



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)

The Official Report of the Proceedings of the East African Legislative Assembly SPECIAL SITTING – FIRST MEETING – THIRD SESSION: FIFTH ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 22 October 2024

The East African Legislative Assembly met at 4.15 p.m. at State House, Entebbe, Uganda

PRAYER

(The Speaker, Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana, in the Chair.)

(The Assembly was called to order)

The National Anthem of Uganda

The East African Community Anthem

The Speaker: Honourable Members, you may take your seats. Proceed, Honourable Mashaka Ngole, the Chairperson of the Committee on Legal, Rules and Privileges.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

4.20

Mr Mashaka Khalfan Ngole (Tanzania): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that –

“WHEREAS Clause (1) of Article 55 of the Treaty provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint, and;

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AND WHEREAS Rule 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly provides that the seat of the Assembly shall be at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania, and;

AND WHEREAS Sub-Rule 5 of Rule 10 of the Rules of the Assembly provides that the meetings of the Assembly shall be held at such times and places as the Assembly may appoint, and shall meet at least once in every year at Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania, at a time to be determined by the Assembly;

NOW, THEREFORE, this Assembly do resolve as follow:

That, pursuant to the provisions of Sub-Rule (5) of Rule 10 of the Assembly Rules cited above, the Assembly shall hold its meetings in Uganda from 21st of October to 12th of November 2024 at the State House in Entebbe and at the Parliament of Uganda in Kampala.”

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker: Do you have seconders

Mr Mashaka Khalfan Ngole (Tanzania): Yes, I do.

The Speaker: Oh, it is the whole House. Thank you.

(Seconded by Hon Dr Siranda Gerald Blacks, Hon. David Ole Sankok,

Hon. Gai Deng Nhial and Hon. Millya James Kinyasi)

Honourable Members, I have to put a question. Those who are in favour of this motion, say “Aye”. Those who are against, say “Nay”.

(Question put and agreed to.)

4.23

PROCLAMATION BY THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, amidst us today is our *Mzee*, His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda and Member of the Summit of the East African Heads of State. We have also among us, Right Honourable Anita Annet Among, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. I have also invited the newly elected Member from the Republic of Tanzania and the newly appointed ex-officio Members to be part of us.

I have, in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of the Treaty, invited His Excellency, the President, to address the Assembly. I now proceed to make the following proclamation to welcome His Presence in the Assembly.

“WHEREAS Article 54, Item No.1 of the Treaty, provides that the Speaker of the Assembly may invite any person to attend the Assembly, notwithstanding that he or she is not a member of the Assembly; if in his or her opinion, the business of the Assembly renders his or her presence

desirable. And whereas, in the opinion of the Speaker, the attendance and presence in the Assembly of the President of the Republic of Uganda is desirable in accordance with the business now before the Assembly;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is with great pleasure and honour, on your behalf, Honourable Members, to welcome His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda, in the Assembly. This is given under my hand, today, Tuesday, 22nd October 2024.”

Thank you.

,ADDRESS BY H.E YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): The Right Honourable Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly; the Right Honourable Speaker of the Uganda Parliament; all the honourable members of EALA, and other invited guests; first, I welcome you to Uganda. Thank you for coming to hold your meetings here. (*Applause*)

When I have a chance to talk to Africans, it is a great pleasure to me. This is because this is what I have been doing for the last 60 plus years. We have been very busy with the subject of African integration. Some years ago, our late brother, Benjamin Mkapa, invited me to a seminar in Dar-es-alaam. As usual, it was a pleasure for me to talk about the subject of the East African and African integration. This is not a subject of emotions that we want unity just because we want unity. It is an issue of life or death for the future of the Africans. It should be very clear. I am glad you have come here so that I talk to you.

The reasons for integration are three. There are three historical missions for the African people. Historical mission number one; you must answer the question of prosperity. I think in Swahili they say *ustawi wa jamii*. How can African families be prosperous? Where does prosperity come from?

I like to start with my tribe. You must have heard of a tribe called Banyankole. If you look on the map of Africa, they may be there. The Banyankole are cattle keepers, but they also grow crops. They keep cows; grow bananas, and other crops. However, the problem is that they all produce similar products. A Munyankole has cows, his neighbour has cows; he produces milk, the neighbour produces milk; he has bananas, the neighbour also has bananas. Therefore, this Munyankole cannot buy from this one, and this one cannot buy from the other one because they have similar products. Yet, we must answer the question of where does prosperity come from? Does it come from begging foreign countries for aid? Can it ensure prosperity for us?

The answer of our movement in the 1960s was that prosperity could only come from producing a good or a service and selling it. I have to produce a good or a service and sell it. We added another word here. We say you must produce a good or a service with *Ekibaro*. In our language here, *ekibaro* means *hesabu*. You should calculate. The good or service I am producing - is it profitable? Is this the best way to use my scarce resources? If I have only two acres of land for my family,

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how do I use them to create prosperity for my family? What do I produce? That is how you decide which good or service to produce.

The Swahili word for good is *bidha*, and service is *huduma*. *Natoa huduma gani na bidhaa zipi kusudi nipate pesa za kukimu familia yangu ili tuwe na maisha mazuri?* If you take again the example of those Banyankole, their *bidhaa* or goods that they produce are milk, beef and bananas. However, because they are producing similar products, they do not easily buy from one another. What happens to them? This is where it now becomes also ideological.

In the 1960s and 50s, we had a problem here of the politics of identity, politics of tribes, *makabila*, politics of religion, *dini*. People are trying to tell our people that tribe is more important than Uganda. They had been told that *dini* is more important than Uganda. However, when we came, we said - I am a wealth creator. I do not depend on anybody. *Sitegemei mtu yeyote. Najitegegemea kwa kufuga ng'ombe, kuuza nyama na ndizi na mazao mengine.* I am a wealth creator. I am not a parasite. *(Applause) Sitegemei mtu yeyote. Nategemea jasho langu.*

Who can help me in my wealth creation? If you say tribes, then you find that my Banyankole do not buy my milk, they do not buy my beef. Not because they hate me, but because they have similar products. They have milk, I have milk. They have beef, I have beef. They have bananas, I have bananas. Who then comes to my aid? *Nani ataniokoa?* The one who comes to my aid is Uganda because it is diverse. There are those of us who look after cows, while others do other things. The other people who do not have cows or do not concentrate on them so much are the ones who buy my milk, beef and bananas. When you see that good house, it is partly because of my efforts, but also because of Uganda *ambayo imemsaidia kupata soko.*

If Uganda did not buy my bananas, milk and beef, I would not have had a good life. I live a good life because of my effort, but also because of Uganda. So that is how our movement - now, analysing this, we rejected the other line of politics of identity, politics of tribes, of religion, because we said that kind of politics *hazisaidii*. They do not help us because they do not answer our problem of prosperity. That is why the first ideological principle of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Party is patriotism. Love Uganda. Why love Uganda? Because you need it for your prosperity. You have to love Uganda.

That is historical mission number one; to achieve prosperity. However, in order to achieve it, you must be patriotic. You must love Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia, and the DRC. You must love them because you need them. Here in Uganda, we have got a way of speaking because we are never in a hurry. We discovered now that when we wake up, if you are asleep, you are protected from reality. *Wakati bado tulikuwa tunaangalia, we discovered that kulala ni vizuri lakini nyoka inaweza ikaja na kuingi chumbani mwako, ikakuuma na ukafa kwa amani bila kujua.* So sleeping is also good because when you are asleep, you don't know what's happening in the world. You are protected from reality. However, when you wake up, *unaanza kuwa na hofu bcause unafuatilia mambo sasa.* You are following things now.

These Ugandans were lost with the tribes and religion. However, when we woke them up, they started producing a lot of *Maziwa*. They were producing 200 million litres of milk a year. They are now producing 5.3 billion litres of milk a year. The internal market of Ugandans is now 800

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million litres. They have a surplus of 4 billion litres. *Mahindi* - Maize, they were producing 500,000 tonnes. They are now producing 5 million tonnes, but they consume only 1 million tonnes. They have a surplus of 4 million tonnes. There is a surplus of bananas, cement, industrial products, salt, *and mayai* and so on. The Ugandans have woken up. They are now producing more and more. The internal market is not enough.

We asked the Ugandans, what do we do now? Some people were telling them about tribes; that tribes are very important. Yet, now we have a big production of sugar. People are telling Ugandans that tribes and religion are important. We were stuck with the surplus produce. Where do we sell this surplus? We were stuck. That is how the NRM came up. The NRM is our party, the National Resistance Movement. What are we resisting? Confusion. We resist confusion.

We told the Ugandans, you people, they are telling you that tribes and religious groups are important, now we are stuck. What do we do? They had no answer. The NRM asked, "Have you heard of East Africa?" Ugandans replied, "Yes, of course we have heard of the East African Community." The NRM asked, "Do you know that East Africa can help you buy what cannot be bought here?" The Ugandans now understand the importance of East Africa. East Africa can help you buy what you produce. Ugandans asked, "So East Africa can help us?" The NRM responded "Yes, it can help you." What you do in terms of ideology, you call yourselves Pan-Africanist. Love East Africa, love Africa. Why? Because you need them for your prosperity. If you want to be prosperous, you have no alternative but to love Uganda and to love Africa.

We add on other principles. The third principle here in Uganda, in our movement, is social economic transformation. We tell our people here that they must become modern people. You cannot continue doing things in the old ways. You must become modern people who know how to do business. We call it social economic transformation.

The last principle is democracy. These four principles; patriotism, pan-Africanism, social economic transformation, and democracy, will help us to deal with the issue of prosperity. What I am talking about today, Uganda and the Banyankole is the same with all the communities of East Africa.

I remember in 1964, when I was in secondary school, I started seeing the milk of Kenya. It was milk packed in paper. Those papers were called tetra packs. The Kenya Creameries Cooperative (KCC) produced the milk. I think it was based in Eldoret. We bought that milk for a long time. If you see some rich Kenyans, you know that I contributed to their wealth from 1964. I used to buy the milk of KCC until we started having our own milk here, which is now in surplus. *Mfuko wangu ulisaidia Wakenya kupambana na umaskini.*

In the 1960s, I was also supporting our Tanzanian people. There was tinned beef. What they call *nyama kwenye kopo* from what they were calling it - Three Bulls, Tanganyika Packers. There was a Tanganyika Packers near the other hill where there is a cement factory. Is it called Hima or what? After the barracks, there are hotels there. *Kuna kampuni ya simiti. Hiyo sehemu inaitwa vipi?* There was a factory there called Tanganyika Packers. We were buying that beef here in the 1960s. We were using that one. The Chinese built a factory in Ubongo. We were buying those *kangas* from

there. In Burundi, our people were dying from something called Primus. (*Laughter*). Primus beer was killing quite a few of them. It is a very strong beer, I hear. I do not drink beer, so you tell me.

This is the historical mission, number one. The integration work that you are involved in is not just *Kazi ya Wabunge*, or work of the MPs. It is a matter of life and survival. If we do not handle it well, Africa will be like Latin America. It is a very rich part of the world. They have many natural resources. The big rivers in the world, like the Amazon, are in South America. The big forest, the Amazon, is in South America. However, you see them on the TV, walking on foot to cross into the USA.

The USA is not as rich in natural resources as Latin America. Latin America is richer, but they are badly organised. The market is fragmented. If I start a company in El Salvador or Honduras, it cannot succeed so easily because of the market. The market is there, but fragmented. Historically, you are very privileged people. You are to help us solve the problem of market integration. (*Applause*)

The second historical mission is strategic security. I have heard some people want to achieve superiority on land. They want to be very strong on land forces. They want to be superior in the air force. They want to be superior at sea, the navy. They want to be superior in space. How about us? *Sisi tuko hapa tu*. We are just here. People are going to the moon, and they are looking at us from the moon. We are just here like ants. We do not have a problem. We do not know what is happening on the moon. Some people are there looking at us from there. The Americans have been to the moon. The Russians have been there. The Chinese have been there. The Indians have now gone. *Sisi tuko tu hapa*.

Our countries are trying. They are developing. You are trying. Uganda is developing. It is now a low-middle-income country. It will become a high-middle-income country. It will become a first-world country. We shall definitely achieve it. However, the question is, the UK, France and Germany are first-world countries. However, none of them has gone to the moon. They are here with us. The ones that have gone are the Americans, the Russians, the Chinese, and now the Indians. Therefore, it seems there is something about size. You may develop if you are small or lightweight but you cannot box with heavyweight. However, when you are trained, you must keep in your class.

Uganda will be a developed country. However, can we afford a space programme to go to the moon? This is where now we, the resistance fighters, started disturbing you long ago, in the 1960s, led by Mwalimu Nyerere and other leaders like, Nkrumah, Ahmed Sékou Touré and other leaders. Even in East Africa, we had our leaders like, Jomo Kenyatta, Abed Karume. Some of the ministers were very active, like Tom Mboya. I know those who were very active in supporting Pan Africanism like John Samuel Malecela and others.

We need a political federation. When I was talking about prosperity, it deals with the market; integrating the market, so that the market is one and so that business is easy for our people. However, even if you have market integration, like the European Union have, you do not address the issue of strategic security, because you are not one country. You are different countries with different plans and armies. You do not unite your political and security efforts. You unite the

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economy, but not the politics, not the defence. Even if you form a network and so on, things are not so simple. I have been involved in integration from the 1960s; we have been saying, you people, why don't you form a political federation of East Africa so that you have got one army and one defense programme; so that you can be able to go to the moon, if necessary. In addition, you ask the Americans, what are they doing there? Otherwise, we are endangering the African people. This is exactly what happened many years ago.

Vasco da Gama went around South Africa in 1498. He passed through Mombasa, Fort Jesus, and our chiefs were there watching. Vasco da Gama went to India, then white people started coming. You can imagine Vasco da Gama went around South Africa in 1498. The first white man to come to Uganda here was John Hannington Speke in 1862. This is almost 400 years from when Vasco da Gama passed by the coast. Our kings here were asleep. Putting on monkey skins and leopard skins, that they are leopards. (*Laughter*).

They were warned for 400 years that the Europeans were coming; initially the Europeans were not strong. The guns they had were primitive. However, our kings were doing nothing for 400 years until they came and started picking them like grasshoppers. They had not used the time to prepare. This was enough warning to prepare. When we talk about East African Federation, this is where Mwalimu together with us who were following him differed with Nkrumah. In addition, later on we differed with Muammar Gaddafi. Because Nkrumah and Muammar Gaddafi, and some few others, were talking about the political union of the whole of Africa and all African governments; we said no. This one is not feasible. Africa is too big and diverse to become one political unit. However, it can be one market.

We support the African Common Market. They call it Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). That one we support. The whole of Africa can trade together. However, in terms of political integration, I would like to integrate politically with somebody who is either like me or compatible with me. We must be either similar or compatible. In addition, when I look at you, to see how different you are from me, I do not see any difference. You all look the same to me. Not only that, we have our groups here. The Bantu people. I can speak all the dialects up to Mwanza. Up to Ituri forest. All those dialects are like my dialect. Barundi and Banyarwanda, speak something similar to my dialect. The ones from Western Kenya; the Murembe people, are you here? Is there a Murembe here?

Mr Musamali Paul Mwasa (Uganda): I am here.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): *Murembe!* I am greeting you, *Murembe!*

Mr Paul Mwasa Musamali (Uganda): *Murembe!*

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): We have our Nilotic people; the Luos.

Ntie Jaluo kae? Are there Luos speakers here?

Mr George Stephen Odongo (Uganda): I am here.

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The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Our Luo speaking people from Ateke, our people from Turkana, from Toposa, South Sudan, from Teso, Karimajong and Maasai. These are all similar people. We also have the Cushites like the Somalis and Oromos in South Ethiopia. I can see some Somali people here. If you ask them, what do you call cow? They will say, *Saa*. Are there Somalis here? They call cow, *Saa*. Is that correct?

Ms Iman Falhada Dekow (Kenya): Yes, that is correct.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): In our dialect here, we do not call cow dung, '*Dung*'. We are not like Europeans. Cows do not have dung. Dung is for human beings. *Wazungu hawana maneno ya kutosha hivyo wanaita kila kitu mavi; mavi ya ng'ombe and so on*. No, that is not proper. *Wabantu hatukubali kwamba ng'ombe inatoa mavi. Ng'ombe inatoa kile ambacho Somali wanaita saa. Sisi tunasema ng'ombe inatoa Obusa; Amaase, Obusa*. Even in Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, I am sure that is the same word. In Kirundi, what is it?

The Speaker: In Kirundi, we call it *Amaase*.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): It is the same in Kinyarwanda? So you can see what the Somalis call cow, for us here, we call it cow dung.

In all these Bantu dialects, it is the same. Just like my language. Is there anyone from Bukoba?

Mr Ansar Abubakar Kachwamba (Tanzania): I am here.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Where are you from?

Mr Ansar Abubakar Kachwamba (Tanzania): I am from Kamacumu.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Kamacumu in our language is the same as *Mikuki*. Kamacumu in our language is *Mikuki*. Kamacumu means they were fighting one another. In East Africa, the indigenous groups are either similar or linked. Additionally, we have the lack of having Swahili. *Ni lugha ambayo haina mwenyewe*. Swahili, which is a neutral language, a neutral dialect. It does not belong to any tribe. It does not belong to the Oromo – they cannot claim that it belongs to them. They contribute, but it does not belong to any one of them. It is a language that does not belong to anyone, which now can be used by anybody. If I come and say, all of you speak Kinyankole, I will start a fight. People will start a fight. Why is he imposing his dialect on us? But if I say Swahili, *inakubalika*. (Applause)

Therefore - give me one minute. I will be back. You should not give old men audience because you do so at your own risk. (Laughter)(Interruption)

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): We, the followers of Mwalimu, from the beginning, insisted on the political federation of East Africa. We think East Africa can build a very cohesive, powerful state that can be a centre of gravity for the African race. They can have a very strong country which all the black people can depend on. This

political federation is to deal with the historical mission of strategic security. Economic integration deals with prosperity, but political integration, where possible, deals with strategic security.

The third historical mission is *undugu* - brotherhood. It is to say, by the way, the people we are trying to unite, are they not the same people? Are they not similar people? That is why we emphasise the *undugu*. Apart from the Swahili, even the indigenous languages, I can understand all the dialects from here up to Burundi and from here up to Mwanza. The other day, I met young people in the town, Munyonyo, in one of the hotels. I found them seated there. I asked them where are you from? First, I asked, "What is your name?" One of them said her name was Kwamboka. I asked her, Where are you from? She said that she is from Kisii in Kenya. What does *kwamboka* mean in your dialect? Do we have a Kisii person here?

(The Kenyan High Commissioner to Uganda (Amb. Joash Maangi) rose)

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): You, Kisii man, you tell us. What is Kwamboka? Come on the microphone and tell us.

The Kenyan High Commissioner to Uganda (Amb. Joash Maangi): Your Excellency, it means a bridge. To cross over a bridge.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): *Kuvuka?*

The Kenyan High Commissioner to Uganda (Amb. Joash Maangi): Yes.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): You can imagine, that is what I would call it in my Runyankole. That girl was called Kwamboka, I said, Kwamboka, where are you from? She said, "*I am from Kenya*" Kenya where? Kisii. You can imagine where Banyankole are about 200 miles to the west. Kisii is like another 200 miles to the East, but they have the same words. You hear *murembe*, is one of our words, meaning peace, in some of the dialects.

Therefore, our strategy was, why don't we use this *undugu* - this brotherhood - to solve the other two problems of prosperity and strategic security?

Today, I will give you some gifts, I don't know whether I have enough, but there are some pictures of-, can you bring my gift and show them the big one? I do not know whether I have enough, but if I do not have enough, I will give you by delegation. Bring the big one here to the front. Give it to the Speaker of EALA.

(A gift was presented to the Speaker of EALA)

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Can you show it to them? Please show it to them because I know it. I am the author.

(The Speaker of EALA displayed the photo (gift) to the Assembly)

(Applause)

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): This picture was taken on the 3rd June 1963. It is a picture of our leaders; Jomo Kenyatta, Mwalimu Nyerere, Milton Obote and a delegation of other leaders. I think they even had a delegation from Somalia, where they were declaring that in 1963, the East African Federation would start. My people have smaller pictures of the same for each one of you. That is my gift to you. You can imagine if the Federation had taken off at that time in 1963, all this chaos that had happened in East Africa would never have happened. You would never have had Idi Amin in Uganda, because there is no way Idi Amin could come when there is an East African government - there is no way.

The chaos in Burundi, would never have happened. All those problems since 1972 would not have happened. The problem of Rwanda was already there, but it was, it would have been easy to solve with a united East Africa; Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania together with Zanzibar; we could easily have addressed even the issue of Rwanda, which had already been started by the Belgians who were killing people in 1959.

Somalia wanted to join earlier on. There was a delegation even at that time. People like Mohammad Egar who was working for the East African Federation - his area now is Somaliland, the other part, which is not in agreement with Mogadishu. The problems of Congo would have been addressed more easily by East Africa. We would have solved a lot by now. We would be very far now, but it is never too late. I am very glad that you came here, and I have had now a chance to tell you some of the points I think are important. With these few words, I thank you all, and I thank the Speaker of EALA and the Speaker of Uganda for bringing you to me so that you hear old men's stories. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

The Speaker: Your Excellency, we are requesting you to declare the session officially open.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): What, the session or what? What do I open now?

The Speaker: You are opening the session that is sitting in Uganda.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): It is now my honour as a member of the East African Community to open the session. (*Applause*)

The Speaker: You may take your seats, hon. Members. Thank you, your Excellency. Some weeks ago, you invited me as the Speaker of EALA to participate here in the National Prayer Breakfast and I was seated here. The theme of that day was, "*If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?*" This theme was chosen wisely, and it responds to our EAC vision and mission. This is because we have received this gift from you. We remember that in November 1999, that is when you, Your Excellency, and two prominent leaders from EAC, signed the treaty we are using today. (*Applause*) Mzee Arap Moi, who was the President of Kenya, is no more. Mzee William Mkapa, who was the President of the URT, has gone. You are the only one, who remains with us. We are celebrating 25 years or our silver jubilee at the EAC. It is 25 years.

Your Excellency, we are proud that you remain our strongest pillar and foundation, and your legacy lives. Through your wise leadership, the EAC has rebranded its strategy to boost our market

potential. At that time, you were three countries but today we are eight countries. We thank you for your leadership.

With this, your Excellency, allow me to recognise the VIPs in the gallery. Before I give the floor to our member for the vote of thanks.

We have in the gallery, Right Honourable Robinah Nabanja, who is the Prime Minister of Uganda. Please stand up to be recognised. We also have Honourable Richard Todwong, the Secretary General of the NRM. We have Honourable Hamson Obua, the Government Chief Whip. We have members of the Committee on EAC Affairs of the Parliament of Uganda, led by Honourable Dr. Nsaba Buturo, whom I am informed would like to meet you briefly after this session. We have members of the Parliamentary Forum on EAC. We also have Honourable Adolf Mwesige, the Clerk to the Parliament of Uganda and Staff. We have Ambassador Joash Maangi, High Commissioner of Kenya. We also have a speaker in this House; we have the Speaker of the EAC Youth Parliament, Madam Amana Belinda. Please, stand up and be recognised. *(Applause)*

I would also like to recognize the front bench. Let us start with the Minister, Right Honourable Rebecca Kadaga, in charge of East African Community. We also have the Minister from Tanzania in charge of EAC. He will have to take oath tomorrow to be an ex-officio full member. We also have the Minister in charge of EAC from Kenya. She will also take oath tomorrow. We have the Counsel to the Community. We also have the Right Honourable, Anita Annet Among, my colleague, the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. Thank you.

Now, I invite Honourable Gai Deng to give a vote of thanks. Kindly be brief. We do not need a long speech. Everything has been said. You have the Floor.

5.28

Ms Gai Deng Nhial (South Sudan): Your Excellency, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda; Right Honourable Speaker Joseph Ntakirutimana, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly; Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Right Honourable Anita Annet Among; First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Affairs, Right Honourable Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga; Honourable Ministers from Uganda present; Honourable Members of the Parliament of Uganda present; Honourable Members of the East African Legislative Assembly; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

It is with deep gratitude and honour that we, the members of the East African Legislative Assembly extend our heartfelt thanks to you, Your Excellency, for hosting this significant plenary session in Kampala. Your steadfast leadership in advancing the East African Community and your unwavering commitment to regional integration continue to inspire not only Uganda, but also the entire East African region. *(Applause)*

We take this opportunity also to acknowledge our colleagues, fellow members in EALA from the chapter of Uganda. Your Excellency, the calibre of EALA representatives from Uganda is a testament to your commitment for ensuring strong, capable leadership within the EAC. Their

dedication and contributions have greatly enriched our legacy of work and we are grateful for the quality of leadership that Uganda continues to provide for the region.

Your Excellency, on behalf of my colleagues, I wish to express our sincere appreciation for your strong stance in upholding African values, traditions and family principles, particularly in your leadership regarding non-traditional lifestyles. While acknowledging diverse perspectives, your dedication in preserving the cultural society, a societal fabric of Uganda and the region resonates deeply across East Africa. By focusing on providing essential services, quality education and the well-being of all citizens, you have ensured that we remain focused on the core priorities for our people rather than external agendas.

Under your leadership, Uganda has made tremendous strides in national development, from infrastructure expansion to technological innovation. These achievements serve as a model for progress across East Africa. We are proud to witness the positive impact of your leadership, not only within Uganda, but across the EAC as you continue to advocate for stronger economic and technological integration.

Your Excellency, while we celebrate the progress made in the EAC, we must acknowledge the significant challenges posed by the Community's limited financial resources. The EAC budget for the year 2024-2025 financial year stands at USD112 million, with only 67 million of this figure contributed by the partner states. This figure has remained unchanged for the past five years, despite the expansion of the Community with the inclusion of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia.

The region now serves over 300 million citizens, yet our capacity to deliver critical programmes is constrained by this static budget. The situation, Your Excellency, is exacerbated by the issue of non-remittance from some partner states, leading to liquidity issues that have severely impacted the ability of the EAC institutions to function effectively. At present, the budget absorption rate stands at 48 per cent, meaning that less than half of the allocated funds are being used for the intended programmes.

This underperformance, Your Excellency, has resulted in delays or cancellation of vital programmes, limiting the EAC's capacity to meet its objectives. Due to these constraints, Your Excellency, many essential programmes have been cut or scaled down. For example, the Financial Administration Committee, which advises the Council of Ministers on budgetary matters, has consistently reduced the funding for critical programmes.

One significant casualty was EALA's outreach and sensitisation programme, which involved EALA members visiting all partner states by land, assessing key one-stop border posts, engaging with citizens to evaluate how they are benefiting from the EAC programmes. This initiative provided deep insights into the challenges faced by our people and through direct engagement, we were able to recommend meaningful changes. Unfortunately, this valuable programme was cut due to budget cuts.

Similarly, we had a 10-day sensitisation programme, which allowed EALA members to travel across their own partner states to raise awareness about the EAC integration agenda - it was also

discontinued. This programme was vital in bringing the message of regional integration directly to our citizens. Cutting such programmes, Your Excellency, has significantly reduced our ability and visibility to engage directly with the people we serve and gauge the real impact of EAC policies on the ground.

Another programme also that was cut, Your Excellency, was the Nanyuki series. That was a programme that allowed us, as members of Parliament of EALA, to engage with our counterpart, members of the national parliaments. During this engagement, we discussed issues, challenges, bills that could change the situation within East Africa. That series also, Your Excellency, has been scrapped.

Autonomy of EALA, Your Excellency, we believe that granting EALA greater autonomy would strengthen its ability to independently mobilise resources. Autonomy would enhance our capacity to ensure efficient budget use and provide oversight on long-term initiatives in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, and technology.

Your Excellency, your hosting us at this Plenary provides an excellent opportunity to gain traction for some of EALA's important initiatives. Our Chairperson of the Committee on Communication, Trade, and Investment, Honourable Shabhal, has proposed a motion for the establishment of an East African Investment Bank, which he will be presenting during this session. An East African Investment Bank would be a vital instrument to fund large-scale infrastructure, industrialisation, and technology-driven initiatives. This bank would allow the EAC to pool resources, mobilise funds, and invest in transformative projects, reducing reliance on external donors who often set their own agenda. By creating our own investment bank, we can take control of our development priorities, ensuring that critical projects in infrastructure, health, agriculture, and technology are implemented according to the EAC regional goals.

Your Excellency, the adage that says, "Beggars cannot be choosers", aptly describes the current constraints of donor funding. However, with an East African Investment Bank, we can choose and prioritise the projects that align with our own vision for the future of East Africa. The importance of adequate funding, Your Excellency, is important, but also the alternative financial mechanism which is currently under review. This available funding could allow us, Your Excellency, to implement the Common Market Protocol. It would allow us to fast-track legislative work, policy implementation, and technical preparation for the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, thereby unleashing the economic potential of East Africa.

With sufficient funds, a fully operational customs union can also be achieved. Your Excellency, despite the many opportunities within our region, inter-regional trade within EAC remains quite low, currently standing at 15 per cent. This is far below the potential given the resources that we have within our region.

Your Excellency, your leadership in promoting inter-African trade has been pivotal, but we must continue pushing for more collaboration and investment to fully realise the East African potential.

The last critical point, Your Excellency, is tourism, which presents enormous potential, particularly in light of major continental events like the African Cup of Nations. However, the fragmented visa system where you have Kenya and Uganda issuing a single tourist visa, while countries like the United Republic of Tanzania, require a separate visa undermines our efforts to present the EAC as a single tourist destination and reduces the region's effectiveness and attractiveness to global tourists and investors. We urge the adoption of a single EAC visa policy for all partner states to simplify travel and position East Africa as a prime global destination.

We also call, Your Excellency, for the amendment of the East African Treaty. Your Excellency, it is imperative that we expedite the amendment of the Treaty of the East African Community to accommodate the evolving dynamics of our region. Since the last amendment, we have grown from three partner states to eight, and probably there will be a possibility of further expansion. This growth demands a more robust and updated legal framework to effectively manage the increasing complexities of integration and cooperation.

Your Excellency, last but not least, commemorating the 25 years of the EAC calls for reflection and action. As we commemorate the 25 years of the East African Community, it is an opportune time and a moment to reflect on our achievements and challenges while planning for the future. We believe that now is the ideal time to establish a panel of experts that can be tasked with assessing the EAC progress and recommend strategies for the future.

This panel should focus on vital areas of development, such as agriculture and food security, health systems, climate change, infrastructure development, and harnessing technology to drive innovation. The panel should report directly to the Summit of Heads of State within a defined framework timeframe, ensuring that its recommendations are actionable and timely. Additionally, Your Excellency, we respectfully request that the Summit Heads of State consider establishing a platform for direct engagement with EALA members. As representatives of the people, we are in a unique position to provide valuable insights into how EAC policies are impacting citizens on the ground. A meeting perhaps once a year on the sidelines of the Summit meetings or any other forum would allow us to offer critical feedback and present tangible recommendations that align with regional decisions with the real needs of East Africa.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, we extend again our heartfelt gratitude for your leadership and hospitality. The challenges we face, particularly around financial sustainability and regional integration, require urgent attention. The alternative financial mechanisms, the establishment of the East African Investment Bank, and greater autonomy for EALA present viable solutions. We call for their swift implementation to ensure EAC institutions are adequately funded and empowered. Furthermore, the adoption of a single EAC visa, the revitalisation of the outreach and sensitisation programmes, the amendment of the treaty, and a renewed focus on intra-regional trade are critical areas where your leadership will continue to guide the EAC towards greater unity and prosperity.

Thank you, Your Excellency, for your unwavering commitment to the success and unity of the East African Community.

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The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): *Mpigieni makofi Binti. (Applause)* I can see there are sharp girls in East Africa. *Unatoka wapi?*

Ms Gai Deng Nhial (South Sudan): South Sudan.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Which side of South Sudan?

Ms Gai Deng Nhial (South Sudan): Tonj.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Very, sharp girl. *(Applause)* What she is talking about is true. Funding a budget of \$120 million is nothing. We should share it and provide it. However, I think the issue is really to understand what I was saying before. Where will growth come from? Recently, I was having some issue with my people here. They wanted me to ban rice from Tanzania. They were saying rice from Tanzania is killing our so-called rice farmers here - inefficient farmers of Uganda of rice. *(Laughter)* They were saying because Tanzanian rice is cheaper, I should ban it. Imagine, I said I cannot do that. *(Applause)*. If I ban it, I am committing four sins. Since I want to go to heaven, I cannot be part of it. Sin number one is that I am undermining those Tanzanians. Rice growers who are dealing with the rice better than my inefficient farmers here. So by denying them a market, I am undermining them, instead of encouraging them, “Since you grow the rice well, do it, we all buy from you.”

Secondly, I would also be crippling the Ugandan rice growers, because they do not learn how to be more efficient. They depend on protection by the Government. Then thirdly, I will be punishing the Ugandans, forcing them to buy rice that is more expensive from inefficient Ugandan rice growers, instead of buying cheaper rice. Then number four, Tanzania will also revenge by banning something from Uganda. That childish game goes on and our future is ruined. If the policy makers and the bureaucrats understand where growth will come from, there is no way you can say you are developing Uganda if you do not care about East Africa. *(Applause)*.

To say that, I am developing Uganda or that I am developing Tanzania, but I do not care about East Africa is deceiving yourself. Because without East Africa we shall not grow so easily. In the past, in 1980, I was the Minister of Regional Cooperation, and at that time, we were pushing COMESA. We went for a summit in Botswana. Then after that, I went to the bush to sort out some issues. *(Laughter)* When I was in the bush, I heard that Botswana had pulled out of COMESA. I think even Tanzania also pulled out of COMESA. Now, the reason why Botswana at that time was not understanding the importance of COMESA was because they depend on diamonds. They were depending on diamonds, which are consumed by Europeans, not by us. I think they were not understanding the importance of COMESA. That is why they left.

Tanzania also left, I do not know why they left. Now, the Botswana people are coming here because they are now beginning to understand the importance of the market because they are now producing other things, including vaccines. They came here, they were trying to sell vaccines. We don't have to learn from mistakes. The answers are already there. I think what you should do is talk to your bureaucrats. They are the ones who sometimes advise the political people. And the political leaders, sometimes are very busy.

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If the bureaucrats dealing with the economy could be targeted and made to understand where growth will come from. The other day, I went to the border. One of my clansmen in Tanzania had died. My clan goes into Tanzania. I called the Former President of Tanzania, Hon. Kikwete and told him that my clansman has died, I want to go and say sorry. He allowed me. I went, crossed the Kajera River, went and did something there with my clan. On my way back, on the Uganda side, I noted that there was a huge town which was not there in 1979; when we were fighting Idi Amin, there was nothing there. Now, there is a big town there. I stopped in my car and asked them, “You people, where are you getting this wealth from?” They replied, “From the river.” That they are smuggling. They are smuggling through the river, Tanzania is growing a lot of things now; *maharagwe* and other things. They are smuggling them. But why do you smuggle? You do it properly.

Tanzania is now going to Congo. They are really active now. They are beginning to know the importance of exporting to the region. *Kenya ni wanabiashara wa zamani*. They knew the need. Although sometimes they forget about Christianity. They block my things. However, me as a Christian, I said, if they block my things, *Munga atawasamehe*. I think what you need to do is sensitise the civil servants so they understand the importance. The business people can understand much quicker so *ni wafanya biashara*. What do we call the bureaucrats in Kiswahili? Somebody tell me in the microphone.

Mr Millya James Kinyasi (Tanzania): *Urasimu*

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): *Huyo ni mtu au?*

Mr Millya James Kinyasi (Tanzania): *Urasimu* ni beaurocracy. *Mrasibu* ni beaurocrat.

The President of the Republic of Uganda (His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni): Thank you very much. Let us go and have a group photograph somewhere. Oh! I have interfered with the procedure. (*Laughter*) You know, *wanamapinduzi hawajui mambo ya itifaki*.

The Speaker: Thank you, your Excellency.

Honourable members, before I adjourn this House, tomorrow at 9.00 a.m. in the morning, we have to be in the Chamber because we have our members who are supposed to take oath. I said 9.00 a.m. because by 10.00 a.m. the Parliament of Uganda will have their sitting. They need the Chamber tomorrow up to Thursday.

I now adjourn this sitting to tomorrow, Wednesday, 23 October 2024 at 9.00 a.m. Thank you.

(The House rose at 5.52 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 23 October 2024 at 9.00 a.m.)