced and visionary leader. "This House is lucky at this point in time to have a person of Hon Otafiire's caliber, a passionate leader and Pan Africanist who does not believe in borders", he said. 

## EAC Secretariat builds Partner States' capacities for diagnosis of the novel Corona Virus

The EAC Secretariat has finalised an intensive training programme for laboratory experts to detect and diagnose the new novel corona virus (COVID-19) in the East African Community region.

The training was conducted under the EAC Network of Public Health Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases (Mobile Labs Programme) in collaboration with the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM). The programme is part of the financial support provided to the EAC Region by the German Development Bank (KfW) on behalf of Federal Republic of Germany. The training aimed at building capacity in the region to detect COVID-19.

The EAC Secretariat further acquired diagnostic kits for the novel corona virus that will be distributed among the EAC Partner States soon after the training as part of the regional preparedness plan against COVID-19.

Until 19 February 2020 in China alone more than 74,000 people were infected and over 2,000 died of the disease. 25 countries outside China confirmed cases of COVID-19; 12 of these countries reported cases of human-to-human virus transmission. As of Feb 11, Africa did not have any confirmed cases, but suspected patients have been quarantined in Ethiopia, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Botswana, according to WHO. However, on 14 February Egypt reported the first confirmed case on the continent.


The Acting Head of Health Department at the EAC Secretariat, Dr Michael Katende, says: "The Secretariat provided the training in an effort to enable all EAC Partner States to detect and diagnose the novel corona virus promptly and thereby avoiding its spread". He further emphasized that this initiative is in response to WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) for the new coronavirus. The objectives of the plan are to limit human-to-human transmission of the virus, particularly in countries that would be most vulnerable if they faced an outbreak, to identify, isolate and care for patients early, communicate critical risk and event information, minimize social and economic impact, reduce the spread of the virus from animal sources and address still existing unknowns.

Dr Katende further noted that while no case has yet been confirmed within the EAC region, it was of high priority and importance to ensure that all EAC Partner States maintain high levels of preparedness and surveillance.

Meanwhile, the EAC Ministries of Health encouraged their staff to undertake the WHO online course for methods of detection, prevention, response and control that is available online on: <https://openwho.org/courses/introduction-to-ncov>

The EAC Secretariat urges citizens in the EAC region to undertake the following measures to avoid being infected with the new novel virus:



- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between yourself and other people, when they are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with contaminated hands, as you might transfer the virus.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, seek medical care early, especially if you have recently traveled to China or if you had contact with someone who returned from China with respiratory symptoms.
- Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked animal products, handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care, to avoid cross-contamination with infectious pathogens as per good food safety practices. 

## Personal Representative of the German Chancellor for Africa visits EAC



The Personal Representative of the German Chancellor for Africa, Mr. Guenter Nooke who was on a working visit to Tanzania, on 28 February, 2020 held bilateral talks with EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha.

The two leaders discussed development cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and the EAC on matters relating to regional economic integration, with particular focus on Health and Agriculture, as well as Customs and Trade sectors.


During the discussions, Amb Mfumukeko said the EAC and Germany have enjoyed a long standing partnership for the last 20 years, with commitments from the German Government amounting over Euros 470 million.

The EAC Secretary General has requested Germany, through Mr. Nooke, to consider more support in Agriculture, Industrial development especially Agro-processing, and ICT sectors as part of institutional transformation in addition to the areas that the Federal Republic is currently supporting.

Amb Mfumukeko reiterated that the EAC was deeply interested in penetrating the German and European market in general, which he described as being large and vibrant, adding that the region also hopes to benefit from technology transfer from Europe's largest economy.

On his part, Mr. Nooke noted the impressive progress in the EAC integration process and re-affirmed to the Secretary General his country's continued support to the EAC Project and programs.

"We are very happy with our relationship with EAC and I am looking forward to a strong partnership in the development of the regional bloc", asserted Mr. Nooke.

Accompanying the Secretary General at the meeting with the Personal Representative of the German Chancellor for Africa were the EAC Deputy Secretaries General Hon. Christophe Bazivamo (Productive and Social Sectors) and Eng. Steven Mlote (Planning and Infrastructure), the EAC Director General Customs and Trade, Mr. Kenneth Bagamuhunda and other senior staff of the EAC. 

## UN pledges support to Burundi in attaining peaceful, credible and democratic elections



The United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Africa, Ms. Bintou Keita, has expressed the United Nation's desire for peaceful, credible and democratic elections in Burundi.

Ms. Keita made the statement ON 4 February, 2020 during a meeting with the EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, in Bujumbura, Burundi, adding that peaceful elections in Burundi were a prerequisite for political stability in the nation and the region as a whole.

Speaking on regional peace and security, Ms. Keita said the UN had high expectations that the EAC would play a central role in ensuring peaceful and credible elections in Burundi.

"We are willing and ready to work together with and support the EAC in this endeavour," she added.

On his part, Amb. Mfumukeko informed the UN delegation that the EAC observes elections within the context of the National Constitutions of the Partner States.


He informed the delegation that preparations were underway for the launch of a long-term EAC Observer Mission that will

monitor the Burundi electoral process in its entirety, as well as a short-term EAC Observer Mission that will monitor the polling only.

"I am confident that the peaceful spirit we have experienced during the party nominations will continue during and after elections," said the Secretary General.

"The EAC is calling on all the people of Burundi to side-step violence, regardless of the situation," he added.

In 2018, Burundi promulgated a new Constitution. The May 2020 elections will be the first elections under the new Constitution.

Amb. Mfumukeko was accompanied by the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote, and other EAC senior officials. 

## EAC Secretary General Signs Memorandum of Understanding with UN Under Secretary-General for Political and Peace Building Affairs



EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko on 5 March, 2020 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UN Under Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Ms. Rosemary Di Carlo at the UN Headquarters in New York, USA.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding underscores the need for enhanced cooperation with sub-regional organizations in the areas of peace and security.

The agreement focuses on conflict prevention, electoral assistance, women, peace and security, supporting youth, peace building, countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

Building on the progress achieved so far in the sub-regional integration process of the EAC, the Memorandum of Understanding will help bring the agenda of peace and security closer to the women and men in East Africa and contribute to the promotion of durable and inclusive peace and prosperity.

## International Women's Day 2020 marked at EAC HQs



Each year on the 8th of March, the World celebrates International Women's Day. It is an opportunity for the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and its partners to join the rest of the World in taking stock of women's achievements throughout history and across nations.

This year's International Women's Day, themed "I am Generation Equality: Women's Rights", with #EachforEqual, IWD 2020 as the Campaign Hashtag was celebrated at the EAC Secretariat with over 200 participants in attendance from across the EAC on the 6th March 2020. The celebration reflected on progress made on women's rights and promotion of generation equality in the EAC region and across the world.

In a speech read on his behalf by the Director of Social Affairs at the Secretariat, Ms. Mary Makoffu, EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, said that EAC had adopted, among other things, a programme to mainstream gender and promote the rights of women in all EAC policies and programmes, and in regional and continental instruments.

Amb. Mfumukeko said that in order to facilitate the implementation of the programme, EAC had developed a Regional Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in the EAC Structures, Organs and

Institutions, a Training Manual Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming, and an EAC Gender Policy, that gives direction on Gender equality, equity and non-discrimination within the Community.

"In November 2019, a platform called 50 Million African Women Speak was launched in Kigali. It is supported by the African Development Bank and cuts across three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS). EAC takes this opportunity to inform you that today the platform is now operational and has started its work," said the Secretary General.

German Development Cooperation supports the IWD 2020 event through the EAC-GIZ programme to advance a gender responsive and an inclusive regional integration process. Dr Kirsten Focken noted that without embracing gender equality in all spheres, regional integration, economic empowerment for women, productivity and bridging the digital divide in the region was not achievable.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## IWD 2020 celebration called for changes in promoting generation equality and women' rights in the region


(Continued from page 7)

Dr Focken called upon policy makers to review laws and regulatory frameworks that hinder gender equality, women's economic participation, and develop specific innovative approaches to promote generation equality and women rights. She concluded her remarks by urging the EAC Partner States to fast track assent of the EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill so that it becomes a reality for the region.

The IWD 2020 celebration called for changes in promoting generation equality and women' rights in the region, celebrated and showcased experiences and testimonies of successful women across traders in the region and shared approaches for the advancement of women's rights in the region. Participants also donated sanitary pads to girls at Meru Primary School in Arusha, Maasai school and Manyara districts, and marched through Arusha town centre.

There was also an exhibition showcasing practical interventions promoting women's rights and empowerment in the EAC many of them from the Incubator for Integration and Development (IIDEA), a joint initiative of the EAC, the Regional Dialogue Committee and the EAC-GIZ programme and East African Women in Business Platform (EAWIBP).

Through its African Union Border Programme, GIZ-EAC supports women cross-border traders to know and use the EAC trade facilitation rules through simplified information packages in English and Kiswahili. The participation of those women small and medium scale cross border traders is crucial to the success of EAC's common market and integration.

As part of demonstrating its gender commitment to the rest of the world in commemorating the international women's day, GIZ –EAC Arusha has participated in the IWD 2020 photo campaigns individually and collectively as team with each staff member crafting tailor-made messages, and also participated in the know- your- rights workshop to discuss and exchange with colleagues and partners on Generation Equality and Women's rights. In addition, staff members also actively participated in the regional commemoration of IWD 2020 march and interactive session, which included testimonials from inspirational women traders and IIDEA partners from the EAC Partner States. 



### International Women's Day 2020

Theme: We are Generation Equality

Hashtag: #EachforEqual

Arusha Messages for IWD 2020

No Gender Equality No Integration

Equal Access to Financial Services

Respect Women as Equals to Men

Fight for Generation Equality

We Are Happy as Equals



## EAC hosts 30th NEPAD-IPPF Oversight Committee in Arusha



The New Partnership for Africa's Development Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) held its 30th Oversight Committee meeting for the Special Fund at the East African Community Headquarters, in Arusha, Tanzania.

The meeting attracted more than 30 participants, including donors providing financial support to the NEPAD-IPPF Special Fund, representatives of the African Development Bank, African Union Commission, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Regional Economic Communities, Regional Power Pools, Corridors Authorities and Transboundary River basin organizations.

Members agreed to implement recommendations of NEPAD-IPPF's independent evaluation held in 2019, and also approved operational reforms and the 2020 work program.

EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Steven Mlote, thanked the Bank for its generous support over the past 20 years which he said had resulted in numerous achievements in various sectors including transport, energy, one stop border posts, ICT and Trans-Boundary Water Projects.

He said the recently completed Arusha-Tengeru dual carriageway and the Arusha by-pass had substantially improved traffic flow in the Arusha region while the counterpart section in Kenya – the

Taveta-Mwatate road, has opened up a new and shorter trade and transport route for Rwanda and Burundi from the port of Mombasa.

"Along the Coast of East Africa, the transport corridor from Malindi in Kenya to Bagamoyo in Tanzania is due for upgrading with funds from the Bank. It is gratifying to note that its preparation was funded by the NEPAD-IPPF. This road will close the missing surface transport link between the EAC and SADC regions which traverses Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique," he added.

The successes of initial Bank-funded multinational projects between Kenya and Tanzania provided the impetus to widen the geographical spread to other EAC partner states with current projects underway to link Tanzania to the three landlocked states of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

"To date, NEPAD-IPPF has extended support to the EAC to the tune of almost \$15 million for road and rail soft infrastructure projects over a period of 13 years," said Mlote.

Also represented at the meeting were development partners KfW, and the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Business which both acknowledged the pivotal role NEPAD-IPPF continues to play in

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Infrastructure development critical as the continent seeks to make the African Continental Free Trade Area functional

(Continued from page 9)

the infrastructure space on the continent. They equally recognized the need for more resources to enable the fund to achieve more.

Laura González Villarejo representing the Ministry of Economy, Spain said in her statement that Africa is a priority region for Spain. She added that the Spanish Council of Ministers' long term strategic plan for Africa demonstrated the interest of Spain in Africa.

Ms. Villarejo said infrastructure development enhance regional integration which was the engine of economic growth and development, adding that Spain was keen on funding supra-national infrastructure development projects.

Michael Andres from KfW, the Oversight Committee Chairman, reiterated the full support of Germany for the Fund. He thanked the NEPAD-IPPF team led by Mike Salawou, Bank Division Manager Infrastructure & Partnerships, for the good performance of the fund during 2019, for a well-organized meeting and the East African Community Secretariat for hosting the event. He emphasized the need for joint effort from all concerned parties including the RECs to seek funding for the facility.

AUC representative Mr. Yagouba Traore called upon AUC Member states to support the Fund.

Director of Infrastructure at the African Development Bank, Mr. Amadou Oumarou reaffirmed the institution's commitment to mobilize more resources for NEPAD-IPPF and highlighted a Euro 3 million contribution received by the facility from the Spanish government in 2019. Infrastructure development would be more critical as the continent sought to make the African Continental Free Trade Area functional, he said.

"The facility has maintained a sustained drive towards building partnerships and can report on positive co-financing results. Notwithstanding, our efforts to secure more resources will continue through 2020, both from African governments and stakeholders as well as in collaboration with private sector companies and philanthropists," Oumarou said.

Going forward, implementing cost recovery instruments to support Public Private Partnership projects to attract more private sector financing downstream would be an important focus for the NEPAD-IPPF, he added.

The meeting ended with a visit to the Namanga "One Stop Border Post" between Tanzania-Kenya. This project funded by NEPAD-IPPF, has helped increase trade and tourism and has also stimulated the regional economy within the East African Community.



### African Development Fund

The African Development Fund (ADF) is the concessional window of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group. Established in 1972, it became operational in 1974. Administered by the African Development Bank, it comprises, to date, 32 contributing countries and benefits 38 countries. The 38 ADF-eligible countries include those that are increasing their economic capacities and heading toward becoming the new emerging markets—as well as those that remain fragile and need special assistance for basic levels of service delivery. The ADF has the challenge of having nearly half its client countries as fragile states, and facing a situation where even stable economies can become fragile due to a single internal or external shock.

The ADF contributes to poverty reduction and economic and social development in the least developed African countries by providing concessional funding for projects and programs, as well as technical assistance for studies and capacity-building activities. The Fund has cumulatively invested US\$45 billion over its 44 years of operationalization on the African continent. The Fund's resources are replenished every three years by its donor countries.

### NEPAD-IPPF

The NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) Special Fund established to assist African countries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), specialized agencies and related institutions by providing grant resources for: (i) preparing high quality and viable regional/continental infrastructure projects with a view to requesting financing from public and private sources; (ii) developing a consensus and partnership for project implementation; and (iii) promoting infrastructure projects and programs aimed at enhancing regional integration and trade.

The NEPAD-IPPF supports regional infrastructure development projects in the following sectors: transport, energy, ICT, and water resources management.



## New Indian envoy accredited to the EAC



The High Commissioner of India to the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Sanjiv Kohli, has been accredited as the country's representative to the East African Community.

The High Commissioner presented his letter of credence to EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, during a ceremony held at the EAC headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

During the event, the Indian envoy expressed delight at the accreditation commenting that India has very good relations with the EAC member states.

Mr. Kohli said India supports the EAC goals and lauded the Community developing policies and programmes aimed at improving the well-being of its citizens:

"We consider regional integration to be a highly effective means of promoting prosperity through increased trade and investment," said the envoy.

The Indian envoy proposed a joint EAC-India conference on trade and investment, an idea that was welcomed by the Secretary General.

"We are open to investment and there are opportunities which we can explore together," said Amb Mfumukeko, who also urged India to invest in the region especially in ICT, agriculture and capacity building.

Amb. Mfumukeko briefed the Envoy on the key milestones recorded in the integration process and pledged to link up the envoy with East African Business Council through which Indian investors could explore available opportunities.

Also present at the ceremony was the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote, and the EAC Principal International Relations Officer, Ms. Suma Mwakuyasa. 🇺🇦

## New German Ambassador presents credentials to EAC Secretary General



The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Tanzania, Mrs. Regine Hess, today presented her letter of credence to the Secretary General of the EAC Secretariat, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, to be accredited as the new German Ambassador to the EAC.

Mrs Hess had previously held diplomatic positions in the EAC Partner States of Uganda and Kenya and was accredited to the United Republic of Tanzania on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2020. She is the first female German Ambassador to be accredited to the EAC.

The EAC and Germany have enjoyed long-standing and close relations, their joint development cooperation going back two decades. Commitments from the German Government to the EAC have to date mounted to over EUR 470 mill. (Approximately US\$508 million). The joint cooperation focuses on the areas of economic and social integration as well as health.

Receiving the German Ambassador, EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko hailed the strong relations between the Community and Germany noting that Germany had provided generous technical and financial support to the EAC for decades.

"We have truly benefited from the German support which has catalyzed other Development Partners to support our projects and programmes," said the Secretary General.

Amb. Mfumukeko informed the Germany Ambassador of the significant progress made by the EAC in the four pillars of integration namely the Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and Political Federation, adding that the Community had made great strides in the four pillars due to political goodwill by the leaders of the Partner States.

On her part, the German Ambassador emphasized the importance of Germany's support to the EAC Secretariat:

"Germany is a staunch believer in regional integration. We are convinced that further regional integration amongst the six EAC Partner States will be of great socio-economic and political benefit. The German Government remains committed in supporting the EAC Secretariat in the future," said Mrs Hess. 🇺🇦

## Mombasa hosts EAC Coffee Business Forum

The East African Community Coffee Business Forum was held in Mombasa, Kenya with high level speakers from public and private sector exchanging and seeking to learn from each other as well as find new markets and seal international sales opportunities.

The forum organised by EAC jointly with the African Fine Coffee Conference and Exhibition and financed by the European Union through the MARKUP Programme featured a week of interactive discussions, workshops and networking events.

Speaking at the official opening ceremony, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of the Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, said coffee was an important and strategic crop for the EAC region, adding that the composition of EAC trade continues to be dominated by agricultural commodities, including coffee.

Hon. Bazivamo told the participants that EAC produces both Arabica and Robusta coffee but unfortunately its combined coffee exports of green coffee beans by volume to the world market are less than 10% despite the growing global potential for coffee.

Hon. Bazivamo informed the stakeholders that world coffee consumption has been on an upward trend for the last 10 years and is projected to continue rising, noting that the onus was the EAC to come up with new strategies for production and marketing of more coffee.

The Deputy Secretary General assured the participants at the forum that coffee growing remains a priority for the EAC region as clearly outlined in the regional economic bloc's policies including the EAC Agriculture and Food Strategy, EAC Industrialization Policy and Strategy as well as EAC Development Strategies.

He underscored the importance of Coffee as global commodity, and one in which EAC countries could and should be extremely competitive.

On his part, the European Union (EU) Head of Delegation to Tanzania and the EAC, Ambassador Manfredo Fanti, said the EAC Coffee Business Forum was a good example of what EU was willing to do with Africa to support local and regional export competitiveness in order to increase market opportunities for African companies in Europe and in other parts of the World.



The EU envoy observed that coffee was one of the major cash crops in the EAC, constituting a significant share of total export value in each EAC country. The sector was also important in creating substantial employment and income generation opportunities for the farmers.

Amb. Fanti challenged the participants at the forum to use the five-day workshop to discuss ways of eliminating various forms of trade barriers among coffee trading countries, and catalyse additional public-private collaboration in order to mobilise investments and enhance the role of coffee in the regional economy.

The Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC), Ms Dorothy Tembo, on her part, underscored the importance of bringing together public and private stakeholders to discuss ways of boosting trade and investment opportunities for coffee exporters as an occasion to identify the opportunities and challenges facing the EAC region.

She informed the participants that the solutions emerging from the deliberations of the forum will benefit not only the EAC but other parts of the African continent experiencing similar challenges include trade barriers, access to finance, standards and market access.

The key themes addressed included: the removal of coffee trade barriers with a spotlight on the World Trade Organization; Trade Facilitation Agreements; innovative mechanisms to facilitate access to credit, buyer and investor priorities globally as well as how regional growers and traders can capitalize on new opportunities around the world.



## EAC Partner States directed to enforce laws banning plastic carrier bags



East African Community Partner States have been directed to enforce relevant laws to effectively ban the manufacture and use of plastic carrier bags with immediate effect.

The 7th Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council on Environment and Natural Resources Management which met in Dodoma, Tanzania further directed Partner States that have not completely banned the single use plastic and plastic carrier bags to do so urgently.

So far, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania have fully enforced the ban on the manufacture of single use plastic and plastic carrier bags.

The Sectoral Council further adopted the EAC Comprehensive Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and directed the Secretariat to expedite its implementation.

The Sectoral Council received a status report on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) which was adopted by African Union Member States and the rest of the

world during the 3rd UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Council was, among other things, informed that in implementing the SFDRR, the overall disaster risk had generally increased in the EAC region in recent years.

Further, mortalities from biological and hydro-meteorological hazards remained stable but the number of people affected by disasters dropped from 32 million to 1.5 million.

The Sectoral Council further heard that the direct economic impact of disasters in the EAC dropped from US\$1.8 million to US\$483,600 over the period with Kenya and Tanzania sustaining the highest economic losses.

The Council was informed that massive impact had been noted including landslides, floods and drought on health, educational and transportation systems.

The Sectoral Council further adopted the final Draft EAC Forestry Policy and EAC Forestry Strategy (2020/21 – 2031/32),

which strategy is expected to address the social and environmental impact and investment gap in the forest sector.

The Council observed that the EAC Forestry Policy and Strategy will support Partner States in embracing landscape approach as one of the vehicles for achieving multiple objectives of biodiversity conservation, resilient and productive forest ecosystems, improvement of livelihoods, and mitigation of climate change.

The landscape approach to conservation refers to balancing competing land use demands in a way that is best for human well-being and the environment. It means creating solutions that consider food and livelihoods, rights, restoration and progress towards climate and development goals.

The meeting noted that the validated draft EAC Forestry Policy and Strategy would also enhance and strengthen coordination of programmes on natural resource conservation and initiatives supported by the respective Conventions and regional agreements.



## EAC I Deserve Campaign launched in Kigali

A year-long campaign to inspire East Africans to embrace the integration agenda dubbed “**The EAC i Deserve**” targets to ignite and sustain the enthusiasm and create a new momentum that will inspire every citizen in East Africa to play their part in the integration agenda.

The Rwandan edition of the campaign was launched at the College of Medicines and Health Sciences, Remera Campus, University of Rwanda in Kigali, Rwanda.

The campaign aims at creating opportunities for EAC citizens, to express themselves on how they feel after 20 years of the EAC integration and what they think should be done for it to work better for their lives in the coming years.

Speaking on behalf of the Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hon. Dr. Vincent Biruta, the Director General of African Cooperation, Ms. Diyana Gitera, said the campaign was an important part of EAC’s 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, adding that through increased communication and awareness, it would engage the most critical stakeholders – the youth – on an exciting path towards EAC’s integration.

“It is my hope that the sensitization event taking place throughout the year, turns out to be a milestone that creates a new momentum to inspire East Africans to embrace and deepen the integration process,” said Ms. Gitera.

The Director General cautioned the participants on the challenges that will be equally part of the narrative throughout the campaign. “Our wish is to appreciate the positive impact of the EAC, but also and perhaps more importantly, correct the course wherever necessary.”

She reminded the youth that the short film competition entailed in the campaign was meant to enable them to capture real stories on the EAC while demonstrating how more innovative EAC could be to get to the “EAC we want.”

On his part, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote, said that in the last 20 years, the Community had witnessed commendable growth in trade, infrastructure, better policies but added that regional social cohesion needs to be improved.

“We need to invest more in people-to-people relations for better and improved integration agenda,” said Eng. Mlote.

The DSG said that campaign would offer East Africans the opportunity to voice their concerns and share suggestions on how best EAC can forge forward as a region. He urged Rwandans and the youth in particular to participate in the discourses and freely share ideas and suggestions with the EAC Secretariat, the EAC Legisla-



tive Assembly, Partner States, and the East Africa Court of Justice, and other institutions of the bloc.

The future belongs to our youth’. Our EAC Vision 2050 requires skills, innovations, manpower and strategy to attain. Putting our youth at the centre of this blueprint brings us a step closer to accomplishing it,” said the DSG.

He disclosed that the campaign would engage the young people in EAC through a Short Film Competition, adding that prize money of US\$25,000 was up for grabs by 33 youthful winners in the creative campaign.

Making presentation about the status of the EAC integration for the past 20 years, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of the Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, said the campaign provides a platform to hear stories from every East African on the impact the EAC has made to his or her life and the future direction the citizens want the region to take.

Hon. Bazivamo informed the participants that EAC through various policy initiatives has achieved commendable results during the past 20 years, namely: new infrastructures projects, regional industrialization policies, healthcare approaches, Common External Tariffs and Common Higher Education Area, just to mention but a few.

So far, the campaign has been successfully launched in Nairobi, Kampala and Bujumbura. The Republic of South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania are next on the line.

More than 300 stakeholders including youth, students, business leaders, academicians, religious leaders, various government agencies and Members of Parliament attended the campaign launched.



**Editorial Team:**

*Simon Peter Owaka; Aileen Mallya; Bobi Odiko; Annah Nabaasa; Florian Mutabazi;  
J.R.Luwali (Photographer) & Mukhtar Abdul Bolyao (Photographer)*

Visit the EAC Web Portal at <http://www.eac.int> to read these and more stories online.

*EAC Update e-newsletter is published by the Department of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs  
East African Community (EAC) | P.O. Box 1096 | Arusha - Tanzania.*

[www.eac.int](http://www.eac.int)

*For further information please contact:*

*Simon Peter Owaka, Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Department | Email: [SOwaka@eachq.org](mailto:SOwaka@eachq.org)*