EAC WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

DEEPENING INTEGRATION, WIDENING COOPERATION

29th MAY, 2023

Latest from the Office of the Secretary General

- President Ruto urges the Committee of Experts Drafting the Constitution for the EAC Political Confederation to have the first draft ready by June 2024
- EAC Political Confederation Constitution Drafting process - Kenya National Consultations
- EACJ receives the Bureau of East African Community Speakers

PRESIDENT RUTO URGES THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS DRAFTING THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE EAC POLITICAL CONFEDERATION TO HAVE THE FIRST DRAFT READY BY JUNE 2024

The President of the Republic of Kenya H.E William Ruto urged the Committee of Experts tasked with drafting the Constitution for the proposed EAC Political Confederation to fast-track the process and have the first draft of constitution latest by the end of June 2024.

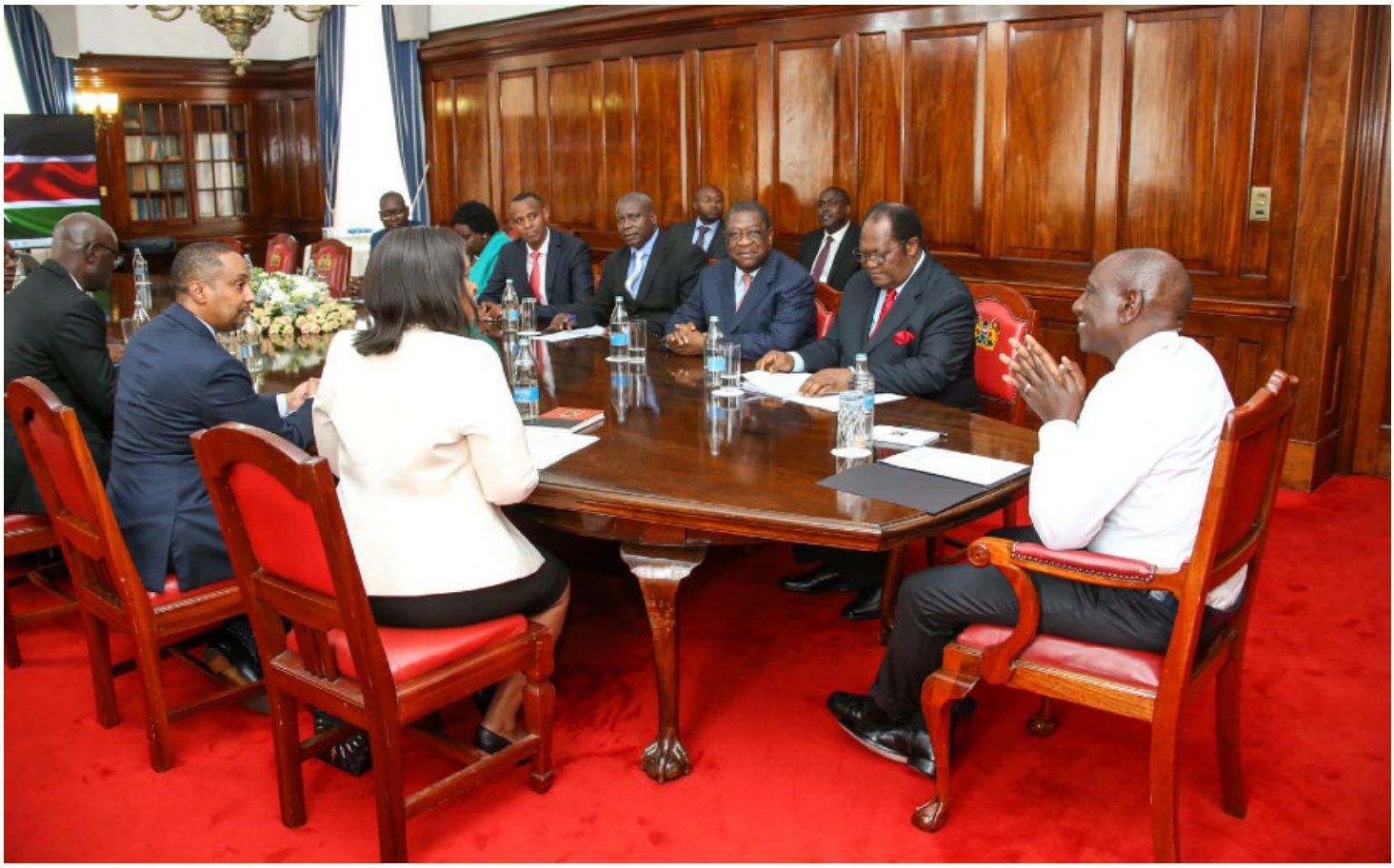
The President said that East Africans have always lived together and would not wait for the Partner States to establish the confederation to continue with their lives, adding that the citizens were well ahead of their national governments in as far as the integration process was concerned.

President Ruto said that East Africans wanted to live together and do business regardless of national boundaries and urged EAC Partner States should therefore endeavour to catch up with them and actualise the Political Confederation as fast as possible," said President Ruto.

The Head of State said that the idea of a federation was conceived after independence in the early 1960s by the Founding Fathers of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, adding that the ongoing expansion of the Community would be an asset for the people of East Africa and Africa as a whole.

President Ruto was speaking at State House in Nairobi, Kenya when he received the Committee of Experts tasked with drafting the Constitution for the proposed EAC Political Confederation. The committee, which is chaired by Uganda's retired Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki, is currently collecting views from stakeholders and opinion leaders in Kenya through national consultative forums.

...President Ruto pledges US$1 million to support the EAC Political Confederation Constitution Drafting process



President Ruto pledged that the Government of Kenya would give US$1 million to the EAC Secretariat to support national consultations on Political Confederation being conducted by the committee.

The President also pledged to convince the other Partner States to also contribute so that the process of drafting the constitution is finished in time as directed by the Summit.

The president said that Partner States should not entertain the barriers occasioned by the boundaries created by the former colonial powers for their own imperial interests, instead urging Partner States to work together and collapse all the boundaries for the sake of integration in the region and beyond.

Dr. Ruto cited prosperity for the region, strategic interest and security and the fact that East Africans were peoples of the same origins as the major reasons why the region needs to integrate and embrace the unity of the region.

President Ruto said that a borderless Africa would benefit from the prosperity that comes with integration, noting that integration would provide for a bigger market for the goods and services produced by the people of the region.

On his part, Justice Benjamin Odoki, the Chairperson of the Committee informed the President that the committee concluded stakeholders' consultations in Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Uganda.

NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS FOR DRAFTING THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE EAC POLITICAL CONFEDERATION CONCLUDES IN KENYA

National consultations for Drafting the Constitution for the proposed East African Community (EAC) Political Confederation concluded in Machakos County, Kenya over the weekend.

The 20-day consultations launched in Mombasa on 9th May, 2023 saw the Committee of Constitutional Experts for Drafting the EAC Political Federation Constitution hold consultations with civil society, local leaders, opinion leaders and the business community, among other stakeholders, to seek their views on what kind of a Political Confederation they would desire for the EAC.

The consultations were done in various areas across the country including Kisumu, Kakamega, Eldoret, Nakuru, Nyeri, Embu, Garissa and Nairobi.

The objectives of the national onsultations are to enhance awareness on the ongoing Constitution-making process for transforming the EAC into a Political Confederation; obtain stakeholders' views on their interests and key issues to inform the drafting of model Confederation and subsequently a Confederal Constitution in line with the principle of people-centred regional community, and; prepare the public in general to give their inputs into the draft Constitution once it will be drafted.

Kenya was the third Partner State where national consultations were conducted after Burundi in January 2020 and Uganda in April 2021.

Speaking during a media briefing held after the conclusion of the consultations, EAC Secretary General Hon. (Dr) Peter Mathuki said the views gathered during the consultations will not only form the basis of drafting and promulgating the Constitution for the EAC Confederation, but also lend credibility and legitimacy to the process and the Constitution itself.

The Secretary General told journalist that the 18th Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State held in 2017 adopted a Political Confederation as a transitional model to the EAC Political Federation.

“These consultations are therefore crucial for the Experts to gather the views of people and propose to Summit a model of the Political Confederation,” said Dr. Mathuki.

Dr. Mathuki said that some of the issues recommended by the different stakeholders during the consultations to be included in the proposed Political Confederation were: the elimination of borders to allow complete free movement, residency and trade; a common EAC identity document, and; the Confederation to create structures to handle cross-border security.

Other proposals were: a common foreign policy, for instance, an EAC Ambassador for all foreign missions like the EU Ambassador; a common currency to facilitate trade and deepen integration, and; clear levels of decision making for the Confederal and National Governments.

“I look forward to the model to be proposed from these views after all Partner States have contributed their opinions,” said the Secretary General.

On his part, Chairperson of the Committee of Experts, Justice (Rtd.) Benjamin Odoki, said that the Committee managed to interact with the representatives of County Governments, private sector, industry, civil society, youth, women, people with disabilities, political leaders, the clergy and academia, amongst other stakeholders.

Justice Odoki said that at the national level, the Committee received ideas and recommendations from the President of Kenya, H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, Parliament, the Judiciary, constitutional commissions, political parties and various ministries.

“We have listened to Kenyans express challenges with the current configuration of the EAC which, according to many, make them unable to realise the benefits they have anticipated from the integration,” said Justice Odoki.

Justice Odoki disclosed to the media that Kenya had expressed urgent need for a political confederation of East Africa to give meaning to the integration. •

EAC SECRETARY GENERAL CALLS FOR ENHACED RESOURCE MOBILISATION FOR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The EAC Secretary General, Hon. (Dr) Peter Mathuki has called on regional and continental blocs to enhance resource mobilisation for regional infrastructure projects to ensure better trade facilitation, noting that the development of infrastructure will provide access to regional and world markets.

The Secretary General was speaking during the 2nd Meeting of the Heads of Regional and Continental blocs on the sidelines of the African Development Bank Group Annual Meeting in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt. •

EACJ RECEIVES THE BUREAU OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

The Judge President of the East African Court together with other Judges of the Appellate Division, received the Rt. Hon. Speakers of the National Parliaments of the EAC Partner States (The Bureau of the EAC Speakers) at the Court's premises in Arusha, Tanzania.

The National Assemblies' Speakers from the EAC Partner States, who were attending their 15th meeting in Arusha, paid a courtesy call on the Judge President of EACJ, Justice Nestor Kayobera, to learn about the EACJ.

Justice Kayobera expressed his gratitude to the Speakers for finding time to visit the Court, which is the first of its kind in the last 22 years of the Court's existence.

Justice Kayobera told the Speakers that the Court has decided very many cases against the Governments, such as Cases on the Election of Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, adding that the Court belongs to the people.

“Therefore, this is your Court and your visit is very important to enable you understand these cases,” said Justice Kayobera, even as he commended the EAC Partner States for implementing the decisions of the Court.

The Judge President also informed the Speakers that, the Court currently is composed of a total of 11 Judges, that is six (6) in the First Instance Division and five (5) in the Appellate Division, adding that the Republic of South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo cannot appoint Judges to the EACJ Appellate Division until the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community is amended to allow more Judges be appointed to that Division, as new countries join Community.

Justice Kayobera further said that, the Treaty allows a total of 10 Judges to be appointed to the First Instance Division of the Court and that DRC is in the process of appointing a Judge.

On her part, the Chairperson of the Bureau of the EAC Speakers, who is also the Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, the Rt. Hon. Jemma Nunu Kumba, hailed the EACJ for all the cases determined and that the Parliaments appreciate the work of the Court in ensuring justice in the EAC integration.

"We have taken note that the Court belongs to us as the President of the Court has indicated and we pledge our support where need arises." said Rt. Hon. Jemma.

The EALA Speaker, Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, commended the EACJ President and the Judges for receiving the Speakers and called for cooperation among EAC Organs for the benefit of all East Africans.

The other Rt. Hon. Speakers present during the courtesy call led by the Chairperson were, Rt. Hon Gelase Ndabirabe, President of the National Assembly of Burundi, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Sinzohagera, President of the Burundi Senate, Rt. Hon Mukabaramba Alvera, Vice President of the Rwanda Senate and Senator Hillary Kiprotich Sigei, representing the Speaker of the Kenya Senate. •

TOP REGIONAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Museveni reveals new details on deadly attack on Ugandan troops in Somalia

Uganda President Yoweri Museveni has spoken on the early Friday morning raid at a military base in Somalia, revealing details why Al Shabaab managed to overrun the facility manned by up to 200 Ugandan troops. The militants attacked the base of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (Atmis) at Buulo Mareer, Lower Shabelle, on May 26, killing scores of Ugandan soldiers and destroying military equipment. **MORE**

Kenya revives push by African nations to ditch the dollar

Kenya's President William Ruto has asked African leaders to take first steps towards ditching the globally-bullish US dollar by signing up to a pan-African payments system to facilitate trade within the continent. Dr Ruto has urged his peers in Africa to mobilise central and commercial banks to join Pan-African Payments and Settlement System (PAPSS) which was launched in January 2022. The system for intra-African trade was developed by African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat. The initiative was backed by the African Union and African central banks. **MORE**

DR Congo: Gen Kazura attends EAC meet in Burundi

(RDF), ON Monday, May 29, attended an extraordinary meeting of army chiefs from East African Community partner states held in Bujumbura, Burundi, to discuss the security situation in eastern DR Congo.Regional army chiefs have met at least three times, since November 2022, in their bid to find a sustainable solution to the rampant security crisis in eastern DR Congo. **MORE**

Ruto wants EAC Political Confederation draft law by next June

President William Ruto wants the Committee of Experts which is drafting the constitution for the proposed East Africa Community Political Confederation to fast-track the process. President Ruto who met the committee at State House in Nairobi on Thursday urged them to have the first draft of the constitution latest by the end of June 2024. **MORE**

Tanzania issues new directives for trading of agricultural crops

Tanzania's ministry of agriculture on Monday said that it has issued directives to formalise trading of crops for the benefit of the country, farmers and local and foreign traders. The government said restrictions imposed on the purchase of agricultural crops, especially cereals, directly from farmers do not target any country, emphasising that compliance was required by traders from all countries buying produce from Tanzania. **MORE**

Why East African nations must look inward to address food insecurity

East African countries need to show more cooperation in addressing food security challenges that could likely get worse if unforeseen external crises continue to pop up and disrupt supply chains across the world, according to a new study published this week. The findings on the impact of such crises on food availability within the East African Community warn that without coordinated mitigation measures the entire region could soon find itself swamped by perennial global shocks akin to the climate change, Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. **MORE**

GLOBAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

US revokes visa of Uganda's Parliament Speaker over anti-homosexuality law

The US has revoked the visas of Uganda's Speaker of Parliament, Anita Among, with lawmaker Asuman Basalirwa saying she is the first victim of likely sanctions after the East African nation lawed an anti-LGBTQ legislation. The speaker's current visas have been cancelled and this is confirmed in an email," Basalirwa who moved the Bill said. **MORE**

AU at 60: Time to move from aspiration to actualisation of unity

The African Union (AU) turned 60 on May 25, counting from the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 to its reconstitution as the AU in 2002 to date. Such a milestone as a diamond jubilee is usually an occasion for celebration of its achievements, and time for reflection, taking stock, and planning for the years ahead. **MORE**

Lavrov in Nairobi as Russia-Ukraine contest heats up in Africa

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov touched down in Nairobi on Monday morning for a series of meetings with local leaders, his first trip to Nairobi but his fourth to Africa since the war in Ukraine began last year in February. Mr Lavrov's itinerary was not made public, but he was scheduled to meet President William Ruto and leaders of the Kenyan parliament and the Foreign Affairs Ministry. **MORE**

UN chief Guterres calls for 'immediate' funding for the Horn of Africa

The United Nations is appealing for US$7 billion in funding to assist nearly 32 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia who are facing acute food insecurity due to the worst drought in 40 years. "We must act now to prevent the crisis from turning into a catastrophe," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told donors. "Make no mistake: action will make all the difference." **MORE**

US laws to promote home grown industries will hurt African economies

The Biden administration has ratcheted up protectionism and industrial policy amid surging economic tensions with China. Legislation passed in 2022 unlocked hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies to spur domestic production of renewable energy and electric vehicles, and to support other decarbonisation goals. The legislation is also designed to support homegrown strategic industries such as high-end semiconductors while constraining China's access to such technologies. **MORE**

Moscow targeted by drone attacks, no casualties

The Russian capital and its surrounding areas were targeted by rare drone attacks on Tuesday morning, causing "minor" damage to buildings and no casualties, officials said. Russian forces had fired a barrage of missiles at Kyiv on Monday, sending panicked residents running for shelter in an unusual daytime attack on the Ukrainian capital following overnight strikes. **MORE**

PICTORIAL

49th Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Council of Ministers convenes in Bujumbura, Burundi.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 21st Extra-Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State, 31st May, 2023, Burundi, Bujumbura.

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

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