SG BLOGS ON THE LAUNCH OF THE EAC VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITY

In 2013, The EAC Heads of State launched a System to facilitate Customs Connectivity in our Region. Today, they launched a Telepresence Video Conferencing System for the Community. What I said then is as true for the system they launched then, as the one they launched today.

Our Heads of State did not launch a piece of technology. After all, technological advances in the last few years are allowing major neuro-surgery by doctors to be performed thousands of kilometers from their patients. These advances allow humanity to explore the outer regions of our Universe.

No, what they launched then, and what they launched today, is not technology- it is a new way of doing business. It is about accelerating the East African integration agenda, through faster, smarter, more cost effective, methods. It is about a mindset for the future.

And, our accelerated integration demands of us a mindset change. The demands on time and resources for integration will inevitably increase. We must learn to do more with less - less time, less money.

For example, The EAC Organs and Institutions, and Partner States hold approximately 800 meetings and consultations annually, at an estimated cost of US$ 12 million.

The demands for consultations will only increase as we integrate more. Through the use of this and other technologies, a 30% reduction in the physical meetings would lead to annual savings of US$ 3.6 million. I am convinced we can do even better than just 30%.

Of course the 12 million does not include on time wasted and delays simply traveling from place to place given the inefficiencies and challenges of infrastructure in our region. Neither does it include the cost of resources not optimally utilized when meetings are postponed due to difficulties of travel, and critical decisions not taken and/or delayed.

This needs to change. However, for change to happen, we must all have a view and a determination to do better, more efficiently, with less resources. So what the EAC Heads of State launched today, is not technology - but a mindset Change.

I thank the Council of Ministers for accepting to take leadership in implementing the Change towards efficiency and effectiveness.

I thank our Partner, Trade Mark East Africa, represented at the Launch by its Chief Executive Officer, Mr Frank Matsaert, whose financial support made the acquisition of the technology
possible.