East African Legislative Assembly, Bujumbura, Burundi, March 26th, 2015: The Assembly has taken crucial steps to improve its governance systems following the adoption of rules of procedures of the Committees of the Assembly and a code of conduct for its Members.

The adoption of both sets of rules shall supplement the Rules of Procedure of the House which were debated and adopted on January 21, 2015 at the sitting in Arusha. The Rules of Procedure however took effect on March 17th, 2015 at the Bujumbura sitting. This followed the expiry of a motion filed by Hon Dora Byamukama for a transition period to allow for quality control and re-packaging of the Rules.

The Assembly has been keen to put in place a code of conduct and rules of procedure for its standing Committees for the effective and efficient discharge of its duties as per Article 49(2) of the Treaty.

The objectives of establishing rules of Procedure for Standing Committees are to cater for growth of the Assembly and its membership; provide for technological advancement; and address unforeseen incidents and developments.

In this regard, a Sub-Committee of the Committee on Legal Privileges and Privileges met in Nairobi on February 1-7th, 2015, to develop drafts. The draft Committees Rules of Procedure and draft Code of Conduct for Members of the Assembly were then considered and adopted by the whole Committee in Bujumbura, Burundi March 13-14, 2015.

While making his submissions yesterday, the Chair of the Committee on Legal Rules and Privileges, Hon Peter Mathuki remarked that the Committee had employed various methods in its approach. He cited some of the means as the review of global literature on Codes of Conducts, Ethics and Integrity, the EALA Rules of Procedure 2015 and the EAC Treaty. The Committee further reviewed Partner States’ National Parliaments’ Rules of Procedure including Committees’ Rules of Procedure and Code of Conducts; and that of regional parliaments Rules of Procedure similar to EALA.
In her submissions, Hon Judy Pareno said the process of establishing Rules of Procedure was diverse and had among others borrowed from the existing practices in the national assemblies and elsewhere and said this was healthy.

“I am happy that we have documented rules and some of the existing lapses that existed in Committees are now addressed in the committee rules”, Hon Pareno said.

Hon Mukasa Mbidde noted that the House had realized a milestone achievement by coming up with the Rules of Procedure of Committees of the Assembly and the code of conduct for members.

Hon Abubakar Zein urged the Members to champion good governance in all their dealings.

“We have to be a House of honour and integrity. We also need to be guided on how to extend our conduct as Members inside and outside the House. We need to pass it – but duty also demands that we implement it. This is part of our legacy that we are ready, able and willing to increase the levels of integrity in the House. We shall not look back,” Hon Zein said.

The Rules of Procedures take into consideration a number of areas including functions of chairpersons, management and power of committees and issues of quorum. The code of conduct for Members among other areas look into the personal conduct of the Members emphasizing selflessness, integrity, objectivity and openness. All Members are expected to uphold the code of conduct in undertaking their duties.

Article 49 (g) of the Treaty provides that EALA shall make its Rules of Procedure and that of its Committees.

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For more information, contact
Bobi Odiko,
Senior Public Relations Officer,
East African Legislative Assembly.
Tel: +255-27-2508240 Fax: +255-27-2503103,
Committees Establish Rules of Procedure

No in Burundi + 257-75773750
Email: BOdiko@eachq.org
Web: http://www.eala.org