



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY - NYERERE CENTRE FOR PEACE RESEARCH (EAC-  
NCPR)**

**7<sup>TH</sup> EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEBATE ON EAC INTEGRATION**

**16<sup>TH</sup> – 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2021, ENTEBBE, UGANDA**

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Southern Sudan with its Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The Vision of the EAC is “A prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa”. The Mission is to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments.

The EAC integration is to be realized in an incremental progression through the stages of a Customs Union; Common Market; Monetary Union; and ultimately a Political Federation of the East African States. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1999 and became operational on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2000. Since the commencement of the EAC, the Partner States have established: 1) the Customs Union in 2005, which has led to easier movement of goods within the EAC region; 2) the Common Market in 2010, which has resulted in easier movement of workers, people, services and capital within the EAC region, and 3) the Monetary Union in 2013, (which upon full implementation within a period of 10 years) will result in, among others a single/common currency thereby facilitating easier movement of goods, workers, people, capital and services. The ultimate and the last stage of EAC integration is the Political Federation, institutional and capacity development to lay its foundation are going on with the drafting of a Political Confederation in course.

The EAC Common Market Protocol Article 5 provides for acceleration of social economic growth and development of Partner States by facilitating free movement of persons and labour through the adoption of common policies. The private sector and the youth are key stakeholder in the achievement of the goal of the EAC. The economic development of EAC is private-sector led and the integration is generally people-centred with the youth as critical mass to drive the integration.

However, due to the outbreak of the COVID-10 pandemic in early 2020, the economy of the region has been greatly hampered by the spread of the pandemic. .

### **1.1 Youth Participation in the East African Community Integration**

The East African Community recognizes that youth are a crucial asset, an important key resource and partners in social economic and political development of the community. The EAC has been undertaking various initiatives to promote continues dialogue among the youth and continuously promote their participation in moving the EAC regional integration. The involvement of the youth in EAC affairs is provided for under Article 120 (c) of the EAC Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC. The Treaty provides for adoption of a common approach for involvement of the youth in the integration process through education, training and mainstreaming youth issues into EAC policies, programmes and projects as one of the strategic interventions towards the realization of a fully integrated Community.

In July 2013 the EAC passed the EAC Youth Policy in order to guide planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Community programmes to address youth issues in the region while assuring sustainable social, economic and political development. The EAC Secretariat through its Nyerere Centre for Peace Research has consequently and on a continuous basis, engaged the youth through training, exchange programs and providing them with a platform to participate. To date, a number student from East African Universities have benefited from the exchange training programs on Peace and Conflict Resolution, good governance and Human Rights. These programs have created an enabling environment for students to play an active role in the integration process as well as offered the students space that enables them to learn more about the benefits, challenges and opportunities from the EAC integration.

### **1.2 The EAC Youth Ambassadors concept**

In 2008, the EAC Summit of Heads of States decided on the deepening sensitization and awareness creation for greater political will as a means for realization of the EAC Political

Federation. Consequently, University Students Debate and sensitization was adopted as one strategy. The EAC Secretariat has conducted a number of activities to engage and empower young people and enhance their contribution to the EAC integration agenda. These include among others, The Annual EAC Youth Summit and the Nyerere Centre for Peace Research (NCPR) programme.

The 1st EAC University Students Debate on regional integration, organised by the Secretariat in August 2012 triggered a snowball effect among EAC Youth and sparked broad enthusiasm for their participation in EAC integration processes. The aim of the debate was to provide a regional platform to promote dialogue among university students and interest them in advocating for regional integration initiatives. The event attracted over 100 students from public and private institutions of higher learning. In addition, the debate also brought together representation from private sector, civil society, media, technocrats and academia. Six participants were drawn from each of the five Partner States making a total of 30 debaters. As an outcome of the Debate, 5 EAC Youth Ambassadors were appointed as focal points in their respective Universities, to collaborate with the EAC Secretariat in sensitizing their peers on the EAC integration processes, benefits and challenges. As an outcome of the Event, a recommendation was made to the EAC policy-making organs to declare the EAC University Students Debate as an annual event.

The 2nd University Students Debate held in September 2013 enhanced the 'EAC phoria' among University Students further and gave a push to new initiatives to youth engagement with the EAC. Since August 2012, the EAC Youth Ambassadors have engaged and empowered young people to enhance their contribution to the EAC integration agenda through effective peer training and engagements. Guided by the realities facing young people in the EAC region and anchored in the belief that young people are a catalyst for peace, democracy, equality, and good governance and an essential resource for sustainable development and poverty eradication; The first batch of the EAC Youth Ambassadors has been the voice of the youth on the EAC integration agenda.

Since then, there have been four EAC University Students' Debate organized, third in 2014 in Nairobi, fourth in 2015 in Kampala and fifth in 2017 in Kigali and sixth in 2018 in Dar es salaam. The debates were not organized in 2016 and 2019 due to resource constraints.

### **1.3 The EAC Youth Ambassadors' Platform**

The successful 2nd EAC University Students' Debate on regional integration and the subsequent appointment of the new EAC Youth Ambassadors lead to the realization for the

need for continuous engagement and dialogue platform for the youth. The EAC Youth Ambassadors' Platform, (EAC-YAP), was subsequently launched on 3rd September 2013. The platform brings all the youth together with the purpose of bridging the information gap about the EAC integration and fosters their participation in accelerating the integration through knowledge and experience sharing. The Platform also coordinates the establishment of EAC Youth clubs at Universities and higher learning Institutions in East Africa. It is led by Youth Ambassadors of each Partner State, with alumni Ambassadors, past participants and all other youth passionate about the EAC integration. The main purpose of the EAC clubs is to bring together students from different universities across the country under the EAC YAP, to engage them in debate and community work that would be of a paramount importance in promoting a sustainable East African Union as per the aspirations of the mission and goal of the EAC.

The 1st EAC Youth Convention held in November 2013 in Kampala is so far the highest structure of the Youth Ambassadors Platform. Upon the invitation of African Union EAC-Youth Ambassadors' Platform coordinated national youth consultations in contributing to the high-level dialogue on democracy and governance. The Convention granted the East African youth an opportunity to participate in the regional consultation process and developed an EAC position paper on "Constitutionalism and Rule of Law" that was submitted to the African Union. The convention also provided awareness raising on EAC Integration processes is planned to take place annually.

## **2.0 THE EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DEBATE ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

### **2.1 Background**

The EAC University Students Debate on Regional Integration was initiated in 2012. The aim of the debate is to provide a regional platform to promote dialogue among the youth and interest them in advocating for regional integration initiatives. The specific objectives of the EAC University Students' Debate are to: -

- a. Promote continued participation of the youth on issues of the EAC integration;
- b. Encourage networking among university students/youth to enhance regional integration;
- c. Prepare the youth for future leadership roles at regional and international levels as they hold the mantle as Ambassadors of EAC integration in the region;

The Debate is an annual rotational event that attracts an audience of over 200 youth from the East Africa, lecturers from public, private and other higher institutions of learning. In addition, the debate also brings together representation from youth councils, private sector,

civil society, media, technocrats and academia. Six participants are drawn from each Partner State making a total of 36 debaters.

During the debate one winner from each Partner State is appointed as an EAC Youth Ambassador and the runner up is appointed as Deputy EAC Youth Ambassador and both acts as focal points for targeted sensitization activities in their respective Universities/Partner States for a period of one year. After the completion of the one-year tenure, the Youth Ambassadors remain engaged as part of the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform (EACYAP). The EAC Secretariat established the EAC Youth Ambassadors' Platform to popularize EAC integration through continuous and structured engagement with the youth in higher institutions of learning and beyond. The EAC Youth Ambassadors in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat have sensitized their peers on the EAC integration processes, benefits and challenges. This has enhanced increased awareness on regional integration and networking among institutions of higher learning in the region.

Moreover, the fact that the EAC integration is people centered, the Youth have the potential to foster creativity, innovation, leadership and sharing of information and nurture a bond of "*Eastafrikaness*" with a distinct East African identity that is very much desired. The EAC University Students' Debate has seen the formation of over 150 EAC Youth Clubs in different universities in Partner States, this has resulted in appreciation and constructive youth dialogues on the integration process thus increased enthusiasm among the youth and support for the EAC integration.

## **2.2 Youth in East Africa as Key Stakeholders in fostering the Private Sector Development**

The youth of East Africa are important stakeholder in the EAC processes and form substantial part of the population. Article 120 (c) of the EAC Treaty provides for adoption of a common approach for involvement of the youth in the integration process through education, training and mainstreaming youth issues into EAC policies, programmes and projects as one of the strategic interventions towards the realization of a fully integrated corrupt free Community.

The covid-19 pandemic has devastated the economies of East Africa countries, reducing their former growth rates significantly. In the bid to curb the health threat posed by the pandemic to the East African population, Partner State imposed international best practices and recommendations of the world health organization including strict lockdowns, restrictions

of movements of persons and trade. By implication, the private sector in the EAC was constricted and intra-trade volumes in East Africa fell.

The private sector in East Africa accounts for over 70% of all youth employment and its constriction led to loss of the livelihood of young people in being laid off work and close of business, some temporarily for the period of the lockdown, others permanently in the event that they could not adjust in time.

In this regard, young people became prone to acts of extremisms and radicalization from terrorist groups operating with the region which thrive on the vulnerability of young people and the needs they can't find within their economies. Community violence and cases of rape have also increased within the region for the period of the lockdown which experts say is caused by mental health challenges coming from their loss of livelihoods.

Young people in East Africa make a very big percentage of the population, therefore young people led initiatives can gain traction in influencing peer responses of innovative ways to dealing with the effects of the pandemic. There is need for a platform to survey the ideas of young people in how to deal with the pandemic and provide a view point from their perspective and experience on how they as young people can be part of the recovery of the private sector and existence of sustainable peace which has been compromised by the pandemic. The outcomes of such a platform will form policy and action recommendations to the EAC Council of ministers and other policy players in the region.

Furthermore, youth as a critical demographic group, their views and aspirations will shape the future of East Africa. The promotion of innovation, integrity and accountability is key to an integrated East Africa especially as the implementation of the aspirations in the EAC Common Market Protocol deepens. The values, ethics and leadership skills of youth in East Africa are vital in advancing the regional integration because they influence the choices that youth make.

### **3.0 SEVENTH EAC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEBATE ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The EAC Secretariat through the EAC University Students Debate engages youth as one of the key stakeholders towards realization of the objectives of the Community.

In 2020, the EAC Youth Ambassadors engaged border communities amid COVID-19 pandemic period of August – November 2020. The engagements undertook a multi-stakeholder outreach for communities at border districts with the major goal of sensitizing border agencies on protection against and prevention of cross border transmission. The activities entailed information dissemination on COVID-19 prevention and protection measures to border officers, border communities, government leaders in relevant ministries of health and the EAC through conducting a series of interviews at the political level addressing concerns of border communities and officials and air the interviews using cross border radio stations.

The Customs Union is the first pillar of the EAC Integration and has been in force since 2005, as defined in Article 75 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. The Customs Union guarantees accelerated economic growth and development through liberalising intra-regional trade in goods on the basis of mutually beneficial trade arrangements among Partner States; promoting efficiency in production within the Community; enhancing domestic, cross-border and foreign investment in the Community; and promoting economic development and diversification in industrialization in the Community. As part of the assessment of benefits, challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of the Customs Union, the 2021 EAC University Students Debate is intended to engage the youth to dialogue and refresh their knowledge and experiences with the border management – of enhancing domestic, cross border and foreign investment within the Community to advance economic development amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 7th Annual EAC University Students' debate is scheduled to take place on **16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 in Entebbe, Uganda**. The debate is expected to bring together representation from university students, academia, policy makers, media, youth leaders, entrepreneurs and one high school to participate in the event.

### **3.2 Theme of the Debate**

Under the theme: ***“Assessing the Impact of Covid-19 on the Private Sector development in the EAC and the Role of the Youth in paving the way forward.”***

The debate will delve into issues relating to:

- a. The state of the Private Sector before the Pandemic, GDP conditions and growth: how much the sector contributed to the economy;

- b. Legislation in regards to Private Sector development ie taxation, permits, access to finance before the Pandemic;
- c. The impact of Covid-19 on the Private Sector: What measures have Partner States put in place to support the sector politically, socially, economically, technologically among others;
- d. Reforms that EAC Secretariat and Partner States may put in place to strengthen and build a stronger Private Sector;
- e. Border management to minimize the risk of the Pandemic, interstate conflicts and tensions between Partner States and
- f. Border management for secure, safe and easy movement of people and goods amidst the pandemic.

### **3.3 Objectives of the Debate**

The overall objective of the EAC University Debate is to enhance youth participation in the EAC integration agenda and processes. The debates and subsequent sensitization activities create an enabling environment for not only students and youth to play an active role in the integration process but offer space that enables them to learn more about the benefits, challenges and opportunities from the EAC integration.

The EAC University Debate on the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on implementation of the Customs Union and the Common Market Protocol aims at assessing the status, progress, challenges and opportunities of the two pillars of EAC integration. By the end of the debate:

- a. Participants will have increased knowledge, appreciation of the progress and status of the implementation of the EAC Customs Union and the Common Market Protocol,
- b. Participants will appreciate the contribution of the Private Sector in the economic growth of EAC,
- c. Key issues relating to border migration management and youth challenges will have been distilled for further dialogue among youth and other stakeholders in Partner States and the region.
- d. The conversation and recommendations on the role of youth in East Africa in strengthening the Private Sector during the Pandemic is initiated.
- e. Twelve (12) Youth Ambassadors will have been selected – two (2) per Partner State.



### **3.4 Participation in the Debate**

The East African Community Secretariat will cover transport expenses, accommodation and meals for the participants during the days of the event. Six participants will be selected from each of the EAC Partner State, drawn from national universities, public, private and other institutions of higher learning. The participants will be either on the affirmative (proposition) or alternative (Opposition) strategy side (team) of the debate but the Secretariat reserves the prerogative to ensure that both sides have equitable membership. More information will be submitted to successful candidates in good time to allow for sufficient preparations.

Participation in this debate is limited to students who are in their second year at the university pursuing a degree. Students who participated in the last three debates need not apply in order to give an opportunity to others to take part. Interested applicants with good analytical and communication skills; and a good command of English language are encouraged to apply. Please note that the Debate will be conducted in English.

### **3.5 Expected Outcomes**

The debate will also bring together representatives from academia, private sector, civil society, media and technocrats from the East African region, development Partners and relevant stakeholders who will listen to the debate and make their comments on the strength of the deliberations and make recommendations on the way forward for the debate. The debate will be streamed live on the EAC website and other social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook will also be used to enable a wide participation of youth across the EAC region.

The best debaters will be appointed as EAC Youth Ambassadors 2022-2023 with an obligation to spearhead peer learning, sensitization and out-reach programs in their respective universities, border communities in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat, Development Partners, the East African Legislative Assembly and EAC Ministries in Partner States. There will be a Gala Dinner where awards will be given to the Best debaters and the winning team.

In the spirit of promoting a sense of “*Eastafricanness*”, it is expected that by the end of the debate, a bond will have been created among the students thereby shaping and nurturing the East African identity among the youth, in the long run. Participants would have been empowered to continue engaging in dialogue on matters of EAC integration, immigration management and curbing corruption to promote stability and social economic development.

The EAC University Debate on regional integration provides a pedestal to the youth to participate, dialogue and contribute to policy formulation on issues that constitute the EAC Youth agenda.

### **3.6 Methodology**

#### **3.6.1 Participation at the Debate**

The participation at the 7th EAC University Students Debate will be as follows:

- The main debate will involve 36 University Students (debaters), 6 from each Partner State;
- 3 Judges obtained from the Civil Society, Academia, EAC Secretariat and EAC institutions;
- 6 Local Universities will be represented by 9 students and 1 Lecturer from each University. These students and lecturers will form part of the audience for the debate;
- 100 students from the host University;
- A host country local High School will present poem/song on the theme;
- A Moderator will facilitate the Debate;
- EAC Youth Ambassadors platform members will participate and
- Staff from the EAC Secretariat.

#### **3.6.2 Date and Venue**

The Debate will take place from **16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> December**, 2021, Entebbe, Uganda.

#### **3.6.3 HOW TO APPLY**

Applicants who are interested to participate should apply by submitting the following documents:

1. A one-page motivation letter explaining why they are interested to participate and indicating which University they come from and the Year of Study and
2. A two-page essay on ***“Assessing the Impact of Covid-19 on the private sector development/Trade, its effect in the EAC and the Role of the Youth in paving the way forward”***
3. A scanned copy of University Identity Card and Passport bio data page.

The documents should have a front size of 12, Arial with single line spacing and should be sent as one attachment.

East African Community Nyerere Centre for Peace Research, on email: [debate\\_applications@eachq.org](mailto:debate_applications@eachq.org) the applications should reach us not later than 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2021 at 5:00 pm East African Time. Please note that only successful candidates will be contacted.

**East African Community Secretariat**

**October 2021**

**Arusha, TANZANIA**