



In this Issue

- EAC Secretary General underscores the role of innovation and industrialization in East Africa
- EAC Partner States Need to Harmonise 100 Laws to Conform to the Common Market Protocol
- EAC Headquarters Hosts EAC-Germany Renewable Energy Technologies Exhibition
- 50 Million African Women Project to help reduce to Zero Gender Inequalities
- Burundi Ready to Host the 1st Edition of the EAC Games
- 15th Meeting of Sectoral Council on Transport, Communication and Meteorology (TCM) concludes in Arusha

EAC SECRETARY GENERAL UNDERScores THE ROLE OF INNOVATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION IN EAST AFRICA



The 6th Annual EAC Secretary General's Forum themed *Strategizing for impact: People-Centred and Market-Driven Integration* was hosted in Nairobi, Kenya at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

Addressing the over 100 delegates attending the Forum, Uganda's 2nd Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of EAC Affairs and Chairperson of the EAC Council of Ministers, Rt. Hon. Dr. Kirunda Kivejinja, called upon all Partner States to strengthen mechanisms to guide the national level implementation of EAC Policies and Programmes and to utilize the Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF) already established to facilitate exchange and sharing of ideas on regional integration on a sustained basis.

Rt. Hon. Kirunda Kivejinja, who was represented by Ms. Ronah Nandaula Serwadda from Uganda's Ministry of EAC Affairs, noted that a number of the Forum's initiatives had been supported by policy directives from the EAC Council of Ministers to address some of the recommendations that were made during the past Forums.

He cited a few of them as follows; the reduction in the costs of communication via mobile phones, internet and other means through harmonization of the roaming fees by some Partner States after the adoption by the Council of the One Area Network; the passing of the EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill by EALA in 2017; the Non-Tariff Barriers Bill (currently undergoing assent); EAC HIV/AIDS Act, 2012; and the EABC regional code of conduct for doing business, among others.

(Continued on page 2)

... EAC Secretary General appeals to Forum participants to work towards a fully integrated East Africa

(Continued from page 1)

The 2nd Deputy Prime Minister pledged continued support and partnership of the EAC Council of Ministers to the Annual EAC Secretary General's Forum including mainstreaming of the Dialogue in regional initiatives and at the national levels.

He re-iterated the commitment of government of Uganda and that of the EAC Council of Ministers in supporting the implementation of the recommendations including ensuring active participation of all Parties to the Dialogue in the EAC regional integration process.

Addressing the same occasion, Kenya's Principal Secretary in the Ministry of East African Community and Northern Corridor Development, Dr. Susan Koech recognized the important role of the incubator for Integration and Development in East Africa (IIDEA). Furthermore, she disclosed that to date, Kenya and Uganda's Cross-Border Traders had benefited from real time market information on prices of goods in over 100 markets in the region through the Incubator for Integration and Development in East Africa (IIDEA) project from the Sauti Africa/EASSI web based trade information platform, which was a classic example of how important the Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF) can impact positively on the lives of rural East Africa.

The Principal Secretary highlighted another innovative project, ClinPesa by CreativeDNA, which if fully implemented will facilitate access to health care services across the region and applauded the Regional Dialogue Committee for a job well done.

Dr. Susan Koech challenged the forum participants to propose a sustainability mechanism that will ensure funds growth with a possibility of an independent revolving fund to support young innovators especially in the agricultural value chain, which is the back bone of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) involved in intra-EAC trade.

She urged the Dialogue Parties to use the forum to come up with reforms that will see more involvement of the rural communities with activities in the EAC integration process for it to have the intended meaning and desired impact.

"There are very few projects, if any, touching on the youth in the region and something need to be done to get them fully integrated in the CDF programmes - everybody counts in the EAC integration agenda", observed the Principal Secretary.

"As a country Kenya, we have embraced inclusivity by bringing on board the County governments especially those that are in the transit routes between Kenya and Tanzania and Uganda who play a critical role in policy development and implementation".

The Principal Secretary disclosed that her Ministry had forged cross working relations with the County Governments and policy making organs (County Assemblies) to bring them to speed on EAC integration process to enable them appreciate cross border trade and how their policies relate with the Common Market Protocol with respect to Tariff and Non Tariff Barriers especially for the border Counties like Busia, Kisumu, Kajiado and Migori, among others".

On his part, the Secretary General of the East African Community, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko disclosed that for the first time, the Republic of South Sudan was participating in the Forum and called upon the new Partner State to move quickly and establish all the required structures in the country for the effective Dialogue on EAC Integration up to the grassroots level.

He appealed to the Parties to the Dialogue and participants to work towards a fully integrated East Africa with all East Africans living in harmony with each other.

The Secretary General commended the Private Sector through its umbrella organization, the East African Business Council, for improving the business and economic environment in the region through evidence-based policy advocacy in several areas including; harmonization of trade facilitation and regulatory framework, harmonization of product standards, advocating for free movement of the factors of production, as well as addressing trade barriers faced by women-owned businesses and Micro, Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Amb. Mfumukeko asserted that the sector had contributed towards monitoring and advocacy on elimination of NTBs, improved infrastructure network, and enhanced the competitiveness of firms in intra and extra-EAC trade and these efforts had tremendously contributed to reduction in the incidences of Non-Tariff Barriers.

Dr. Kirsten Focken, the Cluster Coordinator-EAC-GIZ Programme based in Arusha, Tanzania stated that the German support towards enhancing engagement of the privates sector and civil society is premised on the notion that Regional Integration can only become a reality when the citizens are aware, involved and own the process.

Dr. Focken urged the Dialogue Parties to address the current gaps in the CDF, review the stakeholder's interests and mobilize resources for its implementation and sustainability.

The Executive Director of the East African Business Council (EABC), Ms. Lilian Awinja informed the Forum that working together with the EAC Secretariat and the Regional Dialogue Committee, the Parties had analyzed and discovered that out of the previous 5 EAC SG Foras, the level of implementation of the agreed recommendations was still very low, for example the analysis indicates that only 16% of the recommendations had been fully implemented, 43% partly implemented, 36% not implemented and 5% had no update at all.

"These figures are worrying and explains why this forum has been organized as a strategy forum such that the Dialogue Parties together with the EAC Secretary General brainstorm and agree on a clear path to the realization of the objectives of the Consultative Dialogue Framework as envisaged under Article 127(4) of the EAC Treaty.

The 6th Forum, which is supported by GiZ, is being attended by about 100 delegates drawn from the Partner States' Private Sector Organizations (PSOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), professional bodies, Academia/Universities, Media, EAC Organs and Institutions, Development Partners and Other Interest Groups.

The Forum aims to provide a platform for regular dialogue between the EAC Secretary General and the Private Sector, Civil Society and other interest groups on how to improve the EAC integration process. The annual Forum is convened by the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with the Regional Dialogue Committee (RDC) which is comprised of membership drawn from Partners States which include the Private Sector, Civil Society, Representatives of Government and regional Private Sector, Civil Society, Trade Union, Employer and Professional Associations/Bodies.

The Forum is guided by the principles of cooperation for mutual benefit, trust, goodwill, active and constructive participation, inclusivity and respect for diverse views, among others.



EAC Partner States Need to Harmonise 100 Laws to Conform to the Common Market Protocol



Over 100 laws in the six East African Community Partner States national legislation need to be reviewed to conform to the EAC Common Market Protocol.

The EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo noted that harmonisation of Partner States' relevant national laws to conform to the Protocol was a monumental task that would require lots of time and resources.

Hon. Bazivamo said that the concerned laws relate to the provisions of the protocol, namely: free movement of goods; free movement of persons; free movement of labour; free movement of capital; free movement of services; right of establishment, and; right of residence.

Hon. Bazivamo said that despite these challenges, the Community had made significant progress in terms of promoting the cross-border movement of skilled labour and cited the signing of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) among various professionals.

The DSG disclosed that MRAs had already been signed among Accountants, Architects, Engineers and Veterinarians.


"Negotiations of MRAs for Land Surveyors and Advocates were concluded and are awaiting signing by competent authorities. The negotiations of the MRA for Pharmacists have commenced," said Hon. Bazivamo.

The DSG said that the main barriers to the free movement of persons in Africa were the mind-sets based on the geographical boundaries drawn by the colonial powers and regulations put in place by countries concerning immigration, customs and other cross-border procedures.

"Sensitisation of people at all levels is therefore necessary at all levels on the need to knock down these national barriers," he said.

Hon. Bazivamo was speaking during a courtesy call by a team from the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) which is based in Nairobi, Kenya. The IGAD led by ICPALD Director, Dr. Solomon Muchina Munyua, was on a two-day benchmarking mission to the EAC Headquarters specifically on the Free Movement of Persons. The Mission also sought to understand the EAC policy position and practice on transboundary pastoralism and cross-border transhumance.

In his remarks, Dr. Munyua disclosed that IGAD was currently working on protocols on Transhumance and the Free Movement of Persons, and thus the need to benchmark with the EAC whose membership and nationalities overlap with those of IGAD.

"The people of Eastern Africa share languages and culture across borders, for instance, the Digo, Maasai, Kuria and Luhya. Integration brings with it fears of the loss of jobs and resources. We are keen to learn from EAC on how it has managed to overcome these barriers," said Dr. Munyua. 

EAC Headquarters Hosts EAC-Germany Renewable Energy Technologies Exhibition



From 23rd July to 10th August, 2018, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany in collaboration with the East African Community is holding an exhibition on renewable energy initiatives.

The 12-day exhibition, also known as Energiewende, which seeks to increase energy efficiency, protect the climate and the environment opened in Arusha at the EAC headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania on Monday, 23rd July, 2018.

Speaking during the official opening session, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Productive and Social Sectors, Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, said the exhibition had come up at a right time and would increase access to modern energy services in the region, thereby reducing poverty and providing sustainable energy for socio-economic development.

Hon. Bazivamo stated that the exhibition is geared towards achieving the targets of the Regional Strategy on Scaling Up Access to modern Energy Services which provide access to: modern cooking practices for 50% of the population that currently uses traditional cooking fuel; reliable electricity for all urban and peri-urban poor; modern energy services for all schools, clinics, hospitals and community centres and access to mechanical power for heating and productive uses for all communities.

Hon Bazivamo disclosed that the EAC Secretariat was in the process of mobilising funding to: Formulate the Regional Renewable Energy Master plan as well as Regional Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation Strategic Plan; Undertake Policy and Standards harmonisation; and Promote information exchange through knowledge management by facilitating the formation of the Regional renewable Energy association.

The Deputy Secretary General extended his appreciation to the GIZ team for making the exhibition a reality, adding that the endeavour was geared towards technology transfer.

On her part, Dr. Kirsten Focken, the GIZ Programme Manager said the German government decided to fully move to renewable energy over 20 years, adding that it was one of the first governments to undertake the initiative.

"We are glad to demonstrate how to move towards secure, affordable and sustainable energy in a highly industrialized country such as Germany. East Africa is developing rapidly and already deploying sources of renewable energy," added Dr.Focken.

She pledged Germany's continued support to the EAC region on renewable energy as a basis for sound and sustainable economic development.



50 Million African Women Project to help reduce to Zero Gender Inequalities

Supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the East African Community Secretariat has conducted stakeholders' consultative meetings in Partner States from June 19 to July 10, 2018. The main objective of the meetings was to introduce the 50 Million African Women Speak Networking Platform Project (50MWS) to stakeholders.

EAC Secretariat delegation targeted key Ministries partners to the project, including the Ministries of Gender, ICT, Trade and Ministries in charge of EAC Affairs in each Member State. EAC delegation also met stakeholders from Civil Society, NGOs and UN Agencies.



"50MWS is an online platform that will provide financial and non-financial information to women entrepreneurs for them to interact and grow their businesses'," Mary Makoffu, the EAC Director of Social Sectors and head of the EAC delegation explained.

"We have already existing platforms of women in business across EAC and we want to partner with them and build on the existing structures to better deliver on this project," Ms. Makoffu said.

50MWS is being implemented in three different economic regions (RECs) including EAC, COMESA and ECOWAS. This is a good opportunity for women in business in respective RECs to penetrate markets of other RECs, EAC head of delegation considers.

After the consultation meetings the EAC Secretariat wants to continue and work with Member States to form country teams that will help in collection of information to upload into the platform. The Ministry of Gender in each country will be in charge of coordination.

Partners from all member states met, said to be excited and promised to give a full support to this innovative project.

A lot is being done by Member States to promote women's economic empowerment despite some challenges; Gender Ministries' representatives in each Partner States explained.

Governments have started disbursing funds to support women's economic activities; initiatives which are currently contributing to increased employment, women's capacity and resources power.

Youth enterprises are also being supported by Government's funds to build youth's capacity and reduce unemployment; Gender Ministries' representatives continued.

All stakeholders met are confident that the contribution of the 50MWS Project on the top of already existing efforts; will contribute to reduce to zero gender inequalities that were observed across the countries.

Meeting attendants expressed some concerns that can prevent the project from achieving its goal; those include the weak smart phone penetration in most of EAC countries and the sustainability of the Project.

The EAC Secretariat finds these concerns relevant but assured them that EAC has developed a communications Strategy to make sure that even the women using the feature phones in the rural areas are reached by information circulated by the platform.

On the concern of sustainability, Wilson Muyenzi, the 50MWS Project Coordinator says that COMESA, the Project coordinating REC, is commissioning soon studies, to come up with mechanisms of sustainability.

Partner States sincerely thanked EAC Secretariat for this initiative and reiterated again countries' commitment to support the project.

"Once our women will be economically empowered, the capacity of our countries will be doubled, and economic development will be a reality," Mary Makoffu, EAC Director of Social Sectors constantly explained to Stakeholders met.



Burundi Ready to Host the 1st Edition of the EAC Games



The Republic of Burundi will host the 1st Edition of the East African Community Games (EACoG) from 16th to 30th August 2018 in the city of Bujumbura, and in the towns of Ngozi and Gitega, under the theme Fostering EAC Integration and Peace through Sports.

The Games will take the form of all East Africa Games and will include multiple sports disciplines including: Athletics, Football, Handball, Basketball, Netball, Volleyball, Tennis, Rugby, Judo, Karate, Boxing and Taekwondo to be competed among the 6 Partner States that form the East African Community.

EACoG is a Regional Sports initiative that emanates from the decision of the 20th EAC Council of Ministers, which directed the Secretariat to organize and hold Sports Tournaments on regular basis with partnership of private sector, civil society, voluntary organizations/ institutions/individuals and Development Partners.

This was in recognition of the important role sports play towards reinforcing the spirit of East African unity and development and galvanizing a passionate, visionary and broad participation among the East African people, reflecting the basic principle of a people-centered regional integration.

Commenting on the ongoing preparation for the Games, the EAC Secretary General Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko disclosed that EACoG aims at showcasing the diverse sporting talents and provides a platform for sports talent exchange, learning and celebration.

“This initiative is aimed at providing an opportunity for East Africans to showcase the diversity of sporting talent in the region with particular focus on amateur/upcoming sports men and women with a limited emphasis on the competition”. “We are also aiming at making the event attractive to the public to enable East Africans to move across borders to interact freely within the region”.

The Secretary General also disclosed that the Burundi Government through its Ministry in the Office of the President Responsible for EAC Affairs has already extended invitation to the Partner States to participate in the Games.

According to the EAC Principal Sports and Culture Officer, Mr. Bernard Bakaye Lubega, it is expected that EACoG will attract 106 VIPs, 291 Match officials, 310 Team Officials, and 1,630 players in various disciplines.



For more information visit: <https://www.eac.int/eacog>

15th Meeting of Sectoral Council on Transport, Communication and Meteorology (TCM) concludes in Arusha



The 15th Meeting of the Sectoral Council on Transport, Communications and Meteorology (TCM) was held from 25th to 29th June, 2018 at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

Speaking at the opening session, the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote, noted the considerable developments that are being registered in the infrastructure subsector in the region including the fast pace in the development of multinational roads, the rapid expansion of airports and national airlines, the on-going development of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) on the Northern and Central corridors, the expansion of seaports, as well as the increase in mobile penetration and related mobile services.

“The EAC Heads of State, during the Joint EAC Heads of State Retreat on Infrastructure and Health Financing and Development held on 22nd February 2018, approved 286 projects including 17 flagship projects for championship at the Heads of State Level, whose total investment requirement amounts to US\$ 79 billion,” stated the Deputy Secretary General.

Eng. Mlote further emphasized that political support and leadership by the Ministers responsible for infrastructure sectors was a critical factor for successful implementation of the identified regional priority projects.

In his remarks, Hon. Bagiire, Minister of State for Works and Transport, Ministry of Works and Transport, Uganda, stressed on the need to make headway on relating to air transport services liberalization and the EAC roaming framework.

The meeting discussed various projects and programmes under the Infrastructure sub-sectors - roads, railway, civil aviation and airports, maritime transport, meteorology and communication.

The meeting agreed on the proposal to develop Phase II of the One Stop Border Posts, as well as the need to fast track the implementation of Vehicle Load Control and One Stop Border Posts Acts.

In an effort to further enhance the sub-sector in the region, the meeting also approved the EAC Railway Enhancement Study report and the EAC Postal Strategy.

In attendance were Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries, Permanent and Principal Secretaries and Senior Officials of the EAC Partner States responsible for infrastructure sectors; Civil Aviation Safety and Security Agency (CASSOA); the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the EAC Secretariat. Also in attendance as observers were representatives from the East African Communications Organizations (EACO); Trademark East Africa (TMEA); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC); World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC).



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