



**TENTH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE
EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

**STATEMENT BY HON. JAKAYA KIKWETE, MP, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION, TANZANIA, AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
AT THE OPENING SESSION**

8 AUGUST 2005
EAC HEADQUARTERS, AICC, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

Honourable Ministers

**Honourable Secretary General of the East African
Community**

Distinguished Delegates and Observers

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you to the 10th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the East African Community. Our meeting comes in the background of encouraging progress of the Community. The launching of the East African Community Customs Union in January this year has at last brought the activities of the Community to the practical level and rekindled the hopes of the people for tangible benefits of regional integration.

The Customs Union is a centre pillar of the Community. It is a showcase of the determination to develop a single market and investment area in which the Partner States will share the benefits equitably. Thus, the Customs Union Protocol was carefully negotiated, over a long period of four years. The interests of all the Partner States were taken into account and safeguarded in the Protocol. In addition, provisions were made for remedial mechanisms to be applied, whenever the need arises, in the course of implementing the Protocol. With this commitment, the hitches experienced in the initial operations of the Customs Union are fast disappearing. We expect the Customs Union soon to get on an even keel and sail smoothly onwards with all round benefit to the regional economy.

The 3rd Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State held in Dar es Salaam on 29-30 May 2005, yielded great foresight and guiding spirit to the East African regional integration process. In their Joint Communiqué, the Heads of State underlined the aspirations of the people of East Africa as well as reaffirmed the will of the people is paramount in the regional integration process. We should be guided by the spirit of the Dar es Salaam Communiqué in sustaining the political will and popular participation in the Community and be mindful that our today's Community is people-centered. We should move steadfastly through the identified stages in deepening regional integration and concretizing the benefits of a sustainable Community.

The Customs Union, being the first vital stage is a test case for our commitment in regional integration process. The challenge to the Council of Ministers is to ensure the success of the Customs Union and maintain the progress of the Community. The global agenda is focusing on the issues of peace, security and development. Whereas the deliberations on these issues may be located at the global or multilateral fora, the action must come from the grassroots, at the national and regional levels. We should aim at having an efficient, practical and results oriented Community that will make positive impact on the social and economic development and political stability of our region.

Our meeting has before it a wide agenda of 8 substantive items bearing on these critical issues under the regional programme in the economic, political and social sectors. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the reports, which the Secretariat has put at our disposal, namely: -

- 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.

I am gratified to note that the reports once again indicate steady progress in the implementation of the regional programme. 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.

Significant achievements have been made in the Lake Victoria Development Programme, with the operationalisation of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission. Also notable, is the EAC's participation in the continental and global programmes, in particular the Commission for Africa process, NEPAD and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region; and finally the accreditation of EAC to the AU. These are important initiatives and should be followed through so that our region may benefit from the resources and opportunities that arise under these arrangements in building internal capacity and competitiveness in the global market.

The new action oriented phase of the Community will put severe

test on the EAC's human resources, particularly given the highly competitive global situation. The development of human resources is therefore a critical area that we must concentrate our efforts on in the period ahead. The issues that are before us, relating to the implementation of the new organizational structure and terms and conditions of service of the Community, the proposals on Staff Rules and Financial Rules and Regulations, should be handled carefully. Apart from the decisions that we may take on these issues during this meeting, the issues should be taken up in the context of the ongoing formulation of the 3rd EAC Development Strategy which will be further amplified in the forthcoming Retreat of the Ministers, Members of the East African Legislative Assembly, Heads of the EAC Organs and Permanent Secretaries. As you aware, the two days Retreat begins tomorrow in Ngurdoto here in Arusha.

In conclusion, Honourable Ministers, suffice it to state that I have every confidence that you will effectively discharge your business of this meeting and make decisions that will further enhance the regional integration process and development of our region.

Thank you for you kind attention.