



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY NYERERE CENTRE FOR PEACE RESEARCH 8TH EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEBATE ON EAC INTEGRATION DATE 18th -19th OCTOBER, 2023 BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

1.0 Introduction

The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with its Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The Vision of the EAC is “A prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa”. The Mission is to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments.

The EAC integration is to an incremental progression through the stages of a Customs Union; Common Market; Monetary Union; and ultimately a Political Federation of the East African States. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30th November 1999 and became operational on 7th July 2000. Since the commencement of the EAC, the Partner States established a Customs Union in 2005. This has ease movement of goods within the EAC region. The establishment of the Common Market in 2010 resulted in easier movement of workers, people, services and capital within the EAC region, and the Protocol on Monetary Union was signed in 2013 which will climax with single currency thereby facilitating trade and deeper integration. The ultimate and the last stage of EAC integration is the Political Federation. The Federation is to be realized gradually through the Political Confederation whose constitution is now under development. The institutional and capacity development to lay its foundation are going on with establishment on institutions and relevant policies.

To realize the said objectives, mission and vision, the East African Community require a peaceful and political stable environment free from conflict in order to facilitate developmental programmes. Indeed, the East African Community has put in place peace initiatives dedicated to providing an

opportunity for the youth to have their voice heard and strengthen their ability to engage in peace and security, contribute towards building an effective, well-coordinated, and responsive youth sector that acts in solidarity within the region.

1.1 Context

The East African Community has established robust normative and legal frameworks that secure effective participation of youth in the region's peace measures. The Treaty for the Establishment of the Community, in Article 5(3)(f) secures the promotion of peace, security and stability within and good neighbourliness among the Partner States, within its vision of a prosperous, competitive and politically united East Africa, the Partner States in Article 124 (1) of the Treaty, agree that Peace and Security are prerequisites to social and economic development and vital to the achievement of the objectives of the Community.

Moreover, Article 120 (c) invites Partner States to develop and adopt a common approach towards marginalised groups including children and youth. As such, the East African Community has adopted and is currently implementing regional youth and children policies that are based on the basic principle of participation of young people in the matters that affect them in the EAC integration process.

To this end the East African Community Protocol on Peace and Security under Article 2 (i, ii, iii, iv) provides for Partner States to cooperate in peace and security matters and collaborate with international and regional organisations to promote peace and security in the region in areas of conflict prevention, management and resolution, prevention of genocide, combating terrorism, combating and suppressing piracy, peace support operations, control of proliferation of illicit arms and light weapons; among others.

The EAC Youth Policy 2013 stipulates an objective on youth participation in political processes and peace building for political, social and economic stability of the East African Community. It provides for strengthening the capacity of youth and youth organisations in peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution through the promotion of intercultural learning, civic education, tolerance, human rights education and democracy, mutual respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, the importance of dialogue and cooperation, responsibility, solidarity and international cooperation.

Despite these normative frameworks, the youthful population in Africa which forms a third of the Continent's population still remain vulnerable to human security issues including political violence, piracy, maritime, religious fundamentalism, violent extremism; among others. There is an urgent need to increase peace sensitisation initiatives amongst young people within our region to secure peace, justice, inclusion, gender equality and human rights.

It is on this premise that the 8th East African Universities debate is premised on “**EAC Integration, Peacebuilding and Youth Participation**” targeting young people to debate, research and analyse the entire spectrum of Peace, human security, human rights and social justice within EAC region and how the youth can get involved. It is needless to state that majority of sponsored armed

conflicts in the region are always fuelled and executed by young people. The participation of young people in armed conflicts in some parts of our region alarms an urgent need to address this scourge through socio-economic development and opportunities; good governance, rule of law, democracy, and human rights; justice and reconciliation; and meaningful representation and participation in decision-making processes (Continental Plan of Action on Youth, Peace and Security, AU 2020).

1.2 Youth Participation in the East African Community Integration

The East African Community recognizes that youth are a crucial asset, an important key resource and partners in social economic and political development of the community. The EAC has been undertaking various initiatives to promote continued dialogue among the youth and continuously promote their participation in moving the EAC regional integration. The involvement of the youth in EAC affairs is provided for under Article 120 (c) of the EAC Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC. The Treaty provides for adoption of a common approach for involvement of the youth in the integration process through education, training and mainstreaming youth issues into EAC policies, programs and projects as one of the strategic interventions towards the realization of a fully integrated Community.

In July 2013 the EAC passed the EAC Youth Policy in order to guide planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Community programs to address youth issues in the region while assuring sustainable social, economic and political development. The EAC Secretariat through its Nyerere Centre for Peace Research has consequently and on a continuous basis, engaged the youth through training, exchange programs and providing them with a platform to participate. To date, a number students from East African Universities have benefited from the exchange training programs on Peace and Conflict Resolution, good governance and Human Rights. These programs have created an enabling environment for students to play an active role in the integration process as well as offered the students space that enables them to learn more about the benefits, challenges and opportunities from the EAC integration.

1.3 The EAC Youth Ambassadors concept

In 2008, the EAC Summit of Heads of State decided on deepening sensitization and awareness creation for greater political will as a means for realization of the EAC Political Federation. Consequently, University Students Debate and sensitization was adopted as one strategy. The EAC Secretariat has conducted a number of activities to engage and empower young people and enhance their contribution to the EAC integration agenda. These include among others, The Annual EAC Youth Leadership Summit and now the EAC Youth Fellowship programme under the Nyerere Centre for Peace Research (NCPR).

The 1st EAC University Students Debate on regional integration in August 2012 triggered a snowball effect among EAC Youth and sparked broad enthusiasm for their participation in EAC integration process. The aim of the debate was to provide a regional platform to promote dialogue among university students and interest them in advocating for regional integration initiatives. The event attracted over 100 students from public and private institutions of higher learning. In addition, the debate also brought together representation from private sector, civil society, media,

technocrats and academia. Six participants were drawn from each of the five Partner States making a total of 30 debaters. As an outcome of the Debate, 5 EAC Youth Ambassadors were appointed as focal points in their respective Universities, to collaborate with the EAC Secretariat in sensitizing their peers on the EAC integration processes, benefits and challenges. As an outcome of the event, a recommendation was made to the EAC policy-making organs to declare the EAC University Students Debate as an annual event.

The 2nd University Students Debate held in September 2013 further enhanced the ‘EAC phoria’ among University Students and gave a push to new initiatives to youth engagement with the EAC. Since August 2012, the EAC Youth Ambassadors have engaged and empowered young people to enhance their contribution to the EAC integration agenda through effective peer training and engagements. Guided by the realities facing young people in the EAC region and anchored in the belief that young people are a catalyst for peace, democracy, equality, and good governance and an essential resource for sustainable development and poverty eradication; The first batch of the EAC Youth Ambassadors has been the voice of the youth on the EAC integration agenda.

Since then, there have been five EAC University Students’ Debate organized, third in 2014 in Nairobi, fourth in 2015 in Kampala, fifth in 2017 in Kigali, sixth in 2018 in Dar-es-Salaam and the 7th in 2021 Entebbe, Uganda. The debates were not organized in 2016 and 2019 due to resource constraints, and were not organized in 2020 due to eruption of COVID-19 Pandemic as most of the expected participants were not vaccinated to enter the host country

1.4 The EAC Youth Ambassadors’ Platform

The successful 2nd EAC University Students’ Debate on regional integration and the subsequent appointment of the new EAC Youth Ambassadors lead to the realization for the need for continuous engagement and dialogue platform for the youth within the region. The EAC Youth Ambassadors’ Platform, (EAC-YAP), was subsequently launched on 3rd September 2013. The platform brings all the youth together with the purpose of bridging the information gap about the EAC integration and fosters their participation in accelerating the integration through knowledge and experience sharing. The Platform also coordinates the establishment of EAC Youth clubs at universities and higher learning Institutions in East Africa. It is led by Youth Ambassadors of each Partner State, with alumni Ambassadors, past participants and all other youth passionate about the EAC integration. The main purpose of the EAC clubs is to bring together students from different universities across the country under the EAC YAP, to engage them in debate and community work that would be of a paramount importance in promoting a sustainable East African Union as per the aspirations of the mission and goal of the EAC.

The 1st EAC Youth Convention held in November 2013 in Kampala is so far the highest structure of the Youth Ambassadors Platform. Upon the invitation of African Union EAC-Youth Ambassadors’ Platform coordinated national youth consultations in contributing to the high-level dialogue on democracy and governance. The Convention granted the East African youth an opportunity to participate in the regional consultation process and developed an EAC position paper on “Constitutionalism and Rule of Law” that was submitted to the African Union. The

convention also provided awareness raising on EAC Integration processes is planned to take place annually.

2.0 THE EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEBATE ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

2.1. Background

The EAC University Students Debate on Regional Integration was initiated in 2012. The aim of the debate is to provide a regional platform to promote dialogue among the youth and interest them in advocating for regional integration initiatives. The specific objectives of the EAC University Students' Debate are to: -

- a. Promote continued participation of the youth on issues of the EAC integration;
- b. Encourage networking among university students/youth to enhance regional integration;
- c. Prepare the youth for future leadership roles at regional and international levels as they hold the mantle as Ambassadors of EAC integration in the region;
- d. To facilitate young people in driving the agenda of the East African Community regional integration process;
- e. To empower, inform and inspire youth in the region through active engagements on merging issues and trends; and
- f. To bridge the gap between the Secretariat and Youth in the rural areas.

The Debate is an annual rotational event that attracts an audience of over 200 youth from the East Africa, lecturers, experts from public, private and other higher institutions of learning. In addition, the debate also brings together representation from youth councils, private sector, civil society, media, technocrats and academia. Six participants are drawn from each Partner State making a total of 36 debaters.

During the debate one winner from each Partner State is appointed as an EAC Youth Ambassador and the runner up is appointed as Deputy EAC Youth Ambassador and both acts as focal points for targeted sensitization activities in their respective Universities/Partner States for a period of one year. After the completion of the one-year tenure, the Youth Ambassadors remain engaged as part of the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform (EACYAP). The EAC Secretariat established the EAC Youth Ambassadors' Platform to popularize EAC integration through continuous and structured engagement with the youth in higher institutions of learning and beyond. The EAC Youth Ambassadors in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat have sensitized their peers on the EAC integration processes, benefits and challenges. This has enhanced increased awareness on regional integration and networking among institutions of higher learning in the region.

Moreover, the fact that the EAC integration is people centered, the Youth have the potential to foster creativity, innovation, leadership and sharing of information and nurture a bond of "Eafricaness" with a distinct East African identity that is very much desired. The EAC University Students' Debate has seen the formation of over 150 EAC Youth Clubs in different universities in Partner States, this has resulted in appreciation and constructive youth dialogues on the integration process thus increased enthusiasm among the youth and support for the EAC integration.

The youth in EAC form substantial part of the population. Article 120 (c) of the EAC Treaty provides for adoption of a common approach for involvement of the youth in the integration process through education, training and mainstreaming youth issues into EAC policies, programs and projects as one of the strategic interventions towards the realization of a fully integrated corrupt free Community.

Despite the above-mentioned normative frameworks, the EAC region continues to witness the involvement of young people in violent conflict and extremism. This has led to the stereotype that label young people as a violent group and a threat to security and stability of the region. Young people are normally viewed as perpetrators or victims especially when it comes to participation in violence and sexual gender-based violence with women always seen as victims.

Therefore, it is crucial and critical that the EAC taps in this demographic group through continuous engagement initiatives that target their views and aspirations will shall ultimately shape the future of East Africa. This Debate is not only timely but also necessary having been predicated and centred upon Youth Participation in Peace initiatives in the region.

3.0 EIGHTH EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEBATE ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

3.1 Youth as Key Stakeholders of EAC Political Integration and Peace Building

In line with Article 123 (5), the EAC has put in place institutional frameworks through the establishment of various Sectoral Councils and Committees to give direction and policy guidance for cooperation in areas of Defence, Inter State Security as well as Foreign Policy Coordination so as to enhance peace, security and good governance. The key instruments include the Protocols, Mechanisms and Strategy among them is: EAC Youth Policy (2013), the EAC Youth Action Plan (2016-2021); EAC Youth Peace and Security Agenda, Peace and Security Communication Strategy for engagement in EAC among others.

Additionally, the EAC Secretariat through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has continued to engage youth as one of the key stakeholders towards realization of the objectives of the community.

In 2022, the EAC Secretariat engaged a number of youths in peace and Security initiatives aimed at continuous dialogue to promote political Integration and peace building initiatives namely:

- 1) Inter-generational dialogue held in November 2022 in Dar es Salaam, a platform aimed at creating space for experience, wisdom and skills sharing between generations through interactions on conflict prevention, mediation and other peace and security interventions to promote Political integration and peacebuilding. It drew participation from the East African Legislative Assembly, Political Affairs and Conflict Resolutions Committee, Representative of EAC Panel of Eminent Persons who participated in the Burundi Dialogue, Chairperson of the EAC Inter-Religious Council, AU coordinator for the Youth for Peace Africa Program, National Youth Councils, youth from Civil Society and EAC youth Ambassadors participated.

- 2) EAC Youth Forum held in November, 2022 in Nairobi aimed to foster ongoing communication, collaboration, and exchange of knowledge and resources among youth leaders, youth Ambassadors and organizations to identify potential funding opportunities and partnerships to support youth-led initiatives and projects in peace building, conflict resolution and EAC integration, and
- 3) Training workshop on countering violent extremism and promotion of a culture of peace, dialogue and tolerance held December 2022 in Entebbe aimed at promoting a culture of respect for life of fellow African citizens / nationals, which would promote peaceful living, stability and development among others. This draws participation from policy makers, youth leaders, National youth councils among others.

The 8th Annual EAC University Students' debate is scheduled to take place on 17th -19th October, 2022 in Bujumbura, Burundi. The debate is expected to bring together representation from university students, academia, policy makers, media, youth leaders, entrepreneurs and one high school to participate in the event. The debate will interrogate the relationship between Political Integration and Peacebuilding and how the youth can play a vital role.

To this end, The East African Community (EAC) invites applications for the 8th EAC University Students Debate on Regional Integration, scheduled to take place from 17th -19th October, 2022 in Bujumbura, Burundi. The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising the Republics of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The EAC envisions a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable, and politically united East Africa, aiming to enhance economic, political, social, and cultural integration for improved quality of life through increased competitiveness, trade, and investments.

3.2 Theme of the Debate

Under the theme: ***"EAC Political Integration, Peace building and Youth Participation"*** the debate will delve into issues relating to;

- a. human security issues including; political violence, piracy, maritime, religious fundamentalism, violent extremism among others;
- b. the role of social media in eradicating conflicts within the region;
- c. the Regional policies ratified in safeguarding peace and security;
- d. Policy recommendations to secure maximum participation of Youth in peace initiatives;
- e. Border management for secure, safe and easy movement of people and goods amidst the pandemic;
- f. Reforms that EAC Secretariat and Partner States may put in place to strengthen and build a more secure region; and
- g. Security border management for secure, safe and easy movement of people and goods amidst security challenges.
- h. The role of youth in peacebuilding.

3.3 Objectives of the Debate

The overall objective of the EAC University Debate is to enhance youth participation in the EAC integration agenda and processes. The debates and subsequent sensitization activities create an enabling environment for not only students and youth to play an active role in the integration process but offer space that enables them to learn more about the benefits, challenges and opportunities from the EAC integration.

The 8th EAC Debate will seek to achieve the following specific objective:

- a. Promote in-depth understanding of EAC Political Integration and peacebuilding efforts within the EAC region;
- b. Examine the impact of youth participation in fostering peace and stability through Political Integration;
- c. Explore the strategies that can enhance youth engagement and involvement in the EAC's political integration and peacebuilding initiatives; and
- d. Assess the extent with which Youth can be actively involved in peace initiatives virtually in this era of social media.

Accordingly, by the end of the debate the following will be the expected outcomes;

- a. Participants will have increased knowledge, appreciation of the EAC Policy framework for peace and security;
- b. Participants will provide policy recommendation for adoption by EAC on how to mainstream Youth in peace initiatives;
- c. Key peace and security issues relating to Youth will be distilled for further dialogue among youth and other stakeholders in Partner States and the region;
- d. The conversation and recommendations on the role of youth in East Africa in strengthening regional peace and security is initiated;
- e. Action points will be identified for further implementation by various stakeholders;
- f. Fourteen (14) Youth Ambassadors will have been selected – two (2) per Partner State with an obligation to spear head peer learning, sensitization and out-reach programs in their respective universities, border communities in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, Development Partners, the East African Legislative Assembly and EAC Ministries in Partner States; and
- g. There will be a Gala Dinner where awards will be given to the Best debaters and the winning team.

3.4 Participation in the Debate

The East African Community Secretariat will cover transport expenses, accommodation and meals for the participants during the days of the event. Six participants will be selected from each of the EAC Partner State, drawn from national universities, public, private and other institutions of higher learning. The participants will be either on the affirmative (proposition) or alternative (Opposition) strategy side (team) of the debate but the Secretariat reserves the prerogative to ensure that both sides have equitable membership. More information will be submitted to successful candidates in good time to allow for sufficient preparations.

Participation in this debate is limited to students who are in their second year at the university pursuing a degree. Students who participated in the last three debates need not apply in order to give an opportunity to others to take part. Interested applicants with good analytical and communication skills; and a good command of English language are encouraged to apply. Please note that the Debate will be conducted in English.

3.5 Expected Outcomes

The debate will also bring together representatives from academia, private sector, civil society, media and technocrats from the East African region, development Partners and relevant stakeholders who will listen to the debate and make their comments on the strength of the deliberations and make recommendations on the way forward for the debate. The debate will be streamed live on the EAC website and other social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook will also be used to enable a wide participation of youth across the EAC region.

The best debaters will be appointed as EAC Youth Ambassadors 2022-2023 with an obligation to spear head peer learning, sensitization and out-reach programs in their respective universities, boarder communities in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, Development Partners, the East African Legislative Assembly and EAC Ministries in Partner States. There will be a Gala Dinner where awards will be given to the Best debaters and the winning team.

In the spirit of promoting a sense of “*Eastafricaness*”, it is expected that by the end of the debate, a bond will have been created among the students thereby shaping and nurturing the East African identity among the youth, in the long run. Participants would have been empowered to continue engaging in dialogue on matters of EAC integration, immigration management and curbing corruption to promote stability and social economic development. The EAC University Debate on regional integration provides a pedestal to the youth to participate, dialogue and contribute to policy formulation on issues that constitute the EAC Youth agenda.

3.6 Methodology

3.6.1 Participation at the Debate

The participation at the 8th EAC University Students’ Debate will be as follows;

- The main debate will involve 42 University Students (debaters), 7 from each Partner State;
- 3 Judges obtained from the Civil Society, Academia, EAC Secretariat and EAC institutions;
- 6 Local Universities will be represented by 9 students and 1 Lecturer from each University. These students and lecturers will form part of the audience for the debate;
- 100 students from the host University;
- A host country local High School will present poem/song on the theme;
- A Moderator will facilitate the Debate;
- EAC Youth Ambassadors platform members will participate and
- Staff from the EAC Secretariat.

3.6.2 Date and Venue

The Debate will take place from 17th -19th October, 2013 in Bujumbura, Burundi.

3.6.3 HOW TO APPLY

Applicants who are interested to participate should apply by submitting the following documents:

- a. A one-page motivation letter explaining why they are interested to participate and indicating which University they come from and the Year of Study and A two-page essay on the topic of ***"EAC Political Integration, Peacebuilding, and Youth Participation."***
- b. A scanned copy of your university ID card and the bio data page of your passport.
- c. All documents should have a font size of 12, Arial font, and single line spacing. Combine the documents into a single attachment and send your application to debate_applications@eachq.org by [Application Deadline] at 5:00 pm East African Time;
- d. The Applications should be uploaded <https://forms.gle/2a4ZKfQ2aPk7VVGTA> addressed to East African Community Nyerere Centre for Peace Research, on email: **debate_applications@eachq.org** The applications should reach us not later than 22nd September, 2023 at 5:00pm East African time. Please note that only successful candidates will be contacted. Only successful applicants will be notified.