
3 DECEMBER 2010
AICC, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

-Your Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Outgoing Chairperson of the Summit,

-Your Excellency Mwal Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya,

-Right Honorable Bernard Makuza, Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwanda,

-Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Members of the Council of Ministers,

-Your Lordships, Judge President and Judges of the East African Court of Justice,

-Honorable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly and Members of the Assembly,

-Your Excellencies, the Heads of Regional Economic Communities and other International Organizations,

-The Secretary General of the East African Community, Ambassador Juma Mwapachu,

-Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

-Distinguished Guests,

-Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellencies,

On behalf of the people of Burundi and on my own behalf, I wish at the outset to thank my colleagues, the EAC Heads of State, for being honored to be the Chair of the EAC Summit for the next one year.

I accept this huge responsibility with humility, and in the belief and trust that my colleagues will always be available to offer me support and guidance.
May I thank the Outgoing Chairperson of the Summit, HE Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete for his outstanding leadership of our organization in spite of his being closely engaged, for the past several months, in securing the mandate of Tanzanian people for a second term as President. I wish to congratulate him for his recent resounding victory and that of his party, CCM. I know that Tanzania will continue to prosper as an economy and as a people, under President Kikwete's leadership.

Your Excellencies,

Allow me also to thank President Kikwete, our outgoing Chair, for his brilliant and inspiring Statement. He has, with his usual eloquence, openness and visionary analysis, outlined where the EAC stands today, the challenges it faces and what it should strive to do and achieve in the next decade. He has offered much food for thought.

As all of us are aware, Excellencies, the last six months have been unusually hectic, if at times too painstaking, as we all participated in consolidating our democratic values through free, fair and credible elections and referenda. We thank Almighty God for enabling us to come out of them safe and sound, with renewed support of our people to lead them to a much brighter future.

In this regard, I wish to renew my congratulations to HE President Paul Kagame, who is represented here by Prime Minister Bernard Makuza, for his massive electoral victory. The Rwandese people spoke with a clear and loud voice, showing that they have great confidence in President Kagame.

At the same time, I wish to congratulate HE Mzee Mwai Kibaki for the successful Referendum which has ushered in a historic constitutional dispensation for the sister State of Kenya. As the EAC region, we stand tall and proud about our achievements in entrenching democracy, respect of human rights and good governance. These are the essential ingredients of our peace and stability, as well as the strategic drivers of our development.

To President Museveni, we offer our warm felicitations and best wishes of success, as you prepare for the general elections in Uganda in February next year.

Last but not least, allow me also to take this opportunity to record my deep appreciation and that of the people of Burundi for your prayers and good wishes you sent to me during the elections that took place in my country from May to September this year. As the saying goes, all is well that ends well.

I am pleased to note that in all the elections in our region, the EAC was highly visible through its Observer Missions which were led by Members of our East African Legislative Assembly. We must sustain and improve on this democratic practice.
Your Excellencies,

I am pleased to note that our Summit comes at a time when the East African Community is making very good progress and realizing major achievements.

The Report of the Council of Ministers which we have just received outlines not only the landmark achievements in the Customs Union and the on-set of the Common Market, but also the new momentum gained in the Monetary Union and the Political Federation processes.

On the whole, the Report profiles a strong strategic position in which the EAC finds itself today. Indeed, this position is the culmination of over ten years of focused integration, since the launching of the EAC in July 2000.

With the milestones reached at this stage, the challenge before us is to scale up our ambitions, and resolve to attain higher levels of integration.

Your Excellencies,

I would like to pay tribute to the leadership of all the EAC Organs and Institutions for prudent management of resources, and their contribution to the high trajectory of growth and development. But we should NOT rest on our laurels. The integration process is deepening. Therefore, the structures and systems of operations in place should be reviewed to conform to the demands of a New Era.

Organizations, like human organisms, can disappear if they are not well maintained and renewed. During my term as Chair of the Summit, I will engage closely with the Council and the Management and Staff of the EAC Organs and Institutions, as well as the East African Legislative Assembly, to heighten attention on addressing all the imperatives for transforming the EAC into a more effective institution.

Your Excellencies,

Another salient issue we must focus upon is to intensify publicity and marketing effort, to reach out to the people with clear messages about the EAC project, and the benefits that will accrue to the people.

It is imperative that the EAC gives further focus on creating a mindset shift, such that the people of East Africa would think and act East African, and create deeper awareness and participation in the integration effort.

Your Excellencies,

As the way forward, we need to push forward the EAC Common Market. We should reward the timely and swift adoption and launching of the Common Market Protocol, with equally swift and effective implementation of the Protocol.

The Common Market Protocol indicates clearly the rights, freedoms, duties and obligations of the people themselves to carry the Common Market forward and reap its benefits. As leaders,
we need to lead the sensitization and mobilization of the people on this important breakthrough that needs to be actualized and made to succeed.

Your Excellencies,

Before I conclude this statement, allow me Your Excellency President Kikwete, to say this aloud and clear: Arusha is and will remain for Burundi and its people a living symbol of our recent history, a story of a happy ending, forged with the appreciated support of Leaders and Peoples of our East African Region. I am grateful and sincerely thanking the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi, for your great contribution and patience you have given to Burundi in their quest for peace.

I would like to conclude by wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year of prosperity, peace and security in our Community.

With these remarks, I thank you for your attention.

Long Live East African Community!

Long Live African Unity!