

PRESS RELEASE

10TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAC Headquarters, AICC, Arusha, 8 August 2005

The Tenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the East African Community was held in Arusha on 8 August 2005.

The Meeting was attended by Hon. Basil Mramba, Minister for Finance, United Republic of Tanzania who chaired the meeting on behalf of Hon Jakaya Kikwete, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of the East African Community; Hon Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Uganda; and Hon John Koech, Minister for East African and Regional Co-operation, who led their respective delegations; and other Ministers from the Partner States responsible for various areas of regional co-operation.

Also in attendance were the Secretary General of the East African Community, Hon. Amanywa Mushega, the Deputy Secretary General (Projects and Programmes), Dr Kipyego Cheluget; and the Deputy Secretary General (Finance and Administration), Mr Ahmada Ngemera; Permanent Secretaries, Senior Officials, Experts and Observers from the Partner States.

The Council of Ministers considered the following Reports on the activities of the Community undertaken since the last ordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers in November 2004: -

- The Report on the progress in the Implementation of Previous decisions of the Council;
- Report on the Tripartite Sectoral Programmes and Activities;
- Report on Institutional Matters;
- Progress Report of the Consultancy Study on the East African Power Master Plan;
- Finance and Administration Report;
- Progress Report on the EAC Development Fund;
- Report on the Activities of the East African Legislative Assembly and the East African Court of Justice; and
- Report of the Contacts and Outreach Activities.

The Ministers noted the tremendous activity and progress realised in the economic, political and social sectors during this period. Implementation of the

projects and programmes in, among other areas, Agriculture and Food Security; Energy; Environment and Natural Resources; Trade Industry and Investment; Tourism and Wildlife Management; Interstate Security and Defence; Legal and Judicial Affairs has proceeded very well and many breakthroughs have been made.

The significant breakthroughs were made in the Lake Victoria Development Programme, with the operationalisation of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission; in the various programmes under the social sector, in particular, in the Health sector; and under the institutional matters with the verification of the application of Rwanda to join the Community; and the accreditation of EAC to the AU.

The Ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the East African Customs Union with the gradual elimination of internal tariffs and other charges of equivalent effect being addressed within the context of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union Protocol and on the basis of the East African Custom Union Management Act 2004. The implementation of the Rules of Origin has already faced some hitches necessitating looking into some relevant rules. The gradual implementation of the Common External Tariff (CET) is also ongoing and some problems have been registered which are being solved on a case-by-case basis.

On Agriculture and Food Security, the Council decided, among others, that a Protocol on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures should be developed in accordance with the provisions of the Protocol on the Establishment of the EAC Customs Union; Partner States should develop and bring into force laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to conform to regional strategies for Agriculture and Food Security; Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) standards for East Africa be developed; development of standards for Artificial Insemination (AI) centres and importation of semen of the identified species ; work towards harmonization of Sanitary Standards for Fishery Products in the region; and establishment of the EAC Sectoral Council on Agriculture and Food Security.

On Wildlife Management the Council approved joint EAC approach for participation in regional and international treaties/ agreements on wildlife conservation and management. This would include measures for protection of wildlife resources from illegal use and protection of the resources for the benefit of present and future generations; development of a strategy for harmonization of policies and legislation on wildlife conservation and management with emphasis on the uniqueness and high value of East Africa's unique wildlife resources; creation of an enabling environment for the active participation of all stakeholders in wildlife conservation and management in East Africa.

With regard to tourism development in the EAC region, the Council adopted the Standards Criteria for the Classification of Hotels, Restaurants and Other Tourist Facilities and Standard Guidelines for the Development of Non-Graded Establishments. These standards will now be printed for use in the tourism industry and will supersede all other existing standard criteria for classification in the EAC Partner States.

The Council directed the Investment Promotion Centres in the Partner States to institute incentives in facilitating the acquisition of high value capital items and equipment, not available locally, by tourism establishments as the Standards Criteria prescribes high capital investment; continued facilitation of a Panel of Experts in studying policies and legislation for purposes of harmonization of tourism industry in the region. The Council further approved plans for Marketing and Promoting East Africa as a single tourist destination; and the development of Sustainable Tourism in the region.

On Political co-operation, the Council took note of the developments in the sector and directed the efforts be sustained in the context of the process of fast tracking the Political Federation. To this extent, the Council reviewed the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee for East Africa and recommended that each National Assembly establish a budget line for EAC matters; and the National Assemblies to establish parliamentary committees specifically for EAC matters. The Ministers recommended to the National Assemblies to urge the Government of Kenya to legislate for increased participation of women in elective positions.

The Council considered a report on the Implementation of the Decisions of the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State which was held in Dar es Salaam on 29-30 May 2005 and approved the proposed consultative mechanism with the East African people on the Political Federation; proposed the one-year period for collection of views from the public commence in January 2006. The Ministers also recalled that at the Extraordinary Summit the Heads of State agreed to appoint Ministers solely responsible for East African Community Affairs, resident in the Capitals as a means of expediting the Regional Integration process towards East African Federation. The Ministers urged the Partner States to implement the decision.

In other matters, the Council noted the progress in the formation of the East African Kiswahili Council by November 2005 and directed the Secretariat to raise the necessary funds and other resources from the Partner States to facilitate the process.

Information and Public Relations Office
EAC, Arusha
8 August 2005