EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

COMMUNIQUÉ

21ST EXTRA-ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY HEADS OF STATE

31ST MAY 2023

BUJUMBURA, REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

1. The East African Community Heads of State, Their Excellencies: Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi; William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya; Dr. Philip Mpango, Vice President representing H.E Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; Rt. Hon. Edwardo Ngirente, Prime Minister representing H.E Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda; Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala, 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, representing H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda; Hon. Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin, Minister in the Office of the President, representing H.E President Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan; Hon. Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, Minister of State/ Minister of Regional Integration representing H.E Felix Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo held the 21st Extra Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Heads of State on 31st May, 2023 in Bujumbura in the Republic of Burundi, the Heads of State met in a cordial and a friendly atmosphere.

2. The Summit noted that the tenure of Engineer Stephen Mlote, Deputy Secretary General Planning and Infrastructure ended on 18th May, 2023 and commended him on his dedicated service to the Community and wished him well in his future endevours.

3. The Summit appointed Ms. Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba as Deputy Secretary General, Customs, Trade and Monetary Affairs and Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth as Deputy Secretary General Infrastructure, Productive, Social and Political sectors with effect from 31st May, 2023.

4. The Heads of State noted that the tenure of Hon. Lady Justice Sauda Mjasiri, Judge of the East African Court of Justice in the Appellate Division and Vice President of the Court, will come to an end on 19th June 2023 and commended her for her dedicated service to the Community and wished her well in her future endevours.

5. The Summit designated Hon. Lady Justice Anita Mugeni from the Republic of Rwanda as Vice President of the East African Court of Justice with effect from 20th June, 2023.

6. The Summit appointed Hon. Justice Omar Othman Makungu from the United Republic of Tanzania as a Judge of the East African Court of Justice in the Appellate Division with effect from 20th June, 2023 and designated the Chairperson of the Summit to preside over the swearing in ceremony.

7. The Summit appointed Hon. Justice Kayemba Kasanda Ignace Rene from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a Judge of the East African Court of Justice in the First Instance Division with effect from 31st May, 2023.

8. The Heads of State received and adopted the reports on the Peace and Security situation in the Eastern DRC submitted by the Facilitator of the EAC- led Nairobi Process and the Chairperson of the EAC Chiefs of the Defence Forces.

9. The Summit congratulated the East African Community Regional Force for its achievement towards restoration of Peace and Security in Easter Democratic Republic of Congo and noted that Major General Aphaxard Muthuri Kiugu from the Republic of Kenya is the new Force Commander of the East African Community Regional Force.

10. The Heads of State took note of the progress made by the Facilitator and the EAC Regional Force in the implementation of the EAC – Led Nairobi Process.

11. The Heads of State condemned in the strongest terms the ceasefire violations in Eastern DRC and directed the EAC regional force to take measures to stop the recurrence.

12. The Heads of State noted that all troop contributing countries have deployed in their respective areas of operation and the reduction in hostilities in Eastern DRC and urged the DRC to facilitate full development by the Republic of South Sudan.

13. The Summit directed the East African Community Regional Force:

i. To safeguard and maintain the areas vacated by M-23 and other armed groups.

ii. To sustain the orderly withdrawal of M-23 and other armed groups from the remaining occupied areas.

iii. To protect civilians and support the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) to the areas vacated by the armed group.

iv. To work with Chiefs of Defense Forces, MONUSCO and other stakeholders to visit and verify within three (3) weeks the suitability of Rumangabo camp for pre-cantonment of M-23 and other armed groups.

v. To ensure that local armed groups do not occupy areas vacated by M-23 and foreign armed groups to be disarmed and repatriated.

14. The Summit directed that communications with M-23 should be handled by the Facilitator.

15. The Summit urged the Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of South Sudan to engage in Bilateral discussion to resolve the issue of negative forces on the border between the two Partner states.

16. The Summit directed the EAC Secretariat to constitute a Technical Evaluation Team by 15th June 2023 composed of an officer at the rank of Brigadier General from each Partner State to evaluate the implementation of the mandate of the East African Regional Force and report to the Sectoral Council on Cooperation on Defence Affairs within ninety (90) days after the extension of the Status Of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

17. The Heads of State applauded H.E President Felix Tshisekedi for his commitment to restoration of Peace in Eastern DRC and agreed to the extension of the Status Of Forces Agreement (SOFA) for six (6) months from 8th March to 8th September, 2023 in order to consolidate the gains made by the East African Community Regional Force.

18. The Summit reiterated its call to all parties to de-escalate tensions and to use established regional, continental and international mechanisms to resolve any disputes in the implementation of Peace in Eastern DRC.

19. The Summit welcomed the decisions of the 11th High-Level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region held in Bujumbura on 6th May, 2023 that;

a) Encouraged the EAC-Led Nairobi Process under the aegis of His Excellency Evariste Ndayishmiye, President of the Republic of Burundi, EAC Chairperson and AU Champion for Youth , Peace and Security , and His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta EAC Facilitator and former President of the Republic of Kenya; urged all parties to remain committed to this Peace

Process and to honor the commitments made to cease hostilities during the Nairobi III consultations.

b) Reiterated support to the LUANDA Process and EAC-LED Nairobi Process.

c) Urged all partners to support these initiatives and their outcomes including with regard to assistance towards Demobilization of combatants of armed groups and their reinsertion and reintegration into civilian lives.

d) Reiterated the request to MONUSCO, the EAC Regional Force and the ad hoc verification mechanism to continue to enhance coordination and synergies with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) in order to impress upon all armed groups to disarm and encouraged other troops deployed through bilateral arrangements to fully commit themselves to the same.

e) Encouraged the DRC to authorize the continuation and the finalization of the deployment of the Regional Force.

20. The Summit reaffirmed that the security situation in Eastern DRC can only be sustainably resolved through a Political Process and dialogue among all the parties and urged the Government of DRC to work with the Facilitator to finalize the appropriate dates for resumption of the Inter-Congolese dialogue.

21. The Summit commended H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, Facilitator of the EAC-Led Nairobi Process for his leadership in the Political Process and efforts on re-energizing the Peace Process in Eastern DRC.

22. The Heads of State agreed on establishment of a Civilian Head of Mission to coordinate all political related matters of the East African Regional Force (EACRF).

23. The Summit noted with appreciation the financial contribution by the Republic of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Uganda and

thanked the Republic of Rwanda and Republic the of South Sudan for their commitment to contribute to the EAC Peace Facility Fund and urged other Partner States to contribute towards the Peace fund.

24. The Heads of State accepted a request from H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda to hold a follow up meeting in Nairobi to be hosted by H.E William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya.

25. The Summit directed the Secretary General to intensify efforts to mobilise resources from Regional and International partners to support the EAC-Led Nairobi Process.

26. The Heads of State deliberated on and adopted the Report of Verification of the application of the Federal Republic of Somalia to join the East African Community earlier circulated to the EAC Partner States and directed the EAC secretariat and the council to commence negotiations with the Federal Republic of Somalia with immediate effect and report to the next Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State.

27. The Heads of State thanked H.E Evariste Ndayishimiye, President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the Summit of the Heads of State for his continued engagement and commitment towards supporting the people of DRC in their pursuit for sustainable Peace and Security and extended their gratitude for the warm and cordial hospitality accorded to them and their delegation during their stay in Burundi.