

**REMARKS BY HON G. G. KARIUKI, MP, CHAIRMAN,
PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND
FOREIGN RELATIONS, KENYA**

**AT THE SECOND SEMINAR FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND THE EAST
AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 27- 29 JANUARY 2005 AT
IMPERIAL RESORT BEACH HOTEL, ENTEBBE
UGANDA**

Honorable Speaker, East African Legislative Assembly,

Honorable Ministers,

Honorable Attorney Generals

Honorable Members of East African Legislative Assembly,

Honorable Speakers of National Assemblies of Partner States,

**Fellow Chairpersons and Members of Foreign Relations and Trade
Committees,**

Clerks of respective National Assemblies,

The Secretary General, East African Community,

The Clerk of East African Legislative Assembly,

Parliamentary Officers,

Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you at this Second Seminar to share and exchange views and experiences since our last meeting at Mt. Kenya Safari Club, Nanyuki, Kenya, in June 2004. I wish to thank all the persons who have worked tirelessly to make this process a success. Indeed, many positive developments have occurred, in Kenya, and the region in general that are worth mentioning.

Appointment of a Cabinet Minister for EAC

Dear Participants,

As you may be aware, soon after we left Nanyuki, the Government of Kenya appointed Hon John K Koech, Minister for East African and Regional Cooperation during the June 30 2004 cabinet reshuffle thus becoming among the first governments in the region to appoint a cabinet level Minister in charge of EAC. It is our hope and expectations that the Minister will move to Arusha sometime in the near future, and effectively operate from there in line with the EAC Treaty.

Gazettment of the East African Community Act no. 2 of 2000, for the Establishment of EAC

The Government of Kenya has gazetted December 29, 2004 as the effective date on which the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community, Act No 2000 came into operation.

Customs Union

The Heads of States of the three Partner States signed the protocol for the implementation of the Customs union clearing the way for its implementation as from January 1, 2005. This is a major and significant development and the Heads of states deserve our commendation for this

bold move, which manifestly shows that our leaders have the political will to propel these integration efforts to its logical conclusion. . I am aware that serious sacrifices have had to be made to make this process successful but am confident that in the end, all nationalities of the respective partner states will mutually benefit. We fully support this initiative and expect the initial implementation ^{hiccups} ~~hitches~~ will be sorted out soberly to enable all the peoples in the region access benefits of integration.

Fast-Tracking Regional Reforms

We have noted with appreciation that the Committee for fast tracking regional Reforms towards integration, headed by Hon. Amos Wako, Kenya's Attorney General carried out its tasks effectively and handed in their report and recommendations. We commend the Heads of States of the three Partner States for endorsing the proposals (road map) for the establishment of a political federation by January 2010 during their sixth annual summit at Arusha on November 26, 2004.

Private Sector / Media

I would like to acknowledge the immense contribution made by the media (both electronic and print) and the private sector businesses especially the East African Business Council in highlighting and sensitizing the peoples and politicians, on the issues and the significance of the integration process

towards our collective survival in a globalizing world. These two bodies have kept the issues on top of the agenda for us (politicians) to address.

I wish to invite fellow Members of Parliaments in the three partner states and EALA to join the Heads of States in making the integration process a reality within our lifetime. We need to sensitize our peoples on the significance and importance of integration with a view to garnering their support. We stand to gain more as a block than when we go our separate ways in this competitive world as this enhances as our global standing collectively. The changing global political and economic dynamics demand that we face global issues as a block.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kenyans are committed to make the integration process become a reality. We believe regular consultations, honest and sober dialogue on controversial issues and above all the political will and vision of what is in store for mutual benefit of all nations is imperative. We owe it to the future generations, and to ourselves, to make this process move forward effectively.

It is my hope that our deliberations will go along way towards expediting and ironing out potential bottlenecks to the integration process in the spirit of open, free and frank debates. I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you

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