EAC WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

DEEPENING INTEGRATION, WIDENING COOPERATION

14TH JANUARY, 2023

Latest from the Office of the Secretary General

- Intra-EAC Trade hits the US$10 billion mark
- EAC readies to send out Verification Mission Team to assess Somalia's readiness to join the bloc
- EAC Facilitator on the EAC-Led Nairobi Process meets with M-23 leadership.
- "We're ready to serve the Community," EAC Organs and Institutions staff pledge during retreat in Kenya.

INTRA-EAC TRADE HITS THE US$10 BILLION MARK

Intra-regional trade within the East African Community (EAC) is on an upward trajectory, standing at US$10.17 billion in September 2022.

The intra-EAC trade, accounting for imports and exports in the 7 EAC Partner States, grew from 13% in 2019 at a value of $ 7.1 billion to 15 % in 2021 at a value of $9.5 billion. By September 2022, the EAC trade value was recorded at $10.17 billion representing a 20% share of Intra-trade to global trade.

EAC Secretary General Hon. (Dr.) Peter Mathuki attributed the increase in intra-regional trade to political goodwill among the members of the Summit of EAC Heads of State and the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in the region amongst other factors.

Dr. Mathuki said that high-level discussions among the Heads of State had eliminated many Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) hampering intra-regional trade and expressed hope that this and other factors would help raise the level of intra-regional trade in East Africa to at least 40% over the next five years.
Dr. Mathuki disclosed that EAC's total trade with the rest of the world stood at US$62 billion, adding that there was still room for improvement.

The Secretary General was addressing the media during a five-day retreat for all EAC Staff held at Maanzoni Lodge in Machakos County, Republic of Kenya where he also disclosed the EAC priorities for the year 2023. He said that following the High-Level Summit on the Common Market Protocol held in July 2022, the EAC is reviewing the issues impeding integration, adding that the issues would be discussed in the next Council of Ministers.

"257 NTBs have been cumulatively resolved since 2007. This is in tandem with the bloc's goal to increase the volumes of intra-regional trade," he said.

Dr. Mathuki further said that EAC Ministers/ Cabinet Secretaries in charge of Trade and Finance had adopted 35% as the 4th Band of the EAC Common External Tariff (CET).

"From 1st July 2022, imports of locally available goods into the region; such as meat, furniture and textiles, have been attracting a tariff of 35 percent. The move aims at promoting local production, value addition and industrialization," said Dr. Mathuki, adding that the CET is one of the key instruments under the Customs Union pillar, which justifies regional integration through uniform treatment of goods imported from third parties.

EAC READIES TO SEND OUT A VERIFICATION MISSION TEAM TO ASSESS SOMALIA'S READINESS TO JOIN THE BLOC

The EAC is scheduled to send a verification mission to the Federal Republic of Somalia, at the end of this month, to assess the country's readiness to join the Community.

EAC Secretary General, Dr. Peter Mathuki stated that this was in line with the directive by the Summit of the EAC Heads of State to the Council, to follow up on the application of Somalia to join the Community.

Dr. Mathuki described Somalia's long Indian Ocean Red Sea route that links Africa to the Arabian Peninsula as a vibrant economic zone saying that it will bring immense benefits for the EAC.

"The exploitation of Somalia's blue economy resources such as fish and the expansive coastline, is also set to boost the regional economy," he said.

On peace and security, the Secretary-General said that EAC was keen on stabilizing the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a process that he said requires a political solution that will be provided by the Heads of State.

On the East African Monetary Union, Dr. Mathuki said that the bloc would have a single currency within the next four years. He said that the Council of Ministers is expected to make a decision soon on the location of the East African Monetary Institute, the precursor to the East African Central Bank that will issue the single currency.

"The single currency will ease business and movement of persons within the region and is in line with our goal to make the region borderless," he said.

On the EAC Political Federation, Dr. Mathuki said that national consultations for the EAC Political Confederation have so far been held for the Republics of Burundi and the Republic of Uganda.

"Plans are at an advanced stage to hold similar consultations for the United Republic of Tanzania, Republics of Rwanda, Kenya and South Sudan in the 2022/2023 Financial Year," he said.

Judge President of the EACJ,Justice Nestor Kayobera, disclosed that the Court would hold its annual rotational sitting in Kigali, Rwanda.

He stated that the sittings were in line with the policy of taking the integration to the people at the grassroots, emphasising that bringing the court closer to the people would not reduce its independence, as an independent arbiter.

Also present at the event were the EACJ Principal Judge, Justice Yohanne Masara, and the Counsel to Community, Dr. Anthony Kafumbe. Heads of all EAC Institutions also joined in the retreat to contribute to the priorities of the year 2023 and review the status of the implementation of directives.

EAC FACILITATOR ON THE EAC-LED NAIROBI PROCESS MEETS WITH M-23 LEADERSHIP

The Former President of the Republic of Kenya and Facilitator of the East African Community (EAC), Led-Nairobi Process on the restoration of peace in the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, met the chairman and senior political & military leaders of the M-23 group, in order to seek to restore peace in Eastern (DRC).

In a demonstration of goodwill and the willingness to work towards the settlement of the situation in North Kivu, the M-23 leaders agreed to continue with an orderly withdrawal and to adhere to a strict cease-fire.

They further agreed to continue to respect and cooperate with the East African Regional Force (EARF) that has now begun to take control of the areas vacated by the M-23; a process that is in adherence to the decision of the extraordinary meeting of the EAC Chiefs of General Staff held in Bujumbura on 8'h November 2022.

It was also agreed that the withdrawal process would continue to be verified by both the East African Regional Force and the ICGLR Verification Mechanism, to ensure the safety and swift return of all the displaced citizens and refugees to their homes.

"The M-23 leaders urged President Kenyatta to assist in assuring that there is safety in DRC and that citizen rights are upheld and recognized and that all the local and foreign armed groups in eastern DRC also lay down their arms, cease any fighting or attacks on the M-23 and seek resolution of the conflict through peaceful means.

The meeting noted that the situation in North Kivu, which was the most volatile in eastern DRC, had achieved progress with increased stability and security over the past four weeks.

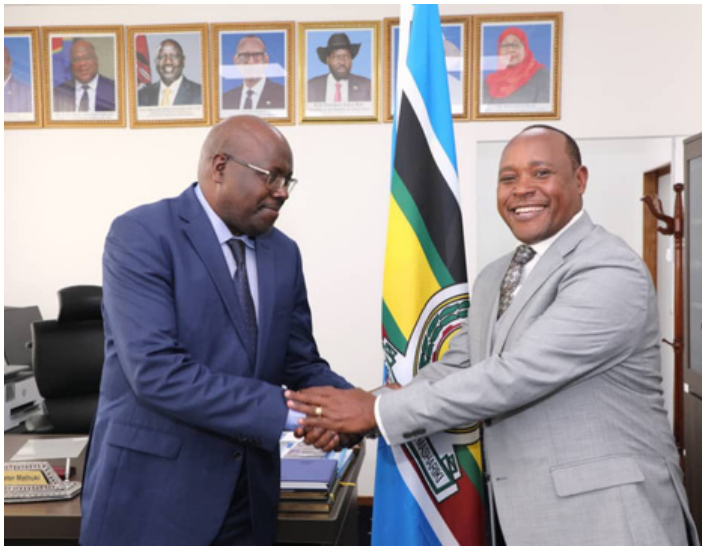
Many people who had been previously displaced had now begun to return to their homes. The meeting further noted that the Nairobi Process on peace and stability in Eastern DRC is a regional initiative intended to end the tremendous suffering and displacement that has been witnessed in the area for a considerable period.

They took note and expressed gratitude that the Nairobi IV Inter-Congolese consultations will be held in key towns of eastern DRC and thereby bring the Nairobi process closer to the various affected communities.

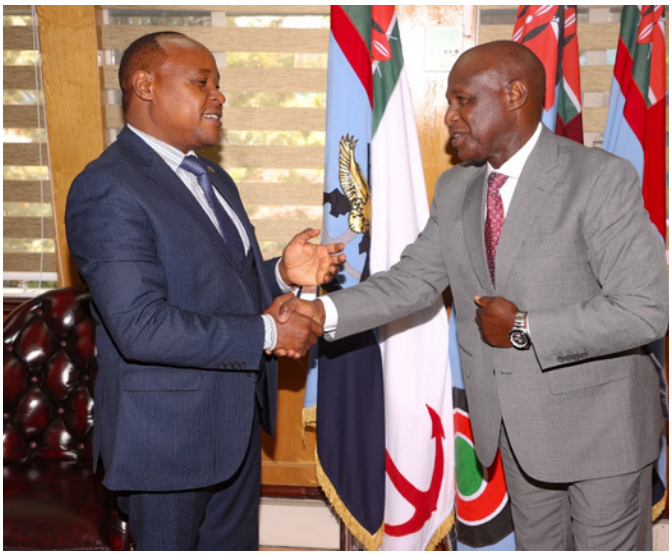
EAC ORGANS & INSTITUTIONS RETREAT

PICTORIALS

PICTORIALS



Heads of EAC Organs; (L-R) EACJ Judge President, Hon. Justice Nestor Kayobera; EAC Secretary General Dr. Peter Mathuki; EALA Speaker, Rt Hon Joseph Ntakirutimana during the EAC SG New Year Address.



EAC Secretary General Dr.Peter Mathuki paid a courtesy call on General Robert Kibochi, Chief of Defence Forces- Republic of Kenya, at the Department of Defence HQ in Nairobi and discussed matters pertaining to peace and security in the Region.

EAC Staff during the EAC SG New Year Address held at the EAC HQ in Arusha, Tanzania.

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- Intra-EAC trade hits the 10 billion dollar mark
- EAC to send verification team to Somalia
- East Africa's proposal for a unified currency may be implemented earlier than projected
- M23 rebels meet Uhuru Kenyatta, agree to cede occupied areas
- Kenya and Tanzania resolve 23 trade barriers after Samia visit
- Uganda ships maiden fuel cargo from Kisumu port
- Tanzanian President Samia appoints new central bank governor
- Kampala-Malaba railway upgrade set to complete next month
- Sudan, South Sudan to set up joint border force
- Bank of the Republic of Burundi restricts the withdrawal of BIF 15 million and above daily and BIF 100 million monthly
- Rwanda: Government to Restrict Public Servant "unnecessary" Foreign Travel

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Meeting of the Coordination Committee with the African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson, RECs/RMs, AUDA-NEPAD and Strategic Partners - 15th-19th Jan 2023, Nairobi, Kenya

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