24TH FEBRUARY, 2025

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

HIGHLIGHTS

DEEPENING INTEGRATION, WIDENING COOPERATION

EAC TO PROMOTE THE REGION AS A UNIFIED TOURISM DESTINATION AT ITB BERLIN 2025

The East African Community (EAC) will, for the first time, participate as an entity having its own stand at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) - Berlin, the world's largest tourism trade fair, from 4th - 6th March, 2025.

Representing the region as a single tourism destination, the EAC will showcase its diverse attractions under the brand "Visit East Africa: Feel the Vibe."

The EAC Secretary General, Hon. Veronica Nduva observes that "this is part of the EAC's efforts to position the region as a leading global tourism destination. The bloc aims to attract international tourists and investors by highlighting the region's rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and unique attractions."

The region offers a wide range of experiences for travelers. It is home to some of the most iconic wildlife, including the traditional Big Five, with the highest population of lions in the world. Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, continues to draw adventurers from around the world, while the Great Migration, a natural wonder shared between Kenya and Tanzania, remains a major highlight for visitors.

ON THE SPOTLIGHT

- ***EAC and KfW Development Bank strengthen regional development with Euro 46 million partnership.***
- ***Centre of Excellence for the East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (EACREEE) to be established as an EAC Institution***
- **EAC-EU convene a digital transformation cocreation to accelerate East Africa's digital economy.**

EAC TO PROMOTE THE REGION AS A UNIFIED TOURISM DESTINATION AT ITB BERLIN 2025

Participation at ITB Berlin will also serve as a platform to promote East Africa's multi-destination tourism offerings and cross-border experiences. International visitors have an opportunity to explore the seamless travel possibilities across the region, with its breathtaking natural landscapes, pristine beaches along the Indian Ocean, and rich cultural traditions. The EAC aims to demonstrate the region's potential to provide an unforgettable travel experience for tourists from around the world.

Moreover, the EAC stand at ITB offers the upcoming and undiscovered destinations within the region an opportunity to showcase their offerings and penetrate the international market. In addition to showcasing East Africa's unique attractions, the fair will create valuable opportunities for business partnerships. Exhibitors from the region will meet with buyers from international markets, strengthening relationships with global travel trade partners.

The EAC will also convene a platform to deliberate on sustainable tourism trends and joint tourism marketing efforts as it launches the Visit East Africa: Feel the Vibe" brand.

"We are delighted to note that the EAC has fully recovered from the impacts of COVID-19 in terms of tourism numbers, with the region having recorded approximately 8.5 million international tourist arrivals in 2024, compared to pre-COVID levels of 7.7 million arrivals in 2019," Hon. Nduva stated.
The promotion of regional tourism under the "Visit East Africa: Feel the Vibe Brand" including participation at ITB is supported by the European Union via the LIFTED project. LIFTED "Leveraging Integration Frameworks for Trade in Services and CSOs in the EAC," is a project jointly co-financed by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

LIFTED aims to increase EAC, continental and further bilateral trade with EU in Trade in Services and Civil Society engagement in the framework of the (AfCFTA) for people-centred EAC integration. It is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE EAST AFRICAN CENTRE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY (EACREEE) TO BE ESTABLISHED AS AN EAC INSTITUTION

The decision to establish the Centre of Excellence for the East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (EACREEE) as an Institution of the East African Community came during the 16th Meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers on Energy.

The Ministers reviewed the status of the Centre of Excellence and directed the EACREEE Secretariat to coordinate with the EAC Secretariat to develop a Concept Paper highlighting the status of EACREEE establishment, progress, bottlenecks, and opportunities for the Partner States and the region.

The overarching mandate of EACREEE is to galvanize Partner States and provide a mechanism through which the private sector and development partners can play a key role in supporting Partner States to close their energy-access deficits, meet increasing energy demands and contribute to climate action.

It is anticipated that the institutionalization of EACREEE will have limited or no resource implications on the EAC given that the Centre has already demonstrated its sustainability by mobilising resources and supporting its operations since its establishment without any direct cash contributions from the Partner States.

The full institutionalization of EACREEE is further expected to drive significant progress in renewable energy adoption and energy efficiency promotion.
On the Power Supply Situation and Status of Implementation of the East African Power System Master Plan (EAPMP the Sectoral Council observed that the level of connectivity and access to power as well as the consumption per capita in the region is still relatively low. The Sectoral Council urged Partner States to put more effort in investing in generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure and come up with demand stimulation strategies to promote the productive use of electricity.

EAC AND KFW DEVELOPMENT BANK STRENGTHEN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH EURO 46 MILLION PARTNERSHIP

EAC continues to enhance strategic partnerships to bolster its capacity to drive sustainable development and tackle regional challenges. In this regard, the EAC and Germany's KfW Development Bank have signed four agreements valued at EUR 46 million to advance key regional infrastructure, improve healthcare systems, foster regional cooperation and mitigate the effects of climate change.

KfW, in partnership with the European Union, is supporting the EAC's Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) to promote sustainable and coordinated use of the Lake's resources to ensure the availability of more and higher-quality water. Two contracts, amounting to EUR 30 million, have been signed for the 'Lake Victoria Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Programme.' These investments focus on expanding sewerage systems in Kampala (Uganda) and Mwanza (Tanzania) and constructing sanitary facilities and a sewerage system in Kisumu (Kenya), particularly for informal settlements.

In the health sector, KfW is also supporting the EAC's efforts to combat infectious diseases. Through a collaboration with the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine in Hamburg, the laboratory network across seven EAC countries is being expanded, with additional training provided to laboratory personnel. This initiative, funded with EUR 12 million, aims to enhance rapid diagnostics during disease outbreaks, including responses to Ebola, dengue, COVID-19, and more recently, the Marburg virus and Mpox.

The EAC scholarship programme, has been designed to support talented Master's students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds pursuing studies in STEM subjects or economics. The second phase, with an additional EUR 4 million funding, will extend the opportunity to students from Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, further enhancing regional mobility and academic collaboration.

EU AND EAC LAUNCH STRATEGIC PROJECTS TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The European Union (EU) and the East African Community (EAC) launched three key projects designed to strengthen regional integration, enhance trade and foster inclusive economic growth.

The projects will support the EAC's efforts to liberalize services, enforce competition policies, and improve institutional capacity, with a strong focus on empowering women and youth. With a total EU contribution of EUR 8 million, these three projects will significantly enhance economic regional integration and facilitate cross-border trade within the EAC.

The first project, Leveraging Integration Frameworks for Trade in Services and Civil Society Organizations (LIFTED), will tackle barriers to trade in services by streamlining tourism regulations and advancing the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications across the region.

Complementing LIFTED, a second project will strengthen the EAC Competition Authority (EACCA) by improving the enforcement of competition laws, harmonizing regulations, and building institutional capacity. Through targeted technical assistance, this project will enhance the skills of EAC judges, EACCA commissioners, and other key stakeholders, ensuring a fair and competitive business environment across the region.

The third project, EU-EAC Technical Assistance, will bolster the capacity of the EAC Organs and Institution to effectively manage projects and improve public finance governance. Strengthening institutional frameworks and aligning with international best practices, this project will enhance the EAC's ability to oversee development programs and manage resources efficiently.

The projects align with the EU's broader strategy to support regional integration through the AfCFTA and the Team Europe Initiative, and will serve to advance the shared vision of the EU and EAC for a stronger, more integrated, and resilient East African region.

EAC STRENGTHENS REGIONAL DIGITAL INTEGRATION WITH ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL PAYMENT SYSTEMS MASTERPLAN

The EAC is poised to accelerate regional digital integration with the development of an EAC Payment Systems Masterplan.
The Masterplan is set to harmonise legal, regulatory and oversight frameworks to promote a conducive cross-border payment ecosystem in the region.

A key initiative expected in the EAC Payments Masterplan is the development of a mutual recognition framework for licensing Payment Service Providers (PSPs), which will facilitate their operations across borders without unnecessary regulatory barriers. To support digital financial services, a harmonised regulatory framework for intra-regional mobile money and e-wallet transactions is also being developed, promoting interoperability and security.

To further strengthen cross-border payments, principles for currency acceptability and convertibility will be introduced, addressing currency-related challenges and fostering better pricing mechanisms.

With the objective of developing infrastructure that is enabling for instant cross-border wholesale and retail payments, the Masterplan will identify infrastructure needs for instant cross-border payments to ensure access, speed, cost efficiency, transparency, inclusivity and safety as well as sustainability of the payment systems.

By integrating national payment systems and enabling instant retail and wholesale payments across the region, individuals and businesses will benefit from lower transfer costs, reduced reliance on costly intermediaries and greater financial inclusion. Mobile money users, small traders and online businesses will experience seamless transactions across borders, thereby enhancing trade and economic opportunities.

3RD ANNUAL EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

L: *On the sidelines of the 38th African Union Summit, the EAC Secretary General, Hon. Veronica Nduva, participated in the AfDB's High-Level Strategic Dialogue on visa-free movement, pushing for free movement across the continent.* ***R:*** *Hon. Veronica Nduva held an engagement with the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa*, H.E Huang Xia, on regional peace and security issues.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EAC AT THE 38TH AU SUMMIT

Right: *The EAC Secretary General joined the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace & Security Mr. Bankole Adeoye and SADC Executive Secretary, H.E Elias Magosi, to deliberate on joint efforts in the restoration of peace and security in Eastern DRC.*

Left:: *EAC Deputy Secretary General, Hon. Aguer Ariik, held a meeting with Dr. Paul Handy, Regional Director, East Africa & AU Representative, at the Institute for Security Studies, to deliberate on strengthening collaboration on regional security issues.*

PICTORIALS

In an effort to accelerate trade facilitation at the Gatuna (RW)/Katuna (UG) OSBP; EAC Secretary General, Hon. Veronica Nduva and Rwanda's Minister of Trade, Hon. Prudence Sebahizi and Rwanda Revenue Authority Commissioner General, engaged stakeholders on enhancing cross-border trade efficiency.

The EAC engaged over 200 women traders at the Borders of Rusumo (TZ/RW), Gatuna/Katuna (RW/UG), Mirama Hills/Kagitumba (UG/RW) and Kobero/Kabanga (BU/TZ).

IGAD assumes Chairmanship of the Inter-RECs Coordination and Collaboration Platform from ECOWAS on 14th February 2025 , for the year.

TOP REGIONAL NEWS

EAC to showcase unified tourism at ITB Berlin 2025

- The East African Community (EAC) will, for the first time, participate as an entity having its own stand at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) – Berlin, the world's largest tourism trade fair, from 4th – 6th March, 2025.Representing the region as a single tourism destination, the EAC will showcase its diverse attractions under the brand "Visit East Africa: Feel the Vibe." MORE

Rwanda turns to digital clinics to address healthcare worker shortage

The Rwandan Government is set to adopt digital clinics—virtual healthcare facilities that use digital technology to provide remote medical services—to tackle the country's shortage of medical personnel, according to the Ministry of Health (MoH). The ministry says the country needs to quadruple its number of healthcare workers to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards.
MORE

Tanzania seeks performance of divested tourist hotels, lodges

Privatised tourist lodges and hotels in Tanzania were once key business entities owned by the government. The Office of the Treasury Registrar had previously directed the current and outright owners of privatised hotels to submit performance reports on the viability of their businesses and services. MORE

Angola President Lourenco takes over AU chairmanship

- Angolan President João Lourenço is the new chairperson of the African Union (AU), succeeding Mauritania's Mohamed Cheikh El Ghazouani, who has held the position since February last year.Lourenço will serve a one-year term, as per AU regulations, and will be deputised by Burundi, Ghana, and Tanzania as the first, second, and third vice chairs, respectively. MORE

Djibouti's foreign minister elected to top African Union post

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf was elected head of the AU's executive commission to replace the outgoing Moussa Faki from Chad. Youssouf is the first person from the East Africa region to lead the AU Commission, or AUC. Djibouti's foreign minister since 2005, there are few who can match Youssouf's experience.
MORE

GLOBAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- **Five candidates in race for AfDB Presidency**

At least five African experts have been cleared as candidates for the new leadership role as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group, with elections slated for May 29.The elections by the Board of Directors will determine the successor of Akinwumi Adesina who has led the bank for the past 10 years as his second term comes to an end in May. MORE

- **Disease Outbreak News: Sudan virus disease**

As of 20 February 2025, a total of nine confirmed cases of Sudan virus disease, including one death have been reported from Uganda, since the outbreak was declared on 30 January 2025.Eight cases received care at treatment centres in the capital Kampala and in Mbale and were discharged on 18 February after two negative tests 72 hours apart. As of 20 February 2025, 58 contacts that have been identified are still under follow up in designated quarantine facilities MORE

- **China hopes EU will meet country halfway on anti-subsidy case**

China hopes the European Union (EU) will take concrete action to work with China and meet halfway on the anti-subsidy case against Chinese electric vehicles, He Yadong, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce, said at a press conference on Thursday.He noted that the case has given rise to widespread concern from various sectors in both China and Europe. MORE

- **Amazon goes nuclear, to invest more than $500 million to develop small modular reactors**

Amazon Web Services is investing more than $500 million in nuclear power, announcing three projects from Virginia to Washington state. AWS, Amazon's subsidiary in cloud computing, has a massive and increasing need for clean energy as it expands its services into generative AI. It's also a part of Amazon's path to net-zero carbon emissions. MORE

- **Pope Francis remains 'critical' and has kidney problem, Vatican says**

Pope Francis remains in a "critical" condition, but "has not presented any further respiratory crises", the Vatican said in a statement. He was still receiving high-flow oxygen therapy and had undergone blood transfusions. Blood tests also showed he had "initial, mild, renal insufficiency" – a kidney problem – that is "currently under control", the statement said. MORE

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAC Close, Afrika Mashariki Road
P.O. Box 1096, Arusha
United Republic of Tanzania
Tel: +255 (0)27 216 2100
Email: eac@eachq.org
www.eac.int

©Copyright 2025 EAC. All rights reserved