



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

**3<sup>RD</sup> EAC ANNUAL SECRETARY GENERAL'S FORUM  
12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

***THEME: "EAC: My Home, My Business"***

**DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

**EAC Secretariat  
Arusha-Tanzania  
P.O. Box 1096  
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## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

The East African Community (EAC) is an intergovernmental organisation comprising the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to spearhead the East African economic, social and political integration agenda. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community clearly envisions an integration process that is people centred and market driven

The EAC Council of Ministers in November 2012 approved the EAC Consultative Dialogue Framework(CDF), (*EAC/CM 26/DECISION 06*)., The CDF provides a framework for a structured dialogue between the East African Community, Private Sector Organisations, Civil Society Organisations and other Interest Groups as provided under Articles 127, 128 and 129 of the EAC Treaty.

The CDF is meant to ensure that the integration process proceeds with the involvement of the citizens of East Africa and is undertaken in the context of multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure that the objectives of widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in; political, economic, social, cultural, health, education, science and technology, defence, security, legal and judicial affairs is achieved for the benefit of the people of East Africa. Therefore, the CDF presupposes a continuous dialogue between the EAC, Partner States, CSOs, PSOs and other interest groups at all levels of the EAC programmes and activities, in accordance with the Calendar of Activities.

To achieve these Objectives, the Community [under Article 5(3) (g)] seeks to enhance and strengthen partnership with the private sector and civil society in order to accelerate sustainable socio-economic and political development.

Article 127 (4) in particular provides that:

*"The Secretary General shall provide a forum for consultations between the private sector, civil society organisations, other interest groups and appropriate institutions of the community."*

In line with this Article, the Secretary General (SG) organised the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> annual fora held in the year 2012 and 2013 in Dar-es-salaam and Nairobi respectively. The SG's Forum is organised collaboratively based on an agreed agenda between the Private Sector, Civil Society and other interest groups and EAC. Consequently, the 3<sup>rd</sup> EAC Annual SG's Forum builds on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> annual for a.

## **2.0 CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

The EAC integration process continues to widen and deepen, great strides continue to be taken towards a more borderless East Africa. With the implementation of the EAC Customs Union, Common Market and recently the signing of the East African Monetary Union Protocol in November 2013. Other ongoing initiatives include;

implementation of the Single Customs Territory, the One Stop Border Posts, elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and harmonization of laws and tax regimes. The Community continues to take advantage of the expanded market across the region. The level of citizen awareness and participation in the integration process has remained low. However, there are continuous efforts to increase citizen's engagement.

In their efforts for people-centered integration process, Civil Society Organisations have played a major role in the enactment and advocacy for the EAC HIV/AIDS Prevention and Management Bill 2012; the Development and adoption of the EAC Youth Policy; EAC Youth Ambassador Platform; provided input into the 4<sup>th</sup> EAC Development Strategy (2012/2016); EAC Health Strategic Plan; EAC Policy on Persons with Disabilities; conclusion of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) by professionals in the following areas; accountants, engineers and architects; advocacy for cross-border legal practice; advocacy for the extended Jurisdiction of East African Court of Justice (EACJ); development of a roadmap for engagement between National Law Societies and MEACAs; University- Industry Labour Market for Youth Linkages; Development of the East African Bribery Index 2013; and sensitization and awareness creation on the integration process.

Inspired by the aspirations of the EAC Treaty Article (3) g and Article 127 EACSOF conducted national consultations on the CSO operating environment in all five partner states

A conducive operating environment for private sector, civil society and other interest groups is the foundation for the CDF (Consultative Dialogue Framework).

A report from these consultations will be presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> SG Forum

In addition to the above, other efforts in the region pioneered by the EAC Private Sector and Civil Society include among others: Civil Society Consultative Forums; Youth Meetings; Child's Rights Conference; Conference on Good Governance; East African Local Government Forum; Launch of the Health Platform and the 1<sup>st</sup> EAC Cultural Festival (JAMAFEST).

The Private Sector continue to contribute to the implementation commitments enshrined within the EAC Customs Union and Common Market Protocols by improving the business and economic environment through evidence-based policy advocacy in the areas of; harmonization of trade facilitation and regulatory framework, harmonization of product standards, free movement labour and services, as well as addressing trade barriers facing by women-owned businesses and Micro, Small Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Further, the sector has contributed towards monitoring and elimination of NTBs, improving infrastructure network, enhancing the competitiveness of firms in intra and extra-EAC trade. Other initiatives include; EAC trade and investment conferences, Bi-annual EAC Energy and Petroleum Conferences, Women in Business Conference, University- Industry Linkages, Annual

Jua Kali/Nguvu Kazi Exhibitions, national and regional SG' CEOs Forums, Outgoing and Inbound Trade Missions among others.

These efforts have contributed tremendously towards improved cross-border trade and investment as well as reduced cost of doing business in the region.

However, some challenges still exist including; the slow pace of implementation of the commitments made by EAC Partner States, non- ratification of the Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation by some Partner States, lack of enforcement mechanisms for the removal of NTBs, inadequate sensitization and awareness creation to the EAC Partner States citizens on EAC integration process.

### **3.0. RATIONALE**

Since the adoption of the CDF for Private Sector, Civil Society and Other Interest Groups by the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers, major activities for implementing this framework have been ongoing under the Secretary General's Forum as provided for in the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> SG- Forum is an opportunity to widen and deepen EAC integration process and ensure enhanced stakeholder participation and inclusivity. It is also a platform for the region's business community to showcase their products and services and identify trade and investment opportunities. The forum will provide a space to dialogue on opportunities and challenges provided by the EAC integration process as well as share experiences. Building on the above, the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with Private Sector, Civil Society, other interest groups is convening the 3<sup>rd</sup> SG's Forum scheduled to take place in Entebbe from 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The Theme for the 3<sup>rd</sup> SGs Forum is: **"EAC: My Home, My Business";**

**The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SG Forum focused on the following issues; ( to insert from previous concepts)**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> SG Forum will focus on the following sub-themes;

- a) Enjoyment of Freedoms and Rights enshrined in the Common Market Protocol**
  - **Free Movement of Persons**
  - **Free movement of Labour**
  - **Right of Residence**
- b) Food Security**
- c) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**
- d) Competitiveness;**
  - **Access to Affordable Finance**

- **ICT( Mobile Commerce and Business Process Outsourcing(BPOs))**

#### **4.0. OBJECTIVES**

The overall objective of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual SG's Forum is to provide a platform where private sector, civil society and other interest groups can dialogue/interact with the Secretary General on regional integration matters. Specifically, the Forum aims to:

- 1. Discuss and make recommendations on status of free movement of labour, persons as well as the Right of Residence as major indicators of socio-economic integration;**
- 2. Discuss and make recommendations to address challenges related to food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation; and**
- 3. Deliberate on the region's competitiveness in relation to access to affordable finance and mobile commerce especially interoperability as a challenge as well as opportunities in Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs).**

#### **5.0. EXPECTED OUTPUTS**

The expected outputs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SG's Forum are as follows:

- a) Official Forum *Communique*;
- b) Clear and practical recommendations to the Secretary General for consideration by the EAC Council of Ministers;
- c) Meaningful interaction between the Secretary General with participants;
- d) Networking and sharing of best practices as well as lessons learned in the EAC integration.

#### **6.0. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The expected outcomes of the SG's Forum 2014 are as follows:

- a) Increased participation of the PSOs, CSOs and other interest groups in EAC policy formulation and decision-making processes;
- b) Increased sense of ownership of EAC integration by the citizenry and;
- c) Increased awareness among citizens on the EAC integration.

## **7.0. PARTICIPANTS**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> SG's Forum is expected to bring together approximately two hundred (200) participants drawn from Governments of EAC Partner States, PSOs, CSOs, professional bodies, Academia/Universities, , Media and EAC Organs and Institutions, development partners and other interest groups.

The Forum will be officiated by the host Government of Uganda. Key Note Address will be presented by the EAC Secretary General. Other main speakers will include Development Partners, Private and Civil Society represented by EABC (and thematic platforms therein), EACSO, EALS, EALGA, EATUC and other interest groups

The Forum will also feature presentations as per the provided themes.

## **8.0. VENUE AND DATES**

The dates for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary General's Forum are 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The **Venue will be at Imperial Beach Resort Hotel; Entebbe, Republic of Uganda.**

## **9.0 COMMUNITY SERVICE**

To be done in consultation with Ministry of EAC, Uganda and Entebbe, Municipal Council